

HONORS AMERICAN GOVERNMENT- HAZELWOOD WEST  
POL SCI 1100 INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN POLITICS - UMSL

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Textbook: Edwards III, George C., Martin P. Wattenburg, Robert L. Lineberry. Government in America: People, Politics, and Policy, 12<sup>th</sup> Edition. (New York: Pearson Education, Inc., 2004).

Description: The purpose of Honors American Government is to introduce students to the development of the American government from the Convention of 1787 through the present. Students will examine the evolving nature of the American republic and how it has addressed the needs and concerns of its citizenry.

Grading: **FOR UMSL CREDIT**

<b>Extended Reflection</b> (4@50pts each)	200
<b>Moot Court Work</b>	100
<b>Debate Participation</b>	100
<b>Class Participation</b>	100
<b>Final Exams</b>	200
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<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>	<b>700</b>

<b>UMSL Grading Scale</b>			
<b>(Based on total points for semester)</b>			
A	92-100	C	73-76
A-	90-92	C-	70-72
B+	87-89	D+	67-69
B	83-86	D	63-66
B-	80-82	D-	60-62
C+	77-79	F	0-59

**FOR HAZELWOOD WEST CREDIT**

<b>PERFORMANCE (70%)</b>	
<b>Extended Reflections</b>	200
<b>Final Exam</b>	200
(Finals during 2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> quarters)	
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<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>	<b>400</b>

<b>LEARNING (30%)</b>	
<b>Moot Court Papers</b>	
(Oral Arguments, Amicus, Reflection) 100	
<b>Debate Participation</b>	
(about 25 points per quarter) 100	
<b>Class Participation</b>	
(about 25 points per quarter) 100	
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<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>	<b>300</b>

<b>Hazelwood West Grading Scale</b>			
<b>(Semester grade is the average of two quarter grades)</b>			
A	92-100	D	65-71
B	82-91	F	0-64
C	72-81		

## **Overview of Major Assignments and Expectations**

- Court Cases:** For their cases, students will be presented with a real or fictitious case that will be researched and argued before the Supreme Court, which will be comprised of principals and teachers. Each side will have fifteen minutes to argue their case and answer the questions of the justices. Those presenting for a particular case will be responsible for writing their summary briefs prior to the case. The actual format and issues of presentations will be discussed in class, but all students need to be familiar with the structure of oral arguments before the Supreme Court before the first debate day. After the case is heard and decided by the justices, each student (except for those presenting the case) will be required to turn in a position paper that critiques (positive and negative) the briefs and the oral argument of both sides. A general rubric will be handed out to explain the grading of the moot Court.
- Class Debate:** On days listed on the schedule, we will debate various issues facing the students at the state and local level. Handout describing the process will follow.
- Class Leadership:** One time each quarter, each team will be responsible for leading a class discussion about an assigned topic. The team will be responsible for assigning reflection topics to the class.
- Topic Reflections:** For days another team is leading the class discussion, each person in the class will be responsible for a complete reflection on the topic that includes three questions for the class to consider. Each reflection should average two typed pages (normal parameters) and have the presence of your research on the topic. This paper should be given to the team leading the discussion the class day before they are to lead the discussion.
- In-Depth Reflection:** Once each quarter, each student will be responsible for writing and in-depth reflection on a topic discussion led by your team or another team. This reflection will need to show extensive research into the topic and your clearly stated position/solution to the issue discussed. This reflection should average 10 typed pages.
- Class Participation:** Participating in educated discussions is critical to success at the collegiate level. Therefore, it is expected of all students to participate during discussion periods reserved for blog topics as well as during lectures when important aspects of American government are introduced.

Expectations: The key to achieving excellence in this class is to be prepared for class every day. Whether the class schedule indicates a lecture hour, due date for a paper, debate hour, research day, or a test day, students need to have all the necessary information and materials to perform well on these tasks. **LATE WORK WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.** If you are out on a day something is due, arrangements must be made prior to the due date. This applies to test days as well. In case of sickness, a voicemail message would be courteous and expected.

## **UNIT OVERVIEWS**

### **Unit 1: The Creation of the American Constitution**

This unit is an examination of the history of the United States immediately after unification through the writing of the Constitution of 1787 and the intent the convention had for its document.

### **Unit 2: The Branches of the American Government**

During this unit, students will take a thorough look at the four major parts of the American government and the constitutional powers, both real and imagined, of each branch.

### **Unit 3: Governing the Several States**

After studying this unit, the students will understand how the American government operates has historically operated through political parties, interest groups and the election process.

### **Unit 4: Creating Public Policy**

This final unit will focus on an examination of how public policy has developed throughout the course of American history. The policies focused on are civil liberties, domestic issues and foreign policy.