

Podium Power

American Government Syllabus

Access to the Internet is required for this class.

Text:

No textbook is required. Reading assignments will be web based. Lectures are from *America at Odds*, 6th Ed, Sidlow & Henschen which can be found on the Internet. This is a college freshman level text and is also used as a high school AP text. However, if you feel your child will benefit from supplemental reading, any high school American government text will be sufficient.

Description:

- American Government is a seminar class. Students are expected to stay current on news events. Students will be given weekly reading or research assignments and will be expected to actively participate in class discussions.
- This course will examine, through research, analysis, and discussion, the framework of the Constitution and how it applies to the executive, judicial and legislative branches as well as private citizens.
- Areas to be studied include the presidential selection process, presidential power, Executive Office of the President, structure and procedures within Congress, congressional responsibilities, the powers of Congress, the role of the media, and the role of public opinion.
- There will be a special emphasis on the influence of politics and special interest groups in policy-making.

Goals:

The goals of this course are:

1. To understand the basic principles of our government as set forth in The US Constitution
2. To understand the functions, powers, and selection of the President
3. To analytically evaluate presidential candidates in order to make a more informed opinion and become actively involved in the presidential process
4. To understand the functions and powers of the US Congress and the Texas Legislature
5. To understand the function of the judicial system
6. To understand basic civil liberties and civil rights guaranteed by The Constitution

7. To make students aware that it is their responsibility, as a good citizen, to monitor their government leaders
8. To encourage students to take an active role in their government.

Requirements:

- Come to class prepared. You will be expected to have read each week's assignment before class and be prepared to intelligently discuss the material.
- Class discussion is essential to this course. Student participation will be a determining factor in a student's final grade. Please feel free to interrupt a lecture to ask questions and to interject personal observations and opinions. If you do not agree with me or other students, say so in a polite way and express your point of contention. Be assured that your viewpoint will not have a negative effect on your grade.
- Assignments are given in advanced and should be turned in on time.
- Attendance is expected at every class. This course covers a lot of material in a short span of time. Some assignments are a group project, which means other students are depending on you to contribute your share of the work. You cannot keep up with consistent absences. If you must miss a class please notify me ahead of time when possible. Missed work is due when you return as well as the assignment due on the day you return.
- This class focuses on discussion, entertaining a variety of viewpoints. It is imperative that all students listen and discuss in a courteous manner. I will not tolerate insulting, rude or otherwise abusive language.

Resources:

- Podium Power student Online Classroom: www.students.podiumpower.net. Membership is password protect and is open only to Podium Power students and parents.
- User ID/password information will be given in class.
- Students will have access to the class syllabus and schedule, notes, grades, and student forum for posting reading responses and other important class resources.
- Students need access to the Internet

Evaluation: Students will be graded on the following:

- Class participation
- Tests
- Group projects
- Written papers

Field Trips:

- Tour the Texas State Capitol

Schedule:

- Will be given to students on the first class day.