

US/AZ Government

Spring 2025

Instructor: Mr. Lane F. Waddell

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Course Overview

United States/Arizona Government will act as the "the finishing course" of the social studies, preparing students to take their rightful place as full, active and responsible members of American society while simultaneously integrating in them an appreciation for the past as it relates to the present and preparing them for the possibilities of their future.

Course Content

This one semester course is intended to make you aware of how government in America works its lifelong impact on your life, and your own ability to influence governmental decisions and actions. This class is a combination of interactive lecture, individual and small group activities and projects, discussion and issue debates, guest lecturers representing governmental and political organizations, and a culminating class activity in which you will research a major issue in Arizona politics.

This course will be organized into the following major instructional units:

Part 1: Foundations

- a. The Five Principles of Politics
- b. Comparison of modern political thought (Hobbes v. Locke)
- c. Types of Government (unitary, confederate, federated, parliamentary, and presidential)
- d. Colonial traditions & revolution
- e. Articles of Confederation (weaknesses & basis for reform)
- f. 2d Constitutional Convention (controversies and compromise)
- g. Key Constitutional concepts (popular sovereignty, limited government, republicanism, federalism, separation of powers, checks and balances, bicameralism, majority rule v. minority rights, constitutional protections of civil liberties)
- h. The Role of the Federalist/Anti-Federalist Debates on ratification of the Constitution (addition of Bill of Rights)
- i. Structure of the Constitution
- j. 1st Amendment - the 5 freedoms
- k. 2nd Amendment - changing values
- l. 4th - 8th Amendments - governmental police power v. legal restraint
- m. 14th - idea of incorporation; due process & the states

Part 2: Institutions

Congress:

- a. Qualifications for office
- b. Powers of Congress (power of the purse, peace and war powers)
- c. Organization and Leadership of Congress
- d. The Great Obstacle Race: The Congressional Law Making Process
- e. Checks and Balances in Action
- f. Current Issues

The Presidency:

- a. Qualifications for office
- b. Powers, Duties, and Roles
- c. Roles of Vice-President & presidential succession
- d. Presidential Selection and the Electoral College
- e. Current Issues

The Federal Court System:

- a. Supreme Court and Federal Courts System
- b. Questions of Jurisdiction (original, appellate, exclusive, concurrent, dual courts system)
- c. Origins and Significance of Judicial Review
- d. The Conflict between Judicial Restraint & Activism
- e. Expanding Role of the Judiciary (Current Issues)

Part 3: Political Behavior

- a. Special Interest Groups and Political Action Committees
- b. Foundations and Roles of Political Parties
- c. The Media: Lens v. Filter
- d. Federal Bureaucracy: the Giant's Labyrinth
- e. Demographics and Voting Behavior
- f. Elections, Campaigning, and use of Political Propaganda
- g. Taxes (types, purpose, power to)
- h. Budget Process

Part 4: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

- a. Civil Rights Act of 1964
- b. Voting Rights Act of 1965
- c. Brown v Board of Education
- d. Marbury v Madison
- e. Black Codes
- f. 14th Amendment
- g. 19th Amendment
- h. Dred Scott v Sanford
- i. Bill of Rights

Course Format and Outline

Lectures, discussions, issue analysis, critical writing, group work, independent projects, panels, debates, guest speakers, tests, and quizzes.

Text and Resource Materials

All primary and secondary readings related to class instruction will be made available to the students either on the class website or Canvas.

Students will be expected to maintain a course notebook for study guides, handouts, class notes, journals, returned tests and quizzes, and other course material. This notebook may be collected for a grade at the end of each unit to assure appropriate collection of course materials.

Course Materials

The following materials are **required** in class each day: notebook, pen or pencil. No pass will be issued to obtain these. It is recommended that students use composition notebooks for lectures and reading outlines. The book will be collected periodically and checked for understanding.

Assessment Procedures

A variety of exams will be used and may include multiple-choice, identification, short answer, essay outlines, and essays. Exams may be oral or written, and may require the use of a computer. Exams will be based on readings, projects, documents, and discussions. Additional exams may include vocabulary, reading comprehension, as well as other assignments. Although most exams will be based solely on a specific assignment, cumulative exams may be given.

Grading System

The semester will be based on total points. There will be roughly 1000 points for the semester. Each assignment or activity will have a point value, which will be determined at the time of the assignment. This does include unit exams. The final will count for 20% of the total points.

The grading scale will be as follows:

- A = 90 - 100% of possible points
- B = 80 - 89% of possible points
- C = 70 - 79% of possible points
- D = 60 - 69% of possible points
- F = anything below 60% of possible points

Assignments

All assignments are due on the date posted. Assignment's one day late will be marked down two grades. Assignments more than one day late will not be accepted. With an excused absence, work or a test must be made-up in accordance with school policy: 1 day absent, 1 day to make-up work or test. If you have missed an assignment or test for any reason it is your responsibility to find out what work needs to be done. Consult the instructor if you have any questions.

Quality of Assignments

All work handed in must have your first and last name, date and class period. Assignments must be on 8 1/2" x 11" college lined paper (no spiral) and be neat and organized, complete with good penmanship, spelling and grammar. Any messy or unreadable work will not be accepted and must be redone.

Late Work Policy

One day late-eligible for 100%
Two days late -eligible for 50%
Three days late or more – 0%

Readings

In this course, we will not use a textbook. All reading material; collection of readings, supplemented frequently with additional materials from readers and online sources is linked through the instructor's web site.

Timely reading is critical both for achievement as an individual student in this class, and for the success of the course as a whole. The reading load in this course is reasonable—on average, assignments will run less than twenty pages per class session. As a result, students are strongly expected to come to class having read the material carefully, thought about it, and prepared to discuss it in class. Failure to do so will result in lessened comprehension of class lectures, poorer exam performance, and a lower participation grade.

Conversely, dutiful attention to the reading will greatly enhance the intellectual experience of the course for the individual student, and enable him or her to contribute meaningfully to the class as a whole.

Method of Instruction

Structured as a series of lectures, discussions, readings, and exercises, the course proceeds for the most part chronologically, seeking to analyze and explain interactions between and among Constitutional structures, practices and provisions, legal doctrines, and major historical events and issues.

Instruction is conducted predominately by discussions and readings. Students should note that the instructor uses the Socratic Method, eliciting information and conclusions by questioning students during course meetings. The aim of such instruction is to see how students clarify problems and questions, work at thinking about the issues, and create understandings and solutions for themselves. Thus, class meetings are not conducted as one-way information delivery sessions but rather as interactive occasions for students to explore and explain their understanding of problems, questions, issues, and materials. More than conveying information, the course is designed to challenge students' thinking and to channel the refinement of that thinking and its articulation.

The method of instruction requires students to do readings and other assignments in advance of class meetings so as to be prepared to participate in class. The instruction proceeds that students each week will spend three hours of preparation for each credit hour of instruction

Attendance and Sweep

Excessive absences in this course will have a negative impact on your grade, as you are responsible for any material or work missed. You are allowed 10 absences (both excused and unexcused). You may lose credit on the 11th absence. You will be swept if not in class by the last bell. Returning to another to gather materials for class still counts as a sweep if not in class before the last bell. If you are tardy you will report to sweep.

Academic Integrity

The MPHS Student Handbook provides definitions of what is expected of your work. If you are found to be in violation of this policy, then corrective steps will be taken.

Honor

The students of Mr. Waddell are setting the standard for those who follow: We will not pass off another's work as our own, we will respect one another and our campus, we will take responsibility for our actions and accept the consequences. In short, we will act with personal integrity because we choose to live a life of honor and success.

Academic Achievement

Every student wants to do well and it is expected that each student will achieve at and beyond their ability. There may come a point during the semester that the student is not meeting their expectations or those of the class. When that occasion arises, the student needs to be proactive. First, check the class website for information on grades and assignments. Next, contact the instructor and determine the best path for achievement. The instructor is there to help the student with academic achievement. This can take many forms, such as creating and maintaining study groups, meeting before or after school. The next step is to discuss the issues with the guidance department. They may have other achievement tools available to the student.

Discussion Posts

The discussion posts are designed to share your thoughts and insights with your classmates. The purpose of the post is to engage in positive dialogue. This is an excellent way to enhance your own learning. Studying the Constitution and the American Government allows for great discussions. Your posts need to reflect insights into the Constitution and American Government by asking probing questions that will enrich your own understanding of the documents. Replying to a classmate with an "I agree", will not garner you any points.

Course Disclaimers

The sequence of material and speed at which we cover material is dependent on the interests and abilities of each class.

This class will provide reasonable accommodations for students who have special needs as documented by the Special Education department or Guidance Counselors.

Classroom Rules and Procedures

There are few classroom rules. You may do those things that promote your learning and the learning of others. As young adults, I expect you to act accordingly. This means:

Be on time - that is something you can take care of.

Be prepared - bring your materials as required.

No talking at inappropriate times (such as during instruction), out-of-turn, or while another has the floor.

Texting, sleeping, or any other disrupting activity will not be tolerated.

Use appropriate language at all times.

Follow all directions the first time they are given.

Respect yourself, others and their property and their opinions; we will not engage in putting people down

School rules prohibit gum, food, ear buds and active cell phones during class.

Work to your best potential.

Discipline procedures follow the three-step correction process:

- (1) One-on-one counseling with you.
- (2) Phone call or meeting with your parents.
- (3) Referral to school administration.

Be careful, all three procedures could be used on the first offense if it serious enough.