

Syllabus – Civics and the U.S. Constitution – Spring 2017

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MATERIALS

The following items are suggested for this course:

- 3-ring binder
- notebook paper
- numerous writing utensils
- headphones (ideally a pair of cheap ear buds)

In order to provide a rich and diverse dialogue of perspectives this course will incorporate materials from a broad spectrum of time and place. We will incorporate a variety of primary and secondary sources of the past and present. Students will develop the skills to analyze the messages contained in these sources, as well as skills related to sourcing such documents and analyzing their potential biases. This class will not use a traditional textbook, but will incorporate open-source online instructional content.

Much of the information utilized in this course will be of a digital nature and students will be expected to access this information both inside and outside of the classroom. Therefore it is essential that each student develop a reliable internet access plan for this course. All students should identify their primary (most convenient) and secondary internet access points (in case primary is not available) considering options within the school, their homes, and the community. A lack of internet access will not be a valid excuse for failure to complete coursework.

COURAGEOUS CONVERSATIONS

It is my opinion that the nature of any worthwhile psychology course must examine issues that many may consider personal and/or controversial. Students will be asked to identify and challenge their views on a number of these topics and will often have the opportunity to share these views with their classmates. We as a class will use the district's Courageous Conversations Protocol, which will be strictly observed and enforced. Consider it a requirement to bring an open mind to class each day.

TOPICS (For more information visit ksde.org's Social Studies Standards page)

Unit 1: The Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship

Unit 2: Foundations of American Democracy

Unit 3: The Structure and Function of Local, State, and Federal Government

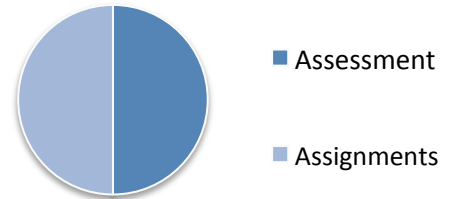
Unit 4: Human and Civil Rights in American Democracy

Unit 5: Citizenship in Action

GRADING POLICY

As the ninth-grade required Social Studies course, this class serves as the introduction to your high school Social Studies education. In this spirit I will hold the highest of expectations regarding student work and behavior. The grading policy for this course reflects these expectations.

Your grade will be weighted across two categories: the Assessment category will include grades on tests, quizzes, projects, and formal writings and will account for 50% of your overall grade; the Assignments category will include daily work, informal writing responses, homework assignments, and class participation and will account for 50% of the overall grade.



Make-up Work Policy: When absent (excused or unexcused) make-up assignments will be provided; however, it is the student's responsibility to advocate for and retrieve your missing assignments. If your absence is excused, you will receive full credit for the assignment as long as it is turned in by the agreed-upon date. If you are unexcused you may earn up to 75% of the total points of the assignment if it is turned in by the agreed-upon date.

Late Work Policy: If student work is late—meaning it is not turned in before the unit quiz is given—you may still turn in the assignment for partial credit, earning up to 80% of the total points you earn on the assignment. In certain circumstances determined by the teacher, a student may need to conference and contract (develop a plan to complete missing or late work). Conferences will be held after school and include parents, a counselor and/or assistant principal in the contract writing process. If deemed necessary, additional support staff and other interventions may be accessed.

Retake Policy: In this class all students who want to increase their learning have the opportunity to retake assessments. Students may retake a unit quiz, project, or other end of unit assessment. Each student has one retake opportunity per assessment and the higher score will be recorded in the grade book. The retake will consist of new questions, but assess the same concepts.

In order to retake an assessment:

1. All missing assignments from the unit must be turned in with a score of 70% or better
2. Complete a Retake Ticket
3. Meet with the teacher two times. During the first meeting the student will turn in their Retake Ticket, missing assignments, and discuss study skills with the teacher. During the second meeting the student will retake the assessment.
4. A retake must be completed prior to the next unit's assessment.

TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM

While these sections of Civics will not be formally "blended" as others are, students will still be expected to use and incorporate technology into their learning and communication. With this in mind students are expected to adhere to the school's appropriate-use policies. Additionally, we will work as a group to foster a sense of digital citizenship when engaging others, their work, and their points-of-view online.

A cell phone can be a great learning tool; however, it can also be a considerable distraction to learning. Therefore, cell phones will not be allowed out unless permitted by the teacher for the purposes of an assignment. Cell phones will need to be left on "silent" and stored in each student's bag or pocket. If a student's cell phone becomes a distraction to themselves, other students, or the teacher, cell phones will be taken by the teacher and returned at the end of the hour. Repeat offenders will be referred to the office.