

Fall 2010

U.S. GOVERNMENT
Mr. Bryant

We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.—II Cor. 5:19

Philosophy:

This course will examine the principles published in the founding documents of the United States, and evaluate the execution of those principles in American government. While the virtues of democracy and citizenship in a republic will be featured, it is understood that the Christian's citizenship is in the Kingdom of God; therefore, a professing Christian must cherish the principles of that Kingdom while honoring the earthly authorities God has established. Students, while not required to subscribe to this school of thought, will be required to consider its implications and to articulate their reflections upon it.

Objectives:

Students will learn to see the issues of government from a Christian perspective.
Students will practice thinking critically and responding appropriately.
Students will follow pertinent current events, and analyze points of debate using evidence.
Students will be committed to participation in their government.

Text:

Magruder's American Government (Prentice Hall, 2001).

Conduct:

The instructor will set the tone for mannered, mature interaction.
Students will be respectful, cooperative, and honest toward the instructor and toward other students.
Students will participate in discussion and debate as appropriate.
Any disrespectful, uncooperative, dishonest, or inappropriate behavior may, at the discretion of the instructor, result in penalties, including detention.
Students will complete their own assignments independently and honestly, except where posted descriptions indicate that an assignment is collaborative.
Students are responsible to comply with classroom expectations and to uphold the Student Dignity Policy.
Students will be subject to the detention fault system as outlined in the Student Handbook.

Materials:

Students will arrive each day with a text, a notebook, something to write with, and any assignments due.
Students will keep their text in good condition, and will receive credit for covering it.
Students who miss class will arrange to obtain necessary materials from a classmate.
The instructor will post assignments in advance and will inform students of his expectations.

Preparedness:

Students who fail to submit an assignment on time will receive 0% on that assignment. Students who fail to submit or present a project on time will lose 30% per day late, unless prior arrangements are made with the instructor.

Students who miss a Daily Quiz (scheduled quiz over assignment due) will receive a zero initially. However, the instructor will drop the two lowest Daily Quiz scores at the end of each quarter. Students missing more than two Daily Quizzes will arrange to take makeup quizzes (subject to be determined by the instructor) no later than three days before the end of the quarter. Students should monitor their own quiz forms and anticipate this. Absence is the only occasion for makeup work in the “Daily Quiz” category.

Students planning to be absent must submit assignments and complete tests beforehand. Students wishing to submit an assignment that would under normal circumstances receive a zero or other penalty must complete and attach a Late Work Petition (available in the classroom) to the **completed assignment**. In general, students will be allowed one day late per day of class missed for any given assignment. Specific hardships or special considerations should be noted on the Late Work Petition. Credit will be assessed by the instructor with reference to the Late Work Petition.

Students will fulfill restroom obligations between classes.

Grading:**Quarter**

Assignments and Projects	20%
Speeches and Debates	20%
Quizzes	10%
Tests	50%

Semester

Quarter 1	45%
Quarter 2	45%
Final Exam	10%

Attendance:

Students are expected to attend all classes.

Students arriving after the last bell will be marked tardy.

Students will be assigned a detention upon their third tardy, to be served as per the *Cavaliers Student Handbook*.

Instructor Contact:

William A. Bryant

Email: bryant@cvc.org (recommended)

Classroom: (559) 734-9481 ext. 233 (voice mail available)

U.S. Government

Course Components (by Quarter Grade Category)

Assignments and Projects (20%)

Text Assignments:

Identified by page number, task, and date due on Unit Calendars. Must be complete and submitted by due date to receive credit.

Projects:

Identified by task and date due on Unit Calendars; generally one week in duration. Rubric and instructions contained in Unit Calendars. Sources cited according to library format where appropriate.

Issue Journal:

Average of three weekly entries expressing opinions on assigned topics. Handwritten or typed, collected periodically (announced at least one day prior) for assessment of credit.

Position Papers:

Responses to quotations, questions, or current events identified in Unit Calendars. Typed, 1 to 2 pages, single-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, default margins. Must choose and articulate a stance, not merely describe the choices involved.

Note: Where feasible, students are encouraged to email assignments as attachments to save on household printing expenses (Save as Rich Text Format (.rtf) file for best results). Typed assignments may also be printed using facilities in the High School Library, or brought to class on a flash drive no later than the end of the day prior to the assignment due date. Printing difficulties do not excuse students from their responsibility to submit assignments on time, so they are forewarned to develop several avenues should one become unavailable.

Speeches and Debates (20%)

One-Minute Speeches:

Scheduled, scripted oral presentations drawn from one Issue Journal entry of student's choice. Typed on standard paper, or handwritten on index cards. Rehearsed, within 10 seconds of one minute. On-topic and concise.

Team Debates:

Four prepared debates: Philosophy of Government Debate, Legislation Floor Debate, Campaign Simulation, Pending Supreme Court Case. Team roles assigned, rubric provided, outcome judged by instructor or guest panel. Emphasis on use of evidence to support position.

Inner-Outer Circle Seminars:

Two seminars allowing students to pose questions and respond to other students' questions on an assigned topic. Rubric and instructions provided.

Daily Quizzes (10%)

Supplement text assignments, usually conducted in class on the assignment due date. Generally 5 questions to assess awareness of key issues.

Unit Tests (50%)

Synthesize information from each unit (usually 2-3 weeks) to demonstrate mastery of concepts. May include information from text, class activities, position papers, or documents under examination during the unit. General study guide provided.

Final Examination (10% of Semester Grade)

Concludes the semester with a comprehensive written assessment. Format may include multiple choice, modified true-false, document analysis, flow charts, memorized lists, or short-answer writing prompts. 90 minutes during First Semester Exam Week.