**American Government: Course Syllabus  
Leila Green**

**Course description:** This course is designed to provide students with an introduction to American governmental systems, civic engagement, and political organization. Students will learn about the origins and foundations of American government as well as the rights and responsibilities afforded to American citizens. Students will gain knowledge about our political process and apply it to understanding current events. As we move through the curriculum, we will also focus closely on the current election cycle and political climate.

**Texts:**

* Online textbook - <https://openstax.org/details/books/american-government-2e>
* Various supplemental texts posted on Microsoft Teams

**Course Objectives:** In this course, students will...

* Analyze the unique roles and responsibilities of the three branches of government to determine how they function and interact.
* Understand the idea of federalism and explain the role of states and the national government in America’s political environment
* Explore America’s political culture and examine the traits and beliefs of the American voter.
* Compare America’s major political parties, the core beliefs, and the impact special interest groups can have on their actions.
* Outline the electoral process in the United States.
* Examine the components and functions of Missouri’s state government.
* Investigate the modern media and its impact on public opinion.
* Examine the concepts of civil rights and civil liberties and their impact on American society.

**Units:**

Unit 1 - Foundations and Origins of Government

Unit 2 - Federalism and the Constitution

Unit 3 - Campaigns, Elections, and Voting

Unit 4 - State and Local Government

Unit 5 - The Legislative Branch

Unit 6 - The Executive Branch

Unit 7 - The Judicial Branch

Unit 8 - Civil Rights and Civil Liberties

Unit 9 - Economics

Unit 10 – Contemporary Issues

**Assignments (semester 1):**

Homework and Classwork - 20%

Notes - 10%

Tests and Projects - 40%

Quizzes – 15%

Writing Assignments - 15%

* Quarters 1&2 will be cumulative. The combined grade for Quarters 1&2 will be worth 80% of each student’s semester grade.

The final exam will be worth 20% of each student’s final semester grade.

**Assignments (semester 2)**

Homework and Classwork – 20%

Tests and Projects – 45%

Quizzes – 20%

Writing Assignments – 15%

* Quarters 3&4 will be cumulative. The combined grade for Quarters 1&2 will be worth 80% of each student’s semester grade.

The final exam will be worth 20% of each student’s final semester grade.

**Assessments:**

Students will be assessed in a variety of ways throughout the school year. Each unit, aside from units 9 & 10, will conclude with a unit test. Throughout each unit, students will take various do-now quizzes on the assigned readings. Students will also complete written assignments during each unit. At the start of each unit, students will be made aware of the approximate date that the summative assessment will take place and they will receive a study guide to accompany them through the unit.

**Grading Scale:** This government course follows the standard Metro grading scale.

A: 90-100%

B: 80-90%

C: 70-80%

F: <70%

**Late Work:** Late work will be accepted up to ten class days after the assigned due date. Students will receive a 10% deduction for each day the assignment is late for the first three days late. **After this, they can earn at best a 70% on the assignment.** If a student is absent, they will receive a week to make up missed class work or a missed test before the late work policy applies.  **No late work will be accepted after the completion of the unit.**

\*\*In case of an emergency, students can receive an extension on an assignment. Please reach out ahead of time to ensure that you will not receive a late penalty.

**Note taking:** For the first semester, students will be required to take notes on presentations, lectures, small-group, and class discussions that occur in this course. At the end of each unit, students will turn in their notebook for graded note-checks. If incomplete, students will not be able to take and turn in notes for late points following the completion of the unit. It is strongly recommended that students continue taking notes second semester, but notes will not be checked for a grade.

**Test Corrections:** If students score below a 70%, they will have the opportunity to make written test corrections on their unit test to bring their score to at best a C. Corrections must be submitted within 5 days from when tests are passed back and reviewed.

**Advanced Placement Test Option:**

A select number of 9th grade government students will have the opportunity to take the Advanced Placement (AP) US Government and Politics exam in May 2022. **Students who have a particular interest in social studies learning and want to challenge themselves academically should indicate interest in the exam to Ms. Green early in the school year**. In addition, Ms. Green will recommend a small number of students who have performed exceedingly well on summative assessments in class. Since Metro’s 9th grade government class is not an AP course, students who elect to take the AP exam will need to complete an extensive amount of supplementary work outside of class. This is a phenomenal opportunity to expose students to college-level material and potentially earn college credit; however, please do not sign up for the exam if you are not prepared to take on the additional time commitment.

**Tardy Policy:** Although there are no bells at Metro, students are expected to be in their seats with their notebooks ready by the start of the class period. If a student is perpetually tardy, he or she will receive a warning, followed by a parent phone call if the issue persists. Extreme cases will be referred to administration.

Do-now activities and reading quizzes will occur during the first 5 minutes of class. **If a student misses the activity or quiz due to a tardy, he or she will not be permitted to make up those lost points.**

**Unexcused Absences:**Unexcused absences will be taken very seriously in this class. If you have an unexcused absence, AKA “cut class” and it is marked as a “cut” on SIS, you will not be eligible to make up any work missed in that class. If you are in the school building and not with administration, the nurse, or in class, this absence is unexcused. **If you have an unexcused absence on the day of a test, you will receive a 0% for that exam and you will not be able to make it up.**

**Cell Phone Policy:** Students are not permitted to use their cell phone in-class unless approved by the teacher. Cell phones should remain in students’ pockets or backpacks until the class period is over. If a student is on his/her phone during class, they will be asked to put it away. If this becomes a persistent issue, the student will receive a call home.

**Classroom Expectations:**

Students are expected to follow all Metro general and academic policies inside of the classroom. This classroom will be a safe space for students. Students are expected to treat each other and their teacher with respect. Inappropriate behavior, vulgar language, bullying, and cheating will not be tolerated.

**Academic Integrity:**Metro has extremely high regard for academic integrity and, as such, has zero tolerance for any and all forms of academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to, all forms of cheating on any assessments, essays, or assignments (copying, taking pictures, group chats with answers, etc.), plagiarism, and any other unethical academic behavior. Any student in violation will receive no credit (zero/F letter grade), a family meeting will be scheduled, and a notation of the violation will be in the student’s school record.

The use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools, such as Chat GPT, has the potential for misuse and often borders on plagiarism. At Metro, we utilize Turnitin to disrupt plagiarism and ensure the integrity of ALL student work. If it is deemed that a student has used any AI tool to complete an assignment, Ms. Green will adhere to the school’s academic integrity policy.

**Be mindful that tests are worth over 40% of your grade. If you cheat on an exam and receive a 0%, you will likely fail the class.**

**End of Course Exam** - In April, all government students will take the Government End of Course Assessment, provided by the state of Missouri. This exam is a state requirement. Throughout the year, students will take practice assessments. If students have been successful in the government class, they will be well-prepared for the exam.

**Teacher Contact Info:**

Email: [leila.green@slps.org](mailto:leila.green@slps.org)

Classroom Phone # - 314-534-3894

Please email if you would like to schedule an in-person meeting or phone call.