

MONTE VISTA CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

SOSC 4420, American Government

Grant Craton, Instructor and Michael Mansfield, Instructor

Course Syllabus

Course Information:

We will be meeting in rooms B-15 & B-17. This is the room with the garage door. The class will be from 8:00 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. Students will have a 30 minute break for lunch between 11:30 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.

Government will start Wednesday, June 3rd and run until Friday, June 12th. Please direct all questions to Mr. Craton at GrantCraton@mvcs.org or Mr. Mansfield at MichaelMansfield@mvcs.org. Students will receive a digital PDF version or hard copy of the textbook the first day of class. Mr. Craton's class will meet in B-17, Mr. Mansfield's class will meet in B-15.

Course Description:

An overview of the American democratic system of government through an examination of its political systems, political process, political culture, and the reality of individual rights, both historically and as currently defined. This course will provide students with foundational understanding of the beliefs, both religious and political, of the writers of both the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution; structure of the American government; powers and limitations of the branches of government; and rights/freedoms of each individual citizen and society as a whole. Additionally, students will develop and consolidate their skills in reading, writing, and critical thinking through classroom activities that will include informal and formal presentations of current important and controversial topics.

Curricular Mapping:

For most students, even those going on to college, this course is the only formal education on American government and politics they will ever have. Additionally, some students may already be eligible to vote, and many more will become eligible in the coming year. It therefore becomes vitally important for students to have a better understanding of the foundations of our government and have an interest in public issues, and can intelligently and civilly discuss the issues. Consequently, this course will build on previous social studies courses taken in both middle and high school, especially the U.S. History class.

Course Objectives:

Upon the successful completion of this course the student will be able to:

1. Describe the three branches of government, including their organization, responsibilities, powers, and limitations.
2. Discuss with confidence the characteristics of the American culture, such as equality and popular consent.
3. Recall and describe the ideas incorporated into the Declaration of Independence and Constitution that came from the Reformation and Enlightenment time periods.
4. Demonstrate an understanding of the Bill of Rights, and how each is not an absolute right.
5. Contrast the civil rights movement with other movements, such as women's, Hispanics, or Native American.
6. Describe the modern issues faced by the U.S. Supreme Court, and American society, such as homosexuality, eminent domain, and capital punishment.

Text:

McClenaghan, William A., Magruder’s American Government. Boston: Pearson, 2009.

Course Outline:

Unit I: Foundations of American Government

- Chap. 1 Principles of Government
- Chap. 2 Origins of American Government
- Chap. 3 The Constitution
- Chap. 4. Federalism
- Chap. 7. Electoral Process

Unit II: The Legislative Branch

- Chap. 10 Congress
- Chap. 11 Powers of Congress
- Chap. 12. Congress in Action

Unit III: The Executive Branch

- Chap. 13: The Presidency
- Chap. 14: The Presidency in Action
- Chap. 15. The Bureaucracy
- Chap. 16. Financing Government
- Chap. 17. Foreign Policy & National Defense

Unit IV: The Judicial Branch

- Chap. 18: The Federal Court System
- Chap. 19: Civil Liberties: First Amendment Freedoms
- Chap. 20: Civil Liberties: Protecting Individual Rights
- Chap. 21: Civil Rights: Equal Justice Under Law

Grading:

All homework/quizzes/tests/projects in a quarter will have point values assigned. Each will then be placed in the appropriate category (i.e. Homework) which is weighted as shown below.

<u>Grade Book Categories</u>		<u>Semester Weighted Grading Configuration</u>	
Homework	30%	Daily Assignments	80%
Projects	30%		
Tests/Quizzes	40%	Final Exam	20%

HS Standard Grading Policy:

Please refer to the policy and procedures posted online in our Student Handbook.

Class Policies:

Class time is vital. The goal is to waste as little as possible. Consequently, the following procedures will be reviewed the first class period and students are expected to adhere to the procedures without any further discussions.

1. Attendance: Students are expected to be in class everyday. If you miss more than 2 days you will receive an incomplete and have to retake the course over the school year. **NO REFUNDS**
2. Late homework is accepted for a 50% decrease in grade. Projects will be deducted at a 10% rate per day late.

School Policies

Students are subject to all academic policies of the school as printed in the Academic Catalog and Student Handbook. Furthermore, it is each student's responsibility to read and follow all academic policies of the school.

Tips for the Students:

1. Since we will be covering 2-4 chapters a day it is important not to miss any school.
2. Do all assignments as complete as possible.
3. Come to class prepared to work and expecting to learn.
4. Ask questions.
5. If you have problems, seek help early

Required Apps:

1. Keynote
2. Pages
3. Notability
4. iMovie
5. Doceri
6. Google Drive
7. Book Creator