

American Government

*Showing **PRIDE** the Lion Way!*
Classroom Procedures and Syllabus

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Course Description

Since the founding of our nation, there has been a civic mission to prepare informed, rational, and participatory citizens committed to the values and principles of American constitutional democracy. This course is designed to meet four basic goals of civic education, including:

- Thorough understanding of our nation's system of government
- Explaining and demonstrating the qualities of good citizenship
- Understanding the foundations of our economy and how to successfully support it
- Acquiring the skills necessary to become a knowledgeable participant in our democratic society

Further, throughout the course, students will:

- Expand critical thinking and analytical skills to interpret the world around and assisting in the ability to make more informed decisions.
- Develop a deep understanding of the problems being faced by the world with emphasis on the United States.
- Develop reading comprehension skills that continually enhance the knowledge gained throughout his/her post-high school education and lifetime.

This course is designed to enhance and strengthen your social studies skills and conceptual understandings. The main goal is for students to develop the ability to gather, critically analyze, and communicate thoughts and findings. There will be required readings, assignments, and projects that will be completed in and out of class. Student success will be determined by the amount of effort put into the class. Current Events will be an integral part of the curriculum and students are expected to stay up-to-date with news at the local, state, national, and international level.

Textbook: *United States Government: Principles in Practice*
Holt McDougal

Classroom Procedures and Expectations

*Remember – school is your full time job. Always do your best, act professional, and follow the guidelines of the classroom and you will achieve success.

Academics: *Personal Responsibility, Determination, Excellence*

I am not afraid to make students work for their grades, nor should students be scared to. The subject matter can be mastered with both work and self-discipline.

Behavior: *Respect*

Respect for yourself, fellow students, teachers, and the classroom itself. To get the most out of our time together, we must cooperate and respect everyone's ideas and input. Remember for every choice you make, there are consequences, whether positive or negative.

Participation: *Respect, Personal Responsibility*

Students' attendance and involvement in the classroom are very valuable to learning. Education is an active process, not a passive one. Therefore, participation is an expected part of their grade. Students are expected to ask questions, answer questions and take part in discussions. Students who insist on doing other things will lose the activity points for the day. Further, students who are tardy or have unexcused absences will also lose points from their overall participation grade.

Communication: *Personal Responsibility, Integrity*

It is my goal to help students develop individual responsibility for their actions. As such, I am going to be insisting that students become primary advocates for themselves. Therefore, if there are questions, an absence, conflicts or disputes, etc., the student is responsible for getting into contact with the teacher and/or group members to resolve the matter at the earliest time possible. If the problem cannot be worked out between the student and teacher, it would then be appropriate to involve parents as advocates.

Attendance: *Personal Responsibility, Excellence*

Students are expected to be on time and prepared for class. **This means having the appropriate materials and being seated in their assigned seats when the bell rings to start the class period.** If students are not prepared and/or in their seats when I take attendance they will be marked tardy or absent. The first and second tardy may be excused with a warning. The third tardy will result in detention and referral to the HS office, as per school policy. If a student is late for a legitimate reason, please walk in quietly, take your seat, and join in appropriately to the activities.

Materials: Textbook and any additional source materials
Notebook and/or loose-leaf paper
Folder or 3 ring binder
Writing Utensil (blue/black pen or pencil)
Good Attitude ☺

Absences: *Personal Responsibility, Excellence*

If a student has an excused absence, he/she will have an equal number of days to make up the assignment. ***If a student is absent from class, it is his/her responsibility to obtain and complete any work and/or materials that were assigned during the absence.*** The student should check the Absence Folders before coming to the teacher. If extenuating circumstances arise, students should discuss them individually with the teacher for modification. In the event of an unexcused absence, the student will not be allowed to make up the work and must serve detention (including office referral after the first offense per school policy).

Cheating/Plagiarizing: *Integrity*

Cheating and plagiarism are unacceptable and are not tolerated. If a student is caught cheating or plagiarizing on a test, quiz, or assignment, they will receive a **zero** for the assignment. Plagiarism of an assignment (i.e. copied from the internet, a book, or another student) will result in a **failing grade for the quarter.**

Late Work: *Personal Responsibility, Excellence*

Assignments given are an important part of the learning process. Thus, it is pertinent they be completed on time. Something is always better than nothing. Assignments that are not received on time will automatically be worth 70% of their value. Please note that 70% can only be achieved if the work is done with effort and completeness – I will not waste my time a student chooses not to put in his/her time. Late work will only be accepted until one week before the end of the grading period (quarter/semester). I understand that circumstances sometimes arise that make it difficult to turn in an assignment on time, please discuss the concern ahead of time for possible accommodations.

Quiz/Test: *Excellence, Personal Responsibility*

Periodically we will have quizzes. Most of them will be announced, but I reserve the right to give a pop quiz. It is advised that students stay informed and current on the material.

Tests will be administered at the end of every unit. They will contain multiple forms of assessment both objective (m/c, t/f, matching) and subjective (short answer, essay, debate, simulation).

Final Exam

At the end of the semester, a final exam will be given to assess understanding of concepts learned.

Technology/Cell Phones *Personal Responsibility, Respect*

Technology can be an important part of the learning process; however it can also be a distraction. Students need to ask permission to use technology and/or cell phones before they may be used. All personal technology should

be placed in the pocket holder in the classroom or kept in student lockers. Unauthorized use of technology will result in the device being confiscated and turned into the office.

Food/Drink: *Respect*

All food and drink (except water) should be put away when the bell rings for class.

Help is always available: *Determination*

Anytime you have a problem that I could be of any assistance please let me know. All you have to do is ask. You'll receive as much help as you need – even if it means outside of school time. All problems will be kept strictly confidential. Please let me know if you need help in any way.

Grading: *Determination*

Grades will be given point value and placed in the following categories:

Summative Assessments (Test/Quiz)	60%
Assignments	25%
Daily Class Work/Participation	15%

Grading Scale: *Personal Responsibility, Determination*

The grading scale is in accordance with Lomira High School policy.

A+	100-99	C+	84-83
A	98-95	C	82-79
A-	94-93	C-	78-77
B+	92-91	D+	76-75
B	90-87	D	74-72
B-	86-85	D-	71-70
		F	69-

Semester Grades will be determined as follows:

1 st Quarter	42.5%
2 nd Quarter	42.5%
Final Exam	15%

Extra Credit: *Excellence, Determination*

There is the possibility to do extra-credit throughout the semester. However, extra credit is often misunderstood. Let me be clear about what it means to me. It means going above and beyond regular assignments and work (i.e. doing something *extra*). It does not mean that you do it *instead* of your regular assignments. If you sit and do nothing for most of the semester, figure out that you are failing a week or two before the end of the semester, and then come and ask if you can do extra credit, you will get a firm "No." Therefore, if you are missing many assignments because you chose not to do them and then ask for extra credit to make them up at the end of the semester, you will get a firm, "no," since you should have been doing those other assignments and then going above and beyond. If noticed early enough (midway through), of course there is the opportunity to bring your grade up.

Classroom Rules: Dos and Don'ts: *Respect*

There are certain standards of behavior which I expect all of my students to meet. The most important is the Golden Rule: treat others as you would like them to treat you, and respect. The specific dos and don'ts will be written in class by the students. Our goal is to be able to create a classroom where everyone feels comfortable.

*Further, as not all procedures can be explained in detail on one syllabus, please refer to the Student Handbook for a full, comprehensive list of rules and expectations of student behavior in the classroom.

American Government
Syllabus

Unit 1: Introduction to civics and government: What makes a good citizen?

- A. Introduction to Civics
- B. Various roles (rights and responsibilities as citizens)

Unit 2: Government Systems: Why have government? What does government do?

- A. Different systems of Government
- B. Appreciation for democracy (activity)
- C. American Government System
 - a. Constitution
 - b. **What are my rights? – Bill of Rights (mini unit)**
 - c. Elections

Unit 3: Structure of Government: How does our government work?

- A. Legislative Branch
- B. Executive Branch
- C. Judicial Branch

Unit 4: State and Local Government: Why do we have different types of government?

- A. State Government
- B. Local Government: County, Town, Village, and City

Unit 5: Citizenship responsibilities and rights: How do I get involved?

- A. Citizen's role in government
- B. Re-look at rights and responsibilities as citizens

Unit 6: The Economy: What is economics? Why does economics matter to me?

- A. Structures of various economies
- B. American Economy
- C. Basic Principles of Economics

Unit 7: US and the World: What is the role of the US in world affairs?

- A. International Organizations
- B. International involvement and consequences
- C. Current Issues

Unit 8: Social Issues and Controversy

- A. Important or significant social issues in the US
- B. Discussions/Debates

*Current Issues and Social Concerns will be addressed throughout the course of the year as they arise or in mini-unit studies