

### **Course Description**

In this inquiry-based course students apply knowledge gained in previous years of study to pursue a deeper understanding of the institutions of American Government.. This course should be viewed as the culmination of civic literacy that will prepare students to vote, to reflect on the responsibilities of citizenship, and to participate in community activities.

### **Course Outline/Objectives**

One semester course consisting of four units 4-5 weeks each with following objections:

- Unit 1- Understand the formation of democratic governments and their respective strengths and challenges. Explain the fundamental principles of American democracy as expressed in the US Constitution and Declaration of Independence. Evaluate positions on the scope and limits of rights and obligations of democratic citizens.
- Unit 2- Evaluate issues regarding campaigns at the national, state and local level and analyze the role and responsibilities democratic citizens relative to those campaigns. Evaluate the influence of media on the political process.
- Unit 3- Analyze the unique roles and responsibilities of the legislative and executive branches.
- Unit 4 – Analyze the unique role and responsibility of the judicial branch, judicial interpretations of the bill of rights

### **Grades**

Grades earned by the student represent a cumulative points total for the semester. All grades received prior to semester final grade should be treated as a progress reports. Grades are based on coursework in the following 4 areas: (% are approximate)

- **Current Events (20%)**- this is the primary homework assignment. Within each unit you will be required to do one written, one blog response.
- **Projects, tests/quizzes (40%)**- Each unit consists of one to two quizzes, one minor project and one test and/or major project for you to demonstrate your level of understanding of the unit benchmarks. Note: In order for you to earn an A in the class you must average a B+ or better on your projects/tests. In order to pass the course, you must attain a minimum of 70% on all projects and tests. Access period can be utilized to bring up scores in this category.
- **Journals (20%)**- Each day students will have between 1-5 journal entries to do in class. A simple notebook in which the pages can be easily and neatly removed will suffice. Journal responses typically range from 3-5 sentences, should be numbered accordingly and leave a space between each entry. Journal grades are evaluated on the basis of student engagement and effort.
- **Participation (20%)**- Each week students will be evaluated on how well they participate in class. This includes such things as being on task, small in-class assignments, website interaction, being an active/positive contributor to class discussions/environment.

### **Late Assignments/Goofs**

In general, no late work will be accepted. Assignments are considered on time if they are turned in the day they are due (presentations the period they are due). If a student is absent the day the assignment is due and the can turn the assignment in upon their return assuming they have an excused absence. Late assignments because of unexcused absences will not be accepted.

**Goofs-** Students have a one time goof available for one late assignment during the semester. A student can use their one goof to turn an assignment within 10 school days of the assigned due date or two Fridays before finals week which ever is earlier. Write "I Goofed" on the front of the assignment when you turn it in.

### **Extra Credit**

Students can do a limited amount of extra credit on teacher approved assignments. Extra credit points can impact a grade a maximum of 5% and added after all other points are calculated and only if the extra credit changes the final grade. Please see me about extra credit opportunities.

### **My Expectations/Class rules**

This is very simple: come to class prepared, be a positive participant, and be respectful to your fellow students, the classroom, and me.

### **Discipline procedure**

Depending on the severity of situation for following options exist:

- a) Go outside to "cool" off.
- b) Call home.
- c) Go to principal to "cool" off
- d) Go to principal and call home.
- e) Meeting with parents, counselor, and principal.

For more information such as copy of this syllabus, major course assignments, class news, and course related links please visit my website at [saintshs.weebly.com](http://saintshs.weebly.com) or the staff webpage at the Saint Helena Unified website ([www.sthelenak12.ca.us](http://www.sthelenak12.ca.us) and click on the staff directory link under the resources section at the bottom of the page). I look forward to working with all of you this upcoming school year. If you have any questions or comments please contact me at [mluelsdorf@sthelena.k12.ca.us](mailto:mluelsdorf@sthelena.k12.ca.us) or 967-2740 x2133.

Please sign the following acknowledging that you have read and understand the course syllabus.

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Student Signature

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Parent Signature