**AMERICAN GOVERNMENT**

**TIM KIRKPATRICK**

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**COURSE PREREQUISITES:** None

**COURSE INFORMATION:** This is a semester-long class open to juniors and seniors. This course is an introduction to U.S. federal government. We will study government institutions and political processes and examine policy choices. The institutions and policies of the U.S. government will be considered in light of historical change, constitutional interpretations, and comparative perspectives. Successful completion of American Government is a graduation requirement.

**TEXTS, READINGS, :**

McClenaghan, William A. American Government, 2004 ed., New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2004

Photocopies, handouts, and documentary videos will supplement text readings.

**TEACHING METHODS:** Teaching strategies used in this class lead to the development of cognitive strategies and capabilities necessary for college-level work and include: writing, research, active inquiry and dialogue, ability to support argumentative points, and evaluation of data and resources to determine the validity, credibility and relevance as it pertains to the topic.

**GENERAL PHILOSOPHY:** Students should gain an understanding of and appreciation for the system of government in the US. In order to make this a successful class for students, teachers, and parents/guardians, there must be an open line of communication. Issues are easier to solve if they are dealt with early. Please feel free to contact me with any concerns that may arise throughout the year.

**ACADEMIC BEHAVIORS**: A successful student at Creek will learn time management skills for assignments/projects, work and socializing, preparing for and taking examinations, using information resources, taking Cornell [class] notes, promoting the use of study groups, and communicating with teachers and counselors. These behaviors will be reinforced through the requirements of this class.

**GRADING:** Grades are calculated using a point system. Coursework and tests/quizzes are worth 80% of the semester grade. The semester final is worth 10%. The Research Paper is worth 10% of the semester grade. Grading scale is as follows: 100-90=A,

89-80=B, 79-70=C,69-60=D, 59-0=F **\*\*\*Late work will receive half credit and will be accepted until the unit test on that subject.\*\*\***

**MAJOR TOPICS COVERED:**

- Foundations and Structures of Government

- U.S. Constitutional Principles

- Federalism

- Political Parties and Elections

- Media and Public Opinion

- Three Branches of Government

- State and Local Government

- Personal Financial Literacy

**KEYS TO SUCCESS:**

- Attend class regularly (except for illness or emergency) and be on time

- Complete assignments to the best of your ability and on time

- Be prepared for tests

- Come prepared for class (notebook, paper, pen or pencil)

- Take good notes

- Finally, ask for help or clarification if you need it

**ATTENDANCE POLICY:**

See Cherry Creek High School attendance policy.

**BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS:**

- No cell phones or MP3 players.

- No food or drink in the classroom

- You get three bathroom/locker/whatever passes.

- Everyone in the class must treat everyone else with respect. This means that you will treat your classmates with respect, I will give you the respect you deserve, and you will do the same for me. This rule is especially important in a class like U.S. Government because we will be discussing topics that people will disagree wholeheartedly on, and we must always be sure to respect opinions, even if they may be different from your own.

**TEACHER AVAILABILITY:**

Students:

You can come see me for any reason and I will be available to students whenever it is possible. My recommendation is to make an appointment to see me in my office. My availability will vary throughout the semester, so it is best to make an appointment, but you are welcome to just drop by if you prefer.

Parents:

Email is probably the best way to contact me, but you are also welcome to call me with ANY concerns you may have. I am happy to discuss all concerns that may arise throughout the semester. Please check Power School regularly so you keep up to date with your student’s performance.

Thank You and Let’s Have a Great Semester

I have read and discussed Mr. Kirkpatrick’s classroom expectations with my parent/guardian and I agree that we will be able to have a successful year under these guidelines.

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Student Name (Please Print)

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Student Signature

I have read and discussed Mr. Kirkpatrick’s classroom expectations with my son/ daughter:

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Parent/ Guardian Name (Please Print)

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Parent Signature

Due Aug 17th