**Westside High School**



**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL STUDIES**

**MR. CHRISTMAN**

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**ROOM A151**

**AMERICAN GOVERNMENT**

Welcome to American Government. This information sheet is issued to you to inform you of the goals, expectations, and standards I have for you for this course. I hope to foster cooperation and understanding between you, your parent(s)/guardian(s), and me this semester so that we together can maximize your educational experience, and so that you can successfully navigate this course.

**Why study American Government?** The purpose of this course is to provide students with a background in the philosophy, functions, and structure of the United States government. Students examine the philosophical foundations of the United States government and how that philosophy developed. Students also examine the structure and function of the United States government and its relationship to states and citizens.

**CLASS ROOM MATERIALS**

Materials needed for the class **EVERY DAY** (unless otherwise noted):

* Remy, Richard C. *United States Government: Democracy in Action*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2000.
* Other supplemental texts, articles, and materials may also be used throughout the year to produce assignments, and essays.
* Notebook (any type is acceptable)
* a Writing Utensil ( i.e. pencil, and/or pen)

**TESTS/PROJECTS**

Tests will typically be administered at the end of each unit, covering the chapter(s) we have just studied. Tests will comprise 40% of your total grade. The style and frequency of tests, however, is subject to change. The tests may consist of:

* **Multiple Choice Questions.**
* **Short-Answer Items.** These will require the student to write a general, but *thorough* description of a particular person, place, or thing in the chapter that we have just completed studying.
* **Essays.** These are large expositions that the student will write to explain *in detail* the cause(s) and effect(s), and importance of a particular event, movement, etc. of American Government. The essay must be clear and cover *ALL* important aspects of the subject matter.

**Some tests may be pop tests. You must be prepared to be tested every day of class. This means that you must have read and studied the material covered in class every day. Pop tests may be of whatever format the teacher designates.**

**HOMEWORK/QUIZZES/IN-CLASS WORK**

Homework, quizzes, and in-class work will comprise 60% of your total grade.

Homework will exist typically in two forms: reading and written.

*Reading Homework* will be required every night, with the exception of a day of a test. The student will need to read the section(s) of the chapter and/or the chapters and class notes that the teacher has covered in the class lecture that day.

*Written Homework* will be required at any time the teacher deems appropriate. The homework will typically be essay in format. The student is responsible for completing the homework the night before it is due. Doing homework in class the day that it is due, or turning the homework in late may result in a large number of points being taken off of the homework grade. Copying someone else’s homework or failing to turn in homework will result in a “0” for that particular grade.

*Quizzes* will be administered on a regular basis to ensure students are reading and taking notes in class.

**MAKE-UP WORK**

Students may make up tests and homework when they bring in an excuse that meets with the guidelines of an excused absence as stated by the Richmond County Board of Education. Minor Grades Work will be accepted up just before the progress report for that grading period is issued, on a date to be determined by the teacher.  After that deadline has expired, no more Minor Grade Work will be accepted.

Parents and students are able to access grades on the Infinite Campus—Parent Portal, located at [www.rcboe.org](http://www.rcboe.org) . With the exception of essays and major projects, grades are generally posted within 5 school days of being taken up (or of a test/quiz being given). Parents are welcome to contact the teacher by calling (706) 868-4030, or by email at chriswi@richmond.k12.ga.us .

**GRADING RUBRIC**

A general grading rubric for each assignment is included with this syllabus. The teacher will use this rubric in grading each student’s assignment. The teacher reserves the right to make changes in the rubric or use another rubric when and if it becomes necessary.

**DISCIPLINE IN THE CLASSROOM**

The rule for classroom discipline is simple: Work hard, study hard, do the right thing. If the student does not do these things, the student will be punished in an appropriate manner determined by the *Richmond County Code of Conduct* and policy in place at Westside High School.

Again, I am pleased to have you in my class and look forward to our school year. I believe we will have a productive school year if we all work hard toward our goals. I will attempt to make myself available to all of you anytime that you need me.

In CHRIST,

Mr. Christman

I, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, parent(s)/guardian(s) of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, have received, read, and understand the contents of the syllabus for Mr. Christman’s American Government course.

Signed\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Course Outline (*Items are subject to change*)**

**SSCG1 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the political philosophies that shaped the development of United States constitutional government.**

a. Analyze key ideas of limited government and the rule of law as seen in the Magna Carta, the Petition of Rights, and the English Bill of Rights.

b. Analyze the writings of Hobbes (Leviathan), Locke (Second Treatise on Government), and Montesquieu (The Spirit of Laws) as they affect our concept of government.

**SSCG2 The student will analyze the natural rights philosophy and the nature of government expressed in the Declaration of Independence.**

a. Compare and contrast the Declaration of Independence and the Social Contract Theory.

b. Evaluate the Declaration of Independence as a persuasive argument.

**SSCG3 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the United States Constitution.**

a. Explain the main ideas in debate over ratification; include those in The Federalist.

b. Analyze the purpose of government stated in the Preamble of the United States Constitution.

c. Explain the fundamental principles upon which the United States Constitution is based; include the rule of law, popular sovereignty, separation of powers, checks and balances, and federalism.

**SSCG4 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the organization and powers of the national government.**

a. Describe the structure and powers of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches.

b. Analyze the relationship between the three branches in a system of checks and balances and separation of powers.

**SSCG5 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the federal system of government described in the United States Constitution.**

a. Explain the relationship of state governments to the national government.

b. Define the difference between enumerated and implied powers.

c. Describe the extent to which power is shared.

d. Identify powers denied to state and national governments.

e. Analyze the ongoing debate that focuses on the balance of power between state and national governments.

f. Analyze the supremacy clause found in Article VI and the role of the U.S. Constitution as the “supreme law of the land.”

g. Explain the meaning of the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States.

American Government/Civics Social Studies Georgia Performance Standards

**SSCG6 The student will demonstrate knowledge of civil liberties and civil rights.**

a. Examine the Bill of Rights with emphasis on First Amendment freedoms.

b. Analyze due process law expressed in the 5th and 14th Amendments.

c. Explain selective incorporation of the Bill of Rights.

d. Explain how government seeks to maintain the balance between individual liberties and the public interest.

e. Explain every citizen’s right to be treated equally under the law.

**SSCG7 The student will describe how thoughtful and effective participation in civic life is characterized by obeying the law, paying taxes, serving on a jury, participating in the political process, performing public service, registering for military duty, being informed about current issues, and respecting differing opinions.**

**SSCG8 The student will demonstrate knowledge of local, state, and national elections.**

a. Describe the organization, role, and constituencies of political parties.

b. Describe the nomination and election process.

c. Examine campaign funding and spending.

d. Analyze the influence of media coverage, campaign advertising, and public opinion polls.

e. Identify how amendments extend the right to vote.

**SSCG9 The student will explain the differences between the House of Representatives and the Senate, with emphasis on terms of office, powers, organization, leadership, and representation of each house.**

**SSCG10 The student will describe the legislative process including the roles played**

**by committees and leadership.**

a. Explain the steps in the legislative process.

b. Explain the function of various leadership positions within the legislature

**SSCG11 The student will describe the influence of lobbyists (business, labor, professional organizations) and special interest groups on the legislative process.**

a. Explain the function of lobbyists.

b. Describe the laws and rules that govern lobbyists.

c. Explain the function of special interest groups.

**SSCG12 The student will analyze the various roles played by the President of the**

**United States; include Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, chief executive, chief agenda setter, representative of the nation, chief of state, foreign policy leader, and party leader.**

**SSCG13 The student will describe the qualifications for becoming President of the**

**United States.**

a. Explain the written qualifications for President of the United States.

b. Describe unwritten qualifications common to past presidents.

**SSCG14 The student will explain the impeachment process and its usage for elected officials.**

a. Explain the impeachment process as defined in the U.S. Constitution.

b. Describe the impeachment proceedings of Andrew Johnson and Bill Clinton.

**SSCG15 The student will explain the functions of the departments and agencies of the federal bureaucracy.**

a. Compare and contrast the organization and responsibilities of independent regulatory agencies, government corporations, and executive agencies.

b. Explain the functions of the Cabinet.

**SSCG16 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the operation of the federal judiciary.**

a. Explain the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court, federal courts and the state courts.

b. Examine how John Marshall established the Supreme Court as an independent, coequal branch of government through his opinions in Marbury v. Madison.

c. Describe how the Supreme Court decides cases.

d. Compare the philosophies of judicial activism and judicial restraint.

**SSCG17 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the organization and powers**

**of state and local government described in the Georgia Constitution.**

a. Examine the legislative, executive, and judicial branches.

b. Examine the structure of local governments with emphasis on county, city, and town.

c. Identify current state and local officials.

d. Analyze the relationship among state and local governments.

e. Evaluate direct democracy by the initiative, referendum, and recall processes.

**SSCG18 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the powers of Georgia’s state**

**and local governments.**

a. Examine the powers of state and local government.

b. Examine sources of revenue received by each level of government.

c. Analyze the services provided by state and local government.

**SSCG19 The student will compare and contrast governments that are unitary, confederate, and federal; autocratic, oligarchic and democratic; and presidential and parliamentary.**

**SSCG20 The student will describe the tools used to carry out United States foreign policy (diplomacy; economic, military, and humanitarian aid; treaties; sanctions and military intervention).**

**SSCG21 The student will describe the causes and effects of criminal activity.**

a. Examine the nature and causes of crimes.

b. Explain the effects criminal acts have on their intended victims.

c. Categorize different types of crimes.

d. Explain the different types of defenses used by perpetrators of crime.

**SSCG22 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the criminal justice process.**

a. Analyze the steps in the criminal justice process.

b. Explain an individual’s due process rights.

c. Describe the steps in a criminal trial or civil suit.

d. Examine the different types of sentences a convicted person can receive.

**TEST ESSAY/HOMEWORK ESSAY/PROJECTS/CLASS WORK GRADING RUBRIC**

**FOR**

**AMERICAN GOVERNMENT**

**MR. CHRISTMAN**

**WESTSIDE HIGH SCHOOL**

*SCORING DESCRIPTION*

**100-90**Contains a well-developed thesis focused on the question which guides the development

of the question throughout.

Presents an effective analysis and explanation and demonstrates understanding of the complexity of the topic.

Effectively uses all or a substantial number of outside source material and

and interprets them correctly.

Supports thesis with substantial and relevant outside information.

May contain insignificant errors that do not hinder argument or organization.

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**89-79** Contains a consistent, well-developed thesis which addresses the question.

Clear explanation of the differences or similarities of the topic of the issue; some imbalance is acceptable.

Effectively uses some outside source material or uses detail to support

interpretation; uses many accurate details from the time period and interprets

them correctly.

Includes insignificant outside information.

Errors do not interfere with the comprehension.

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**78-70** Presents a limited, confused, or poorly developed thesis; weak organization and

writing.

Describes differences or similarities in a general or simplistic manner, may cover only part of the topic.

Ineffective use of outside source material—briefly cites or quotes outside material in a “laundry list” presentation of information; interprets outside material incorrectly.

Contains little outside information that is not relevant or is inaccurate.

May contain major errors.

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**69-BELOW** Contains no thesis or a thesis that does not address the topic

Exhibits inadequate or inaccurate understanding of the question.

Contains little or no understanding of outside source material or ignores them

completely.

Contains inappropriate or no outside information.

Includes numerous errors both major and minor.

*The assignment was not submitted to the teacher in a timely manner*.

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**0** PLAGIARISM, CHEATING OF ANY FORM ON THE ASSIGNMENT