American Citizenship  
Course Syllabus: 2019-2020

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Course Description

Welcome to American Citizenship, Class of 2020! First semester of this class will focus on American Government and Politics, Civics, and what it means to be a citizen. Successful completion of this course will assist you in becoming an effective contributing member of several communities (local, national, and international). Class discussions, textual analysis, activities and projects encourage students to make connections throughout the course: connections between historical events, connections from past to present, and connections to personal experiences. As the instructor, I make conscious decisions about course content and themes for exploration. We will follow the basic outline listed below:

Spring Units of Study

I. Civic Life, Politics, and Government  
II. Foundations of Government  
III. Your Role: Political Beliefs/Behavior

Materials

Each student is required to maintain a three-ring binder, a spiral notebook and writing materials. Highlighters are strongly recommended for “interactive reading” activities. Additionally, it is recommended that students have colored pencils or markers. Lastly, I have for the past several years provided the following items to my classes out of my own pocket but am asking for those that can contribute to bring one of the following items; box of tissue, post-it notes, note cards, Clorox wipes, or a box of markers. If these are delivered by Monday the 9th, they will count as your first extra credit.

Expectations & Policies

Attendance and Tardy: Due to the discussion format of this course, students need to attend class everyday. The reading is unrelenting, quizzes are frequent, tests are large, lecture notes grow daily, and class discussions are evaluated. Although school policy (see Student Handbook) allows students to make up work from absences, the pace of the class will not slow down to let absent students catch up. An absent student is left to his or her own initiative to catch up; I will not hunt students down to remind them of deadlines.  
Major assessment, paper, and project dates are pre-announced. I expect perfect attendance on these dates.  
*Exceptions will be made for documented illnesses or pre-arranged absences.

Tardy Policy: Please refer to the Tardy Policy as outlined in the Student Handbook as this will be followed in this class.

Academic Integrity: Students are expected to do their own work; free of plagiarism, copying, cheating, or any other form of dishonesty. Students failing to maintain integrity will receive a grade of ZERO on all related assessments and assignments and face progressive discipline as outlined in the Student Handbook.

Presence and Participation: The success of this course and the success of students both depend on students being physically and mentally present and engaging in active participation. The grading policy is designed to reflect each student’s willingness and effectiveness in class discussions as well as their presence during class. Presence does not necessarily mean just good attendance. I have had students who miss several days of class due to prolonged illness or other complications and I understand these situations and will work with any student who needs additional support. However, being consistently tardy, truant, using your device inappropriately, or creating distractions for others in the room are all examples of not being mentally present during class. Simply put you should be here and should participate in class everyday that you can be.

Late Work and Extra Credit: Most people occasionally miss a deadline. It happens to the best of us. I will provide students 3 late work “passes” at the begging of each semester. This allows the student to turn in any assignment or project 2 days past the due date for a 50% deduction. These passes cannot be used to take any tests, quizzes, or reading checks on a later date. After these are used I will not accept any additional late work for the semester. You are seniors now and I need you to be responsible young adults. These passes will not be reissued if lost so keep them in a safe place. There will be ample opportunities for extra credit. Each one that is completed will boost your grade by .5%. You can complete up to 4 a semester for a 2% bump at the end of the semester. This is like an insurance policy, use it! Grades in this class will not be rounded so the EC is very important.
**Grading:** Your grade in this class will be calculated on a “Total Points” system. This means that the points you earn throughout the semester will be divided by the total points that were possible. This produces a percentage. That percentage is your grade on the grading scale below. Remember grades WILL NOT BE ROUNDED. The types of grades entered into the gradebook will fall into one of the categories below.

- Performance (formal assessments that includes but is not limited to tests, quizzes, papers, and projects.)
- Assignments (reading guides, notebook checks, in-class writing, lecture notes, etc.)
- Technology, Presence and Participation* (how often and how effectively does a student add to discussion and their mental presence in class; not on their devices, not creating distractions for others, not interrupting discussions, etc. *See section below for further details on this.)

Your semester grade is calculated (NOT ROUNDED) on the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100-90%</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89-80%</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79-70%</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69-60%</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59%…</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All assessment dates are subject to change; announcements will be made at least one week in advance.

*Presence and Participation Scoring*

Scoring for this category is updated throughout the course of the semester. There is a weighted category in the grade book entitled “Presence and Participation.” In this category students have already been given 100/100 points. As the semester progresses deductions and additions will be made to this category based on several criteria.

1.) **Preparedness and engagement in class discussions and activities.** Students are expected to come into class having completed any readings or assignments and to be able to use the information from them in class. Students who willingly engage in the conversations with applicable and useful knowledge will gain points. If a student is shy, he or she is still expected to be prepared and provide constructive responses when called upon. Students who regularly demonstrate that they have not prepared for discussions and activities will face deductions.

2.) **Use of class time.** As a teacher who has a full life outside of class, I understand that many of my students do as well. That is why I provide a fair amount of class time to work on assignments and readings. I expect that students make the most of this time. I will award points to students who are using their class time well throughout the semester. Students who squander class time will face deductions.

3.) **Working with group members.** This class is designed to have students work with one another regularly. This will take place in formal group assignments and/or projects as well as informal in-class discussions and activities. Students who are excellent group members, treat each other with respect, are inclusive of one another’s ideas and contributions and seek out participation from shy or quiet group members will receive additional points. Reciprocally, students who are not respectful of those in their group or who shut out ideas will be deducted.

4.) **Appropriate Use of Technology.** Technology is a powerful and useful tool when used appropriately. Technology also has the capacity to distract us, and those around us, from opportunities to learn and grow together. Learning to use and manage technology appropriately is a professional and life skill. In Citizenship the policy is as follows:

 - Appropriate Use of Technology is a part of the weighted category in the grade book worth 10% of your overall grade entitled “Presence and Participation.”

 - My expectation is that devices are silenced and stored out of sight from bell to bell.

 - If I need you to use your device during class time you will receive a clear invitation to do so.

 - If you are managing an emergency situation, for example a sick loved one, and you may need to use your device during class, it is your responsibility to inform your instructor ahead of time. Please step out quietly to communicate and then return promptly.

 - In the unfortunate event that a student does not follow the above stated guidelines a 20 point deduction will be made in the “Presence and Participation” grade.

 - If five such deductions occur the student will have lost all 100 of the points for this category and will be referred to administration for progressive discipline.
Please read this syllabus carefully and then sign and return this bottom portion by Monday, Sept. 9th. This is a 25 point assignment.

I have read and am aware of the American Citizenship classroom policies.

__________________________________________________________________________
student printed name                                                                 parent/guardian printed name

__________________________________________________________________________
student signature                                                                 parent/guardian signature