Mr. Marzolf – Room 124

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**AMERICAN GOVERNMENT**

**Course Syllabus**

**Course Overview**

American Government offers students the opportunity to learn about the three branches of government as well as their role and responsibility as citizens. The goals of this class are that students recognize the strengths and weaknesses of democratic form of government and develop a realization of the necessity of individual participation to ensure a successfully functioning government. This semester course presents a comprehensive study of national, state and local government with additional focus on law, economics and current political events to provide each student with a solid foundation in the essential components of civic life.

* **Unit 1** – Foundations of Civic & Political Life/Foundations of Government (2 weeks)
* **Unit 2** – State & Local Government (1 week)
* **Unit 3** – The United States & World Affairs (2 weeks)
* **Unit 4** – The 3 Branches of Government (8-9 weeks)
* **Unit 5** – Citizenship in the United States (2 weeks)

Textbook: *Magruder’s American Government* (Prentice Hall 2009)

Student Resource: *Essential Questions Journal*

Credit: .5 CR (one semester course **required for graduation**)

**Objectives of the Course**

Examples of course objectives include, but are not limited to:

* Preparing students to become responsible and contributing members of American society and political life
* Evaluate the origins, purposes and types of governmental systems
* Understand the origins, foundations and evolutionary nature of our American government
* Understand the structure and function of the 3 branches of government – Legislative, Judicial and Executive – at the national and state level
* Understand and evaluate the roles played by individuals, groups and institutions in influencing governmental policies and actions
* Explain how voting behavior influences our government
* Understand our rights as Americans by analyzing the role of government and civic participation as it relates to our Constitution, Bill of Rights and key Supreme Court case decisions.
* Developing a position on an issue and engage in respectful and productive civic discourse and debate
* Explore key current events and evaluate the role of government and civic participation of the people that influence governmental policy and actions.
* Develop essential communication and critical thinking skills to formulate opinions and engage in respectful civic discourse.
* Explain and give examples of how public policies respond to public demands
* Understand and explain how the philosophical revolution that occurred during the Age of Enlightenment shaped the foundations of our American government and democratic principles
* Understand and describe the actions and purposes of federalism, the Bill of Rights, constitutional amendments, the 3-branch system, check-n-balances, Core Democratic Values, as well as the role of law and order, rights and protections of the people and how our governments function independently and co-dependently at the local, state and national level.
* Describe the financial costs of elections and how special interest groups and political action committees participate and gain access to greater governmental influence via the financial process of campaigns
* Explore the social and cultural demographics of Congress and how this relates to the concept of representation in American government
* Describe the process whereby a bill becomes law, the membership and function of the Judicial system, i.e. the role and function of the Supreme Court
* Analyze and evaluate the purpose and function of the Legislative, Judicial and Executive Branches of government – their powers, responsibilities, limitations, checks-n-balances – relating to local, state, national and international governmental policies and actions

**Class Website & PowerSchool**

* **American Government Class Website** – Student, parents/guardians may access the course information including weekly lesson plans and course schedule online via my website at <http://mmarzolf.weebly.com>
* **PowerSchool** – Homepage is <http://www.wcskids.net/parentportal>

Login at <https://ps.wcs.misd.net/public>

\*Or simply download the **PowerSchool App** and register for quick and easy access

**Classroom Rules & Expectations**

Rules are established in the classroom to create an optimal environment for your learning and success. Expectations are established for you to understand what I expect of you and what you need to expect of yourself to learn and be the best that you can be. The Warren Consolidated Schools ***Student Code of Conduct*** will be strictly enforced in the classroom…so get to know it well!

**Rules**

1. Do your best!

2. Respect…yourself, your classmates, your teacher and the learning mission.

3. Participate…Democracy is NOT a spectator sport. Be involved in class by asking questions, sharing opinions, studying and cooperating with classmates and teacher.

**Expectations**

1. Good attendance! Be on time to class each day and prepared to learn.

2. Respect one another as equal human beings and respect the opinions of those you may disagree with.

3. Complete assignments on time and to the best of your ability. Study for exams and cooperate with classmates on projects.

**Cell Phone Usage**

Our American Government classroom is designated as a **YELLOW** **ZONE** regarding cell phone usage. That means that cell phones may be brought to class but are only to be used for learning purposes and with my expressed permission. That means that when class begins your cell phone is to be on **MUTE** and stored away in a safe place, either on your person or somewhere in your belongings, where it can be out-of-sight/out-of-mind. We will make regular use of cell phones as a learning and research tool to support our mastery of the course learning objectives.

For your own safety, Warren Mott HS **prohibits the use of ear buds** during the school day. This includes the hallways and my classroom.

Failure to comply with the school’s cell phone usage policy will result in the following actions:

* 1st Offense – Verbal warning
* 2nd Offense – device is taken and locked up in your House Office for 24 hours. The device will only be released to a parent/guardian who must make an appointment to pick it up before or after school.
* 3rd Offense – device is taken and locked up in your House Office device and can be kept until the end of the school year (June).

**Bullying/Harassment** – Please always think before you speak/act and have empathy for your fellow classmates. The Golden Rule is our school and classroom’s guide to how we should behave towards one another – to treat others as you would want to be treated! Bullying will not be tolerated by Warren Mott High School, or by our class, and is a **MAJOR INFRACTION of the WCS Student Code of Conduct** punishable by up to a 10-day suspension from school and progressive disciplinary action.

* Per WCS School Board Policy, **bullying** includes any physical, verbal and/or psychological abuse, including hazing, inappropriate gestures, comments, threats, or actions to a student or staff member which cause or threaten to cause bodily harm, reasonable fear for personal safety or personal/cultural degradation
* Bullying is any gesture or written, verbal, graphic or physical act that is reasonably perceived as being motivated by race, color, religion, ancestry, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, mental, physical or sensory disability or impairment
* All the aforementioned behaviors are considered bullying/harassment whether they occur online, via phone/text, on/off school property, at a school sponsored event or in a school vehicle
* BE KIND TO ANOTHER! 😊

**Grading Policy**

Grades are determined by measurable assessments of student mastery across content areas and are used as a means of reporting student mastery and achievement relative to curriculum objectives. Grades are determined by student performance and maintained and calculated by the classroom teacher based on the **Warren Consolidated Schools grading scale**. Grades are a measure of academic performance and are used as a means of reporting achievement relative to curriculum objectives. Grades are determined by the teacher and are based on a variety of factors.

**Grade Percentage GPA Value**

A+ 98-100 4.0

A 93-97 4.0

A- 90-92 3.67

B+ 87-89 3.33

B 83-86 3.0

B- 80-82 2.67

C+ 77-79 2.33

C 73-76 2.0

C- 70-72 1.67

D+ 67-69 1.33

D 63-66 1.0

D- 60-62 0.67

E 50-59 0.0

Your final grade card marking grade for the American Government course will be weighed as follows:

* Practice Work (homework/classwork) = **15%**
* Assessments (quizzes, tests, projects, presentations, debates) = **75%**
* Participation = **10%**

Your final grade for the American Government semester course is as follows:

**SEMESTER 1 SEMESTER 2**

* 1st Quarter = 40% 3rd Quarter = 40%
* 2nd Quarter = 40% 4th Quarter = 40%
* Final Exam = 20% Final Exam = 20%
* Two requirements a student needs to satisfy to earn credit in this course:
* Students must pass 60% of the course (i.e. must pass 2 of 3 from above)
* Students must earn a minimum 60% (D-) average
* A student not taking the MIDTERM or FINAL EXAM shall receive an F as the final grade until the exam is completed.
* A student who passes a comprehensive MIDTERM or FINAL EXAM with a 78% (C+) or higher shall be granted semester credit for the course

\**Current course grades can be found using the* ***PowerSchool App*** *or via Parent Portal at* [***www.wcskids.net/parentportal***](http://www.wcskids.net/parentportal)

*\****Cheating/Plagiarism** – strictly **PROHIBITED by the WCS Student Code of Conduct** and enforced by our classroom rules. If it is discovered that a student has copied work from another, or lifted material from the internet without proper attribution, then all involved parties will receive an **E (0%)** on the assignment/assessment and parents/guardians will be notified. Subsequent offenses will result in a disciplinary referral to the Assistant Principal for progressive disciplinary action.

**Class Procedures & Communications**

Classroom procedures are the ways in which we conduct class to achieve the day’s learning objective. Understanding the classroom procedures and carrying them out daily will provide you with greater opportunities to participate in class, be responsible for your own learning and stay organized.

* **Entering the Classroom** – Each student is to enter the classroom on time, prepared to learn and ready to engage in the Daily Warm-Up.
* **Late to class** – My goal is to make it you want to come to class and learn, and your goal is to get yourself here on time, so we can begin our studies. Failure to satisfy the course attendance/tardy policy will result in the following, per the Warren Mott HS Attendance Policy (see attached handout for the specific progressive disciplinary consequences for 4+ tardies to class):
* 1st Tardy – Verbal warning
* 2nd Tardy – Verbal warning + parent/guardian notified
* 3rd Tardy – Detention + parent/guardian notified
* 4th Tardy – Disciplinary referral issued to Assistant Principal
* 5th Tardy – Disciplinary referral issued to Assistant Principal
* 6th Tardy – Disciplinary referral issued to Assistant Principal
* 7+ Tardies – Disciplinary referral issued to Assistant Principal
* **Daily Warm-Up** – Class will begin each day with a **5-10 minute daily warm-up** focused upon the day’s learning objective. Examples of warm-ups include, but are not limited to, readings, written/verbal responses, video clips, cooperative activities, stations. Satisfactory completion on-time of the daily warm-ups contributes towards your PARTICIPATION grade.
* **Hall Passes/Bathroom Privileges** – take care of non-class related business during passing time, e.g. bathroom breaks, drink of water, office visits, etc. No passes will be issued during the first 10 minutes of class and the last 10 minutes of class.
* **Learning Objectives** – The Learning Objectives will be visible and posted in the classroom, adjusted accordingly by me based upon the progress of our studies.
* **Essential Questions** – Each Unit of study is comprised of essential questions that will guide or class studies. These questions provide a framework for us to master our understanding of big ideas and complex issues/relationships.
* **Assignments** – **Class assignments** will be issued on a weekly basis and often will be due by the end of the hour. **Homework assignments** that are completed at home and turned in for a grade will be limited to (1) per week.
* **Interactive Instruction** – Direct instruction will be a regular feature of our class time together. This includes most forms of teacher-led presentations (PowerPoint, lectures, audio/video analysis, etc.) where students will be required to listen, think, take notes, ask questions, make comments, debate and provide written/verbal responses. While this form of instruction is teacher-driven it becomes more student-centered when you actively participate and interact with what you are being taught.
* **Cooperative Learning** – Research has demonstrated that the most meaningful learning takes place when students interact with one another by actively listening, questioning and exchanging ideas in a safe and respectful environment. We will frequently create these opportunities in class!
* **Absent Work** – Please do your best to limit the number of absences from class. Should you miss class for some legitimate reason, please refer to the **class website’s Daily Agenda** for what you missed. If you need anything or have any questions upon your return to class, you can see me or email me. Students with EXC (Excused) absences are provided extra time to complete assignments/assessments in accordance with the number of days they were EXC absent (e.g. EXC absent 2 days = 2 days upon return to complete assignment or assessment).
* **Late Work** – will be accepted up to 3 days after an assignment is due with the following deduction of percentage:
* 1 day LATE = 20% reduction
* 2 days LATE = 30% reduction
* 3 days LATE = 40% reduction
* 4+ days LATE = grade of “F” 49%
* **NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS ACCEPTED AFTER 3 DAYS** – If you believe there is an extenuating circumstance that has led, or will lead, to your assignment being more than 3 days late please schedule a time to discuss the circumstance with me
* MISSED ASSESSMENT = “F” (0%)
* **Participation** – Democracy is NOT a spectator sport! Neither is this class!! 😊 You are curious…you care about your country…you have questions…you have strong opinions…you want answers…you have ideas…GREAT! Now express them!! Participation is worth 10% of your final grade and includes, but is not limited to, completing daily-warm ups and assignments, studying for tests/quizzes, preparing for debates and presentations, asking questions, providing answers, following the directions of your teacher.
* **Communication** – If you have questions, feedback or concerns please do not hesitate to communicate with me. My door is always open to you. I am available in my classroom during my 6th hour prep or you can reach me anytime via email ([**mmarzolf@wcskids.net**](mailto:mmarzolf@wcskids.net)).
* **Individual Help** – It may be necessary for a struggling student to seek out additional help from me. I am always open to help you find ways to be more successful in class…so see me! We can arrange for a time to meet before or after school for extra assistance. Tutors may also be available to you after school hours by checking the link below:

[**http://wmhscounseling.weebly.com/academic-resources-tutoring-info.html**](http://wmhscounseling.weebly.com/academic-resources-tutoring-info.html)

**\*Remind 101** – course communications and reminders will be sent out to you via Remind 101. Please be sure to follow the Remind 101 instructions provided to register in the course so that you do not miss important class announcements, news and reminders.

* **How to register?** TEXT “**81010**” to **@mmarzol**

**School Dress Code**

* Dress for success!
* Pants must be worn at the hips. If you do not have a belt, you will be sent to your House Office and will be offered a zip tie or directed to change into school issued clothing.
* Shorts, skirts and dresses must be fingertip length.
* Hats are prohibited in the building (store them in your locker).
* Backpacks, jackets and large purses must be kept in your locker.
* For our safety and security IDs must be worn with a lanyard around your neck and visible throughout the building and in the classroom. If you do not have an ID visible and in your possession, then you will be sent to your House Office and issued a new one.

(New IDs = $5 / New lanyards = $3)

**Required Supplies**

Each student is required to bring the following classroom supplies with them daily:

* 3-Ring Binder w/ side pockets
* Loose leaf paper (College Rule)
* 5 Tab Dividers
* pens/pencils
* highlighter

Optional supplies (at your discretion):

* smart phone
* laptop
* colored pencils
* multi-color highlighters
* sticky notes

**Student-Teacher-Parent/Guardian**

**CONTRACT FOR SUCCESS**

I, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_,

(Student Name) (Parent/Guardian Name)

have read Mr. Marzolf’s American Government course syllabus and understand the contents, rules and expectations for the semester. I agree to cooperate with the rules and expectations of the course by working to the best of my ability so that I can learn and experience success. As a parent/guardian I agree to support my child’s learning at home and communicate with the teacher with any needs or concerns in a timely manner.

I understand that this semester course is a requirement for graduation, an important learning experience to understand the relationship between our government and the people as well as an opportunity for me to formulate my own opinions and apply them in ways that contribute to our civil discourse and development as a people and nation. Failure to follow the course rules, expectations and WCS Student Code of Conduct may result in failing the course and/or disciplinary action.

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(Student Name Printed)

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(Student Name Signature) (Date)

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(Parent/Guardian Name Printed)

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(Parent/Guardian Name Signature) (Date)

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(Teacher Signature) (Date)