Ms. Sturges

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Welcome American Government! This class covers the basics of our American system of government. It is a semester course; a passing grade in this class is graduation requirement in Topeka Public Schools. The course will cover 4 basic principles/topics of US government and politics:

1. Foundations of US federalism
2. Institutions (the three branches) and how they work
3. Political behavior of the American polity
4. The workings of local government

For class you will need

1. Journal; a spiral notebook is perfect!
2. Text book; we will use these often so BRING THEM EVERY DAY.
3. *AN OPEN MIND AND A GOOD ATTITUDE*

Homework: You can expect homework at least once a week. Homework is always due at the beginning of the next class. I will not collect it from you. It is your responsibility to turn it in to the basket. Work that is handed in incomplete will take a reduction in grade and be handed back to the student to finish. If the work is not finished by the following class it will be given a zero.

Late work: Work is counted late if it is not turned in when class starts the day it is due. Any work turned in after this point is half, (50%), off. After one school day the assignment is worth zero points. Incomplete homework is considered late.

Extra credit: Extra credit may be requested *if and only if* all other work is completed. This means even if the student has received a zero for the assignment, as long as all assignments have been completed, extra credit is possible. Extra credit assignments have a 10-20 point value.

Test and quizzes: Short, 20-30 point quizzes will be given about every two weeks. There will be 50-100 point exams given every 4-5 weeks; one will be a district DBQ. Review sheets will be given for tests. Test and quizzes are NEVER open book or open note. \*\*\*Any student having a 100% in the class or higher will be excused from taking the final exam for a grade![[1]](#footnote-1) Any student who misses an exam or quiz with an ***excused absence*** will have two school days to make the test/ quiz up in the ELC. Any student who misses an exam or quiz with an ***unexcused absence*** will receive an F grade for that exam or quiz without the possibility to retake.

Journals: A journal question, a reflective question pertaining to a previous or upcoming topic, will be given everyday during the first 10 mins of class. Each entry is worth 4 points. In order to receive full credit the entry must be responsibly answered in 4-5 sentences; an entry that is too short will be worth zero points. Journals are collected the last class of every week.

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| Course Schedule (subject to change) | | | |
| **Week** | **Concepts** | **Topics** | **Chapters** |
| 1-2 | Foundations of our Democracy | Purpose of government, systems and theories of gov’t (unitary, federal and confederacy. Democracy v. republic…) | 1 |
|  |  | Governments in the colonies and Britain, Political tensions, Revolution | 2 |
|  |  | Writing the Constitution, Slavery compromises, The Great Compromise |  |
| 2-3 |  | Federalists, Anti-Federalists, Ratification |  |
|  | The Constitution | Constitutional principles (limited gov’t, separation of powers, checks and balances…), Unconstitutional aspects | 3 |
|  |  | Changing the Constitution, Bill of Rights |  |
| 3-4 | Federalism | Division of power, 10th Amendment, concurrent powers, Supremacy Clause |  |
|  |  | Implied v expressed powers v. inherent powers |  |
|  |  | Interaction btw the states |  |
| 4-5 | Political Parties | Goals, Structure, Political spectrum | 4 |
|  |  | Two party system, Third parties |  |
|  | DBQ writing review |  | N/A |
| 5-6 | **September 24, 2013 EXAM (District Document Based Question)** | | |
|  | Legislative Branch | Order and structure, The bicameral system | 10 |
|  |  | The House of Reps, The Senate, The work of a Congressperson |  |
| 6-7 |  | Powers, Oversight | 11 |
|  |  | Organizing congress, Committee work, Passing laws | 12 |
|  | **EXAM: THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH** | | |
| 7-8 | Executive Branch | Constitutional powers of the president (commander in chief, head of state, chief executive…), Vice President and the cabinet | 13-14, 17 |
|  |  | The President and the budget | 16 |
|  |  | POTUS and the other two branches | 14 |
| 8-9 | The Bureaucracy | Who are they? What do they do? | 15 |
|  | **EXAM: EXECUTIVE BRANCH** | | |
|  | The Judicial Branch |  |  |
| 9-10 |  |  |  |
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|  |  |  |  |
| 10-11 |  |  |  |
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|  | **EXAM: THE JUDICIAL BRANCH** | | |

1. This does NOT mean the student is excused from class on the day of the final. It is their responsibility to bring study material for a later final. An unexcused absence will result in an F grade for the exam. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)