

Welcome to American Government at SES

Mr. Roberts

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COURSE OVERVIEW

Students in grade twelve pursue a deeper understanding of the institutions of American government. They compare systems of government in the world today and analyze the history and changing interpretations of the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the current state of the legislative, executive, and judiciary branches of government. An emphasis is placed on analyzing the relationship among federal, state, and local governments, with particular attention paid to important historical documents such as the Federalist Papers. These standards represent the culmination of civic literacy as students prepare to vote, participate in community activities, and assume the responsibilities of citizenship.

MATERIALS

Notebook: You are required to have a spiral notebook (sheets MUST BE 8½ x 11 inches) that you must bring to class everyday. You will record notes, complete assignments and paste worksheets and handouts in this notebook. It will become an ever-growing resource and study guide for this course. You will turn this notebook in, for a grade, several times throughout the semester. More details about your interactive notebook will come soon.

Journal: Students will be required to bring a composition notebook to class daily for journal exercises.

Textbook: The Prentice Hall: *Magruder's American Government* textbook is just one of many resources we will be using in this course. Students are responsible for returning this textbook at the end of the year in a condition identical to its distribution condition, and will be held financially liable for lost or damaged books.

Additional Resources: Throughout this course, we will be analyzing documents, text and visuals from printed sources, speeches, radio and television broadcasts, the internet, as well as other resources.

SES Planner: Students will be required to write daily assignments in the planner provided by SES.

Required Materials: You are required to bring the following class everyday: notebook, journal, highlighter, gluestick, pencils, pens.

EXPECTATIONS

I expect that this classroom will be conducive to learning and open discussion for all. In order for this to happen, it is essential that the classroom be a safe and fun environment. To accomplish this, there are just a few important classroom rules:

Respect Others & Yourself – respect in the classroom will lead to a strong community.

Disagree with Ideas, Not People – this is the foundation of open discussion.

Be an Active Participant – participate by listening and contributing.

Be Honest – lying turns small problems into big ones.

We will abide by all campus-wide policies and there will be **no food or drinks allowed** in the classroom, with the exception of clear or translucent water bottles.

ATTENDANCE

Everyday attendance to this class is mandatory. Being present and on time is an essential life skill and is expected of you in this class. You will be marked tardy if you are not in your assigned seat when the bell rings.

If you have an excused absence, it is **your responsibility** to make-up missed work or notes, and to pick up handouts or assignments – handouts can be found on the side counter filed by date, or downloaded and printed from the class website. You will be given one day for each day of an excused absence to make up missing work for full credit.

You may not make up work (including tests) missed due to an unexcused absence.

HOMEWORK

You will have homework nearly everyday. If there is not a regular assignment, you will be working on long-term projects or preparing for tests/quizzes. Depending on the assignment, homework may be turned in, or pasted in your interactive notebook as required by your instructor.

It is important that all work be turned in **on time**. Homework and notebooks are due at the beginning of the class period, before the bell rings to begin class, unless otherwise stated by your instructor. Homework or notebooks that are turned in late, including after the bell, will be subject to a 50% deduction in points. If you are tardy, your work will be counted at half credit upon your arrival.

GRADING

Students will be assessed in a variety of ways, including tests, quizzes, projects, presentations, essays, notebooks, and homework. Student scores will be updated on Zangle's ParentConnection on an ongoing basis, as well as posted in the room. Please note that student notebooks account for a large portion of assignments, and are collected/scored on a bi-monthly basis.

Grades will be posted and frequently updated.

Grading Scale

A	90% - 100%
B	80% - 89%
C	70% - 79%
D	60% - 69%
F	less than 60%

Final grades will be determined by using the following as a guide. Any changes to the grading system below will be posted on Zangle as "Class News".

Class & Homework	40%
Tests & Quizzes	30%
Projects & Daily Journal	20%
Final Exam	10%

CHEATING

Cheating happens in various forms and is a major problem in schools of all levels. Plagiarism is a form of cheating and is unacceptable. Do not take the writing/research/work of others (this includes friends, parents and the internet) and use it in your work without citing the source. **School and district guidelines for cheating offenses will be strictly followed.**

All of the following are considered plagiarism:

- turning in someone else's work as your own
- copying words or ideas from someone else without giving credit
- failing to put a quotation in quotation marks
- giving incorrect information about the source of a quotation
- changing words but copying the sentence structure of a source without giving credit
- copying so many words or ideas from a source that it makes up the majority of your work, whether you give credit or not

Note to Parents and Guardians:

Please be aware that I show clips from historical films and documentaries at various times throughout the semester. Some of these clips may have an R rating. If you would like your student to be excused from these films, please

contact me by phone or email me at matthew-roberts@scusd.edu and I will be happy to arrange for an alternative assignment.

STUDENT, PARENT, & TEACHER CONTRACT

This syllabus is a contract between you (the student) and me (the teacher). Please sign below stating that you have read and understood the requirements and expectations in this classroom. This also shows your and your parents' recognition of the requirements for passing this course.

It is also mandatory that your parent or guardian read this syllabus and sign below.

Parents and Guardians: please feel free to contact me about your student's progress. Also, what is the best way and time to reach you, if I wish to speak with you about your student?

Time? _____ Phone? _____ Email (if available)? _____

Keep the first page of this syllabus in your notebook for reference and hand in this page, with signatures, to me.

This page is due no later than Friday, September 9th.

Student Name (printed)

Student Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Name (printed)

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date