Peters Township High School  
Course Syllabus: **Honors American Government**

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| Course Information | Teacher Information |
| Course Length: Year-Long Course  Class Location: Rm. 124  Teacher Website: pthshag.weebly.com | Name: Mrs. Courtney Daloia  Phone: 724.941.6250 ext. 5180  Email: daloiac@pt-sd.org |

**Course Overview and Essential Skills**

This rigorous honors course provides both an introduction and an analytic perspective to the foundations, principles and processes that shape and direct the function of our government. This course includes consistent out of class reading, outlining, research questions, along with a requirement for in -class verbal participation.

It will place an emphasis on the development of critical thinking, writing and application of knowledge skills. Students will be asked to identify, explain and analyze the institutions and practices of US democracy, the structure and function of the US Constitution, Bill of Rights, and the relationship between the three branches of government at the national, state and local level. Students will focus on argumentation skills, synthesis and analyzing evidence in fiction and non-fiction text.

**Course Textbook and Required Materials**

* United States Government: Our Democracy (McGraw Hill, 2016) & ISBN#: 978-0-07-663453-8
* **Online Textbook**: All students have access to the complete online version of the textbook. The textbook is available at <http://connected.mcgraw-hill.com/connected/login.do> and accounts were accessed in school ensuring all students have access.
* **Online News, Media, and Educational Resources**: This course is organized around the textbook. However, in light of our dynamic world, there is a heavy reliance on approved educational supplemental resources. [Examples include, but are not limited to, *NYTimes Upfront Magazine, CNN, MSNBC, Fox News, etc.*]
* Some resources for class will be found in the corresponding chapter/day on the class website.
* You will need a binder, paper and pen/pencil for class each day.

**Course Outline of Material Covered:**

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| Unit or Topic | Concepts/Skills/Resources | Timeframe |
| Foundations of Government | * Purposes of Government * Principles of Democracy * Classification * *Resources:* Articles and video clips from approved sources, The Constitution | three weeks |
| Executive Branch | * Roles of the President * Formal and Informal Qualifications * Line of Succession * Vice-President * Process of Electing the President * Evaluation of Electoral College * President’s Cabinet * Federal Bureaucracy * *Resources:* Articles and video clips from approved sources | seven weeks |
| Legislative Branch | * House of Representatives * Reapportionment and Gerrymandering * Leadership in House and Senate * Senate * Filibuster * Staffers/Committees * Create, Present and Evaluate Bills * *Resources:* Articles and video clips from approved sources | seven weeks |
| Judiciary Branch | * Formation of Judiciary Hierarchy * Lower Court System * Meet the Justices * Analysis of Federal Supreme Court Cases * *Resources:* Articles and video clips from approved sources, 60 Minutes Video Clips | three weeks |
| Liberty and Justice | * Bill of Rights – Religion, Arms, Rights of the Accused, Incorporation * Pro/Con Discussion on 2nd * Amendment * *Resources:* Articles and video clips from approved sources | seven weeks |
| Participation in Government | * Political Parties * Third Parties * Youth Voters * Voting Regulations * Media and Politics Comparison * Propaganda * Campaign Financing – PACs and Lobbying * *Resources:* Articles and video clips from approved sources | seven weeks |
| State and Local Government | * Governors and Mayors * Recall Elections * Federalism * State and Local Legislatures * Creation of Public Policy * *Resources:* Articles and video clips from approved sources | two weeks |

\****Depending on the needs of the class or changes in the school year, the course outline is subject to change.***

**Teacher Grading Policy:**

* Grades will be calculated by the point system. Each assessment item will have a point value that will be announced at the time the assessment is assigned. The student’s grade will be divided by the total points possible to determine the percentage grade. Percentage grades follow the Peters Township grading scale.
  + **Unit Assessments** may include but are not limited to, standard tests and quizzes, essay exams, group/partner tests and quizzes, and comprehensive or thematic projects. Point values will vary according to the amount and difficulty of the material covered. Quizzes may be unannounced.
  + **Graded assignments and projects** may include but are not limited to, daily homework, homework checks, papers, presentations, discussions, debates, and group projects. Point values will vary based on scope, length, and difficulty of the assignment.
  + **Class Contribution** (15 points). Each student starts with zero points at the beginning of each quarter. Points will be added per day/assignment. Expectations include, but are not limited to:
    - Make meaningful, significant and original contributions to class discussion
    - Equal preparation, collaboration in group work, debates, presentations etc.
    - Actively listen to others, “Discussion is just as much listening as it is speaking”
    - Ask engaging questions that furthers or clarifies class discussion
    - Avoid distractions, including doing homework (our or others), texting, etc.
  + **A Comprehensive (Final) Exam** is mandated by the administration and will be given on date determined by the high school.
* Grades are updated via PowerSchool – grades are **not** rounded. You will see two decimal points after your percentage grade (ex: 89.58% will stay as a 89% B)
* Late assignments are not accepted for homework, projects or exams. Exceptions are made for when you are absent.

**Classroom Procedures and Expectations:**

* No **cell phones** will be used in the classroom for personal use. Phones will be taken without warning when they are seen. Oftentimes, if we can’t obtain computers for work online, phones may be used to access the internet via BYOD. This is the only exception.
* You will find materials and questions on the exam that we discussed in class that are not covered in the **textbook**. Because of this, your time in class and participation is imperative. Late to class once and you will get a warning. If you are late three times, I will issue you a disciplinary referral to the main office.
* Plagiarism/copyright violations and/or **cheating** are not allowed in any way, shape or form. This includes copying work, having a phone out during a test, finding papers under your seat… etc). Students will get a zero for the assignment with NO opportunity to redo the assignment for points.
* Students should communicate **absences** (family trips, field trips, sickness) with Mrs. Daloia before leaving, if the absence is known ahead of time. Any other information needed can be requested via email at [daloiac@pt-sd.org](mailto:daloiac@pt-sd.org) NOT my WebApps Account.

**“Other”:**

* Students needing to take the **hall pass** somewhere should always sign out the pass in the back of the room. Only one student out at a time, please.
* All assignments should be created using your PTSD WebApps Account. This allows me to track when you completed the assignment and, if you are working in a group setting, who contributed what and when. It will be to your benefit if you are an active participant in the work you are handing in.
* If you finish work early, it is to your advantage to ask questions about the material or, if you have extensive knowledge in the topic, help your peers. (This will increase your participation grade too!)
* I show very few video clips in class. You are responsible for the content. If you miss class, check the website or have me email you the information.

**Parent Communication/Permission Form**

Parent Contact Information for:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(Student name)

Parent name(s):\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Thank you. If you have questions, please contact me at daloiac@pt-sd.org.

***\*\*\*I have reviewed this syllabus and understand the opportunities for and expectations of my student and/or myself.\*\*\****

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(Parent signature here) (Date)

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(Student signature here) (Date)