

Brentsville District High School
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Virginia & United States Government
Mr. Taylor
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SYLLABUS

Introduction:

Dear Parents and Students,

I would like to welcome you to a new school year at Brentsville District High School. I am looking forward to getting to know each of you and working with you to expand our understanding of Virginia & U.S. Government.

Course Description:

Virginia and U.S. Government is a required course within the Prince William County curriculum that seeks to better prepare students for the future by enhancing their awareness of their role in democratic governance. The specific aims of the course are to provide a thorough understanding of the foundations, structures, and institutions of Virginia and U.S. government. By becoming more familiar with such aspects of government, it is believed that students will be better able to make informed decisions and defend their interests as an adult.

The course will be roughly divided into ten units:

First Semester:

- Unit 1: Principles & Origin of American Government
- Unit 2: The Constitution and Principles of Federalism
- Unit 3: Elections
- Unit 4: Comparative Government & Economic Systems
- Unit 5: Executive Branch & Foreign Policy
- Unit 6: Legislative Branch and Judiciary Branch Foundation

Second Semester:

- Unit 7: State & Local Government
- Unit 8: Judiciary, Civil Rights, & Civil Liberties
- Unit 9: Economics
- Unit 10: Personal Finance

Evaluation/Grading:

Grades will be determined in accordance with Prince William School Board Policy. The school term is divided into two semesters. A **final exam** will be administered covering the entire course. Exemptions to the final examination will be based upon Prince William County School Board policies.

1. Students will be evaluated through written tests, projects, essays, oral presentations, homework, and quizzes.
2. Students will receive a class participation grade every day, which will be determined by their attendance, preparedness, and participation in class.
3. Each Unit will conclude with a major test.

4. Grades will be weighted in the following proportion:
45-50% Tests/Quizzes
35% Homework, Essays, Projects
15-20% Class Participation
5. The Prince William County Grading System will be used during this course.
90 - 100 = A
87 - 89 = B+
80 - 86 = B
77 - 79 = C+
70 - 76 = C
67 - 69 = D+
60 - 66 = D
0 - 59 = F

Make-up Assignments:

1. The **responsibility** for make-up work **lies with the student**. If a student's absence from class is excused, they have two class periods to complete all make-up work for each day that they have missed. Students should check with classmates, parent-portal, the class website, or check with the teacher **at an appropriate time** for any work that they may have missed. It is the student's responsibility to schedule the make-up time for all test and quizzes within the two-day time frame.
2. If the student is tardy to school or has an early dismissal that results in missing this class, he/she should pick up his/her work on that day. The student should also turn in any assignments due that day.
3. If the student is absent from a class he/she will be held responsible for any and all lecture notes missed. **It is up to the student to obtain the missed material** from one of their fellow classmates or, if necessary, from the instructor **at an appropriate time**.
4. Work that will be missed due to field trips, school related activities, or family trips must be completed and **handed in before you leave**. The instructor will work to provide adequate notice for exact test dates so any scheduling conflicts with other obligations can be avoided.

Homework:

Homework is used to supplement and enhance regular classroom activities. It is intended to unite the environments of school and home, emphasizing and reinforcing the importance of education.

1. Reading assignments will be assigned on a unit-by-unit basis. These readings must be completed daily before you come to class. You may have a quiz or writing assignment on any of these readings at any time.
2. Each student will keep daily reading and class notes on loose-leaf college ruled paper in his or her class notebook, which will be a valuable tool to be used in preparing for tests and essays.
3. All homework must be turned in within the first five minutes of class. Any assignment turned in after this period will be deemed late.

Materials Needed:

1. **A three-ring loose-leaf notebook**. Students may combine with other subjects, but a distinct section must be dedicated to this class, Virginia and U.S. Government. This notebook will be divided into the following four sections.
 1. Syllabus
 2. Notes
 3. Handouts, and homework assignments
 4. Returned tests/quizzes and any other key writing assignments

Note: Due to the large volume of paperwork anticipated, a large binder (3-inch) is highly recommended, particularly if the student wishes to split the binder with another subject.

2. **Pens or pencils.**
3. **Loose-leaf college ruled notebook paper.**
4. Your **textbook and assigned readings** should be brought to every class.

Student Conduct:

1. Students are to be **respectful** to the instructor and to each other at all times.
2. **No food or drink** (except for water) is allowed in class.
3. **Absolutely no use of cell phones or electronic devices in class.**
4. Students are to be in their **assigned seat, quiet, and ready to work/already working** when the bell rings.
5. Students must remain in their seats until the bell rings at the end of class.
6. Students should seek to use the restroom during class exchanges and not interrupt class to do so.
7. Students may only ask to use the restroom at the appropriate time (not during instruction or class discussion), must use the designated pass, and must return in an expeditious, timely manner.
8. Only one student is permitted to use the restroom at a time.
9. If restroom privileges are abused, they will be revoked.