

Honors Civics/2019-2020

Mr. Samek

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Course Summary

This course is devoted to understanding and interpreting the relationships between citizens and the different levels of government in our society (federal, state, and local). Our study will include a look at our nation's past and how government in America was created. We will also discuss how governments work, the role of citizens, the political system in America today, our economy, and the United States and international relations, to name a few.

Expected Student Outcome

Students completing this course will have a basic – or better – understanding of the role between citizens and their government. For example, students will better understand the following:

- Rights and responsibilities of American citizens
- Purpose and role of government in our society
- Foundations of the American political system
- How government works under the Constitution
- Micro- and macro-economics
- Human experiences and important events in U.S. history
- Interactions of culture, race, and ideas, and the nature of prejudice
- Change and continuity in political systems
- Effects of technology
- Importance of global-international perspectives
- Integration of geography, economics, and civics studies on major developments in the history of Pennsylvania, the United States, and the world
- How America's past has shaped the present

Teaching Methodology

This course is a combination of teacher-centered activity and student-centered activity. Students are expected to talk about what they have heard and read and to discuss the implications, ramifications, merits, flaws, and so on. Small group activities will be held throughout the school year including several debates. Quizzes are given every week (or every other week), and tests are given after each unit is covered. Two or three short essays on assigned topics will be written and students will have individual projects to complete; details will be announced at a later date. Projects are usually equal in points to a test grade. I hope to take a field trip to the Beaver County Jail after we cover a unit on our criminal justice system.

Grading

Grades will be determined by the total number of points accumulated; this includes tests, quizzes, essays, projects, and on how well you are fulfilling your responsibilities to read and discuss the various topics we cover.

Attendance matters here, so does the quality and quantity of your in-class participation. I will always reward effort. Tests will be given at the end of each unit. Any make-up tests/quizzes *may* be in an all-essay form. Late papers/projects will be penalized one letter grade *per day*. Final grades will follow Hopewell's standard grading procedures. For example, 90-100 = A, 80-89 = B, etc.

Plagiarism Policy

Plagiarism is not allowed. Good academic work must be based on honesty; students are expected to do their own work. In the academic community people earn their living through the use of their work, ideas, and words. Their reputation is built, in part, by others using their ideas and giving credit to the author. Students caught plagiarizing will earn no points whatsoever on that particular assignment. Furthermore, they may receive a failing grade for that nine week grading period.

Bring Your Own Device (BYOD)

Personal devices are no longer allowed during instructional periods. This is school policy; therefore, it will be followed in my classroom. That means smartphones, cellphones, smart watches, tablets, et cetera, must be turned off

and placed in the “phone holder” hanging on the door that leads to the library. Tablets (since they won’t fit into the phone holder) must be turned off and placed on the countertop by the world map. This will be done as soon as you enter the room. After class students will retrieve their devices.

Text

Gregory I. Massing, *Civics in Practice: Principles of Government and Economics*. (USA: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 2009).

Homework

Late homework will be worth a maximum of fifty percent of the normal assignment grade.

Rules of Conduct

The following is a brief list of rules that will be followed by all:

- Be in the classroom on time.
 - Bring what you need with you to class.
 - Participate. Remember, I reward effort!
 - If you eat or drink in class don’t make a mess.
 - You will only work on Civics in this classroom.
 - Act like a young adult I’ll treat you like one.
 - All phones/devices will be turned off and placed in the aforementioned phone holder.
 - If you consistently come unprepared for class you will lose points and you will notice it when you receive your report card!
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Tentative Curriculum

Introduction – First 2-3 weeks

- Foundation of our nation – Colonial America – Enlightenment

Unit 1 – Chapters 1, 2, 3, & 4

- Early government – Constitution – responsibilities of citizenship

Unit 2 – Chapters 5, 6 & 7

- Federal government – powers – branches of government

Unit 3 – Chapters 8 & 9

- State governments (emphasis on PA) – local governments

Unit 4 – Chapters 10, 11 & 12

- Political parties – public opinion – taxation

Unit 5 – Chapter 16

- Crime in America – justice system – overview of citizen in society

Unit 6 – Chapters 17 & 21

- U.S. economy – world economy

Unit 7 – Chapters 23 & 24

- U.S. foreign policy – terrorism – new trends – future???

Website

All Hopewell teachers have a website. If you miss class and want to see what is due, or when we have an upcoming quiz or test, just do the following:

- Go to Hopewell's website, which is www.hopewellarea.org
- Click on the tab marked "Schools"
- Click on "High School"
- Click on the link for "Faculty/Staff Directory" (it's on the left)
- Our last names are alphabetized; click on "Samek" and you will arrive at my website.
- If you click on the other link you can email me at my school email address.
- I try to update the website 2-3 times a week.
- You will see links for a syllabus and a study guide. There will always be updated information on assignments.

This syllabus (and course outline) is meant to be a guide to what will probably happen in our class throughout the school year. It is subject to change at my discretion; however, I will give you plenty of advance notice if there are any changes. Any additional reading assignments will be provided well in advance. There will be a comprehensive mid-term exam in January and a comprehensive final exam at the end of the school year.

Please do not hesitate to ask questions about the syllabus, expectations, assignments, tests, etc. I hope you enjoy learning; have fun while you do so.

