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AMERICAN GOVERNMENT 2013-2014

TEXTBOOK: American Government: Democracy in Action; Remy, Richard C.; Glencoe, 2006.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: American Government is a *required* course for Michigan high school students. Through a study of American government, you will understand the basic concepts of democracy and federalism. Students will also study the Constitution, the political process, and public policy. Finally, you will learn the rights and responsibilities of U.S. citizens, and practice methods of effective citizenship.

COURSE OUTLINE: The following units will be studied:

- The Foundations of American Government
- Citizenship and Civil Liberties
- The Legislative Branch
- The Executive Branch
- The Judicial Branch
- Influencing Government
- Public Policies and Services
- Michigan Government and Local Government

In addition, students will gain confidence in reading and understanding various forms of social studies texts, including academic texts, primary source documents, political cartoons, maps, graphs, and charts.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING:

Social Studies Department Grading Policy:

It is the belief of the Social Studies Department that in order to prepare students for success on the Michigan Merit Exam and in the course that it is vital that the student show an acceptable knowledge of the material covered. **In order to show this desired achievement, each student is required to pass the class with a 60% (D-) and also pass each chapter/unit test with a 60%.** In order to accomplish this, each student will have to make a conscious effort to do all assignments and to meet deadlines. Students who fail to reach the 60% for the class and/or tests *may* be eligible for the credit recovery/credit retention program. It is the teacher's discretion to allow a student to be eligible for these programs.

- 1) Your **marking period grades** for the course will be based on the following:

Tests/Quizzes and Required Projects	50%
Daily Homework / Essays	40%
Participation and Notebook	10%

- 2) Your **semester grade** for the course will be based on the following:

1 st marking period	40%
2 nd marking period	40%
Final Exam	20%

- 3) **Extra Credit** will be offered periodically. In order to be eligible for extra credit, you must have all regular assignments completed. Individual extra credit assignments will NOT be assigned. Extra credit must be completed by the assigned deadline. Extra credit may raise your grade a maximum of one step on the grading scale.

- 4) **Retests will be required for all students that earn below a 60% on a chapter/unit test.** Retests will only be offered after school. The highest grade you can earn on a retest is an 80%. (Note: Points will not be awarded until a minimum grade of 60% is achieved.)

Students that earn higher than a 60% on a test may also retest. Retests will only be offered after school **and only once**. The highest grade you can earn on a retest is an 80%. In order to be eligible for a retest, you must meet the following requirements:

- a) Assignments for the chapter or unit were completed **before** the first test.
- b) Completion of a Retest Entitlement Form.

Retests must be completed within two weeks of the original test date. The retest format is short answer and essay.

- 5) **Homework Policy / Late Work Policy**
 - a) It is expected that students will complete all assignments on time.
 - b) Assignments are due at the **beginning** of the block. Assignments turned in later in the block will be considered late.
 - c) Turning an assignment in after the deadline will result in a loss of points. Specifically:
 - An assignment turned in within 24 hours of the time it was due will result in a deduction of 50%.
 - Assignments that are more than a day late will receive completion credit, but **zero** points.
 - d) It is YOUR responsibility to get any work that you missed when you were absent. You will be given time to make-up your work (see guidelines in school handbook). **Any work that is due on the day you were absent will be due on the day you return. Make-up tests must be made up either before or after school.** You will not be allowed to make-up tests

during class time. Make-up tests must be completed within the timelines established by the school handbook.

- e) Work that needs to be made-up due to an absence needs to be completed **ON YOUR OWN TIME**. Upon your return to school, you need to participate in the activities for that day. You will **NOT** make-up the work you missed during class when you should be concentrating on something else.

PLEASE NOTE: Formal papers and required projects are due on the due date regardless of attendance in class.

- 6) Students who fail one of the two marking periods within a semester must earn a passing grade on the final exam.
- 7) Students will be required to complete **two research projects**. **PROJECTS ARE DUE ON THE ASSIGNED DUE DATE, REGARDLESS OF CLASSROOM ATTENDANCE.**
- 8) Any evidence of **cheating or plagiarism** on any course assignment will result in failure and disciplinary action.
- 9) A **notebook** is **REQUIRED**. Your notes must be kept in a 3-ring binder. You are required to keep your notebook numerically organized. You must bring your 3-ring binder to class with you every day.
- 10) Students may be eligible to be **exempt** from the final exam if they meet the guidelines stated in the student handbook.

SUGGESTIONS FOR SUCCESS:

- Stay organized.
- Read the textbook.
- Come to class prepared every day.
- Pay attention and participate in class.
- Use a planner to keep track of homework assignments, upcoming tests, project deadlines, and other important dates.

CLASSROOM RULES AND EXPECTATIONS:

In order to maintain an environment where we can learn together, I have established the following classroom rules and expectations.

- 1) **BE RESPECTFUL.** Your words and actions will build community. Please refrain from words and actions that destroy a personal sense of safety, disrupt community, or hinder collaboration.
- 2) **COME TO CLASS PREPARED AND ON TIME. Having to go to your locker because you are unprepared will result in a tardy.**
- 3) **PARTICIPATE IN ALL CLASS ACTIVITIES. YOU** are responsible for your success. Your focus during this class should be American government, not your homework from another class or the magazine that you brought from home (for example). **Using your class time wisely increases your chances for success!** ☺
- 4) **KEEP YOUR DESK FREE OF PERSONAL ITEMS.** Purses, bags, sweatshirts, etc. need to be placed under your desk or left in your locker.
- 5) **BE IN YOUR SEAT AT THE CLASS STARTING TIME** (as determined by the classroom clock or the bell) **AND STAY THERE UNTIL YOU ARE DISMISSED BY ME.**
- 6) **PLEASE DO NOT BRING HEADPHONES, IPODS, HAND-HELD GAMES, OR THE LIKE TO CLASS.**
- 7) **CELL PHONE TIER – YELLOW (TEACHER DISCRETION).** Cell phones should never be used during instruction. Cell phones **might be allowed** during class, but **only** for educational purposes. Texting and social networking are not educational purposes.
- 8) **CLEAN UP YOUR WORK AREA BEFORE YOU LEAVE.**
- 9) **BE ALERT AND LOOK ALERT.** (No “lazy positions”, please!)
- 10) **LIMIT YOUR USE OF PASSES. Frequent use of the hall pass will result in a loss of pass privileges.** You will NOT be allowed to use the pass to get a snack, drink, fill a water bottle, etc. If you think you will be thirsty/hungry, bring a water bottle/snack to class.