

American Government

Mr. Jesse Torrez

Villages Charter High School – Room 6-225

JesseB.Torrez@tvcs.org

352-259-3777 ext. # 26225

Course Description: Students will gain a working knowledge of the concepts and principles of the American Government from the basic foundations of Government to Comparative Political Systems Worldwide. Students will be exposed to the beginnings of government and how it led to the beginning of the U.S. Government. Students will also learn about the jobs of each branch of the federal government along with covering the Florida State Government and local government.

Course Outline:

Ch. 1: Foundations of Government

Ch. 3: The Constitution

Ch.5: Executive Branch

Ch. 7: Protecting Civil Liberties

Ch. 9: Elections

Ch. 2: Beginnings of American Government

Ch. 4: The Legislative Branch

Ch.6: Judicial Branch

Ch.8: Citizenship and Civil Rights

Ch. 10: Florida State and Local Government

Sunshine State Standards: Available online at www.floridastandards.org/Standards/FLStandardSearch.aspx

Course Texts and Readings:

1. **Macgruder's American Government;** Pearson/Prentice Hall. – Textbook
2. **Additional Reading:** Beyond the textbook, we will read primary source and secondary source documents and excerpts from books/online texts.

American Government Class Materials

- One 3-Ring Binder
- Pens (dark blue or black ink)
- Pencils
- Folder
- Loose leaf paper (college ruled)

Grading: A=100-90 B=89-80 C=79-70 D=69-60 F=59-0

- Unit Tests 50/100
- Quizzes 10/50
- Writing Assignments 10/20
- Homework 5/20
- Participation Assignments 3/5
- All work is due at the beginning of class on the due date, unless otherwise assigned by myself.
- You are responsible for getting make-up work. All assignments will be placed on the shelf. I will keep out extra handouts in this location.
- **Late Work:** All assignments will be accepted up until the end of each Chapter. Points will be taken off according to how quick you get your late work handed in. After that point you will receive a 0 for the assignment.

Class Expectations:

1. Be on Time
2. Come Prepared for Class
3. Be your best Everyday!
4. Be PROUD TO BE A BUFFALO!

Classroom Procedures

1. Students will come to class with all necessary supplies (see above.).
2. Students will not use cell phones or other mobile devices in the classroom unless prompted by the teacher. Please place phones in the techbox. This is a school-wide procedure. If you have your phone, you will receive an office referral.
3. Students will be polite and respectful toward the teacher and their classmates. Students will raise their hands and wait to be recognized before speaking and will be respectful of opinions/views that differ from their own during class discussions and debates.
4. Students are expected to maintain their *academic integrity* and to work independently unless instructed differently by the teacher. If caught copying work, *all* students involved will receive zeros on the assignment. The VHS Classroom Management Plan will be enforced.
5. Students will return all books and materials to their proper place before leaving class. Students are expected to leave their desk areas neat and free of trash.
6. **The teacher, not the bell, dismisses class.**
7. *Tardies and Late Arrivals:* If you arrive at school after the bell rings, you should report to the front office for an admit slip.

How many tardies can I have?

Every Tardy	Zero on the daily bellringer
1st & 2nd Tardies	Warning
3rd Tardy	Parent contact by teacher
4th-9th Tardies	Detention + Parent Contact
10th Tardy	Referral to Administration + Detention
11+ Tardies	Referral to Administration with penalties increasing from Saturday School to ISS to Attendance Contract.

8. *Tardies During Hall Sweeps:* In addition, periodic hall sweeps will be conducted. If a student is tardy to class and in the hallway after the late bell rings, he/she will spend the remainder of the school day assigned to in-school suspension.

Tips for Success in this Course:

- 1. Take complete class notes.** Put them in your OWN words. Don't write down something you don't understand without asking about it. It is very important to review your class notes each day while they are still fresh in your mind. Expand them, clarify them, and add examples so that they will make sense when you go back to study from them later. You will be given time each day to identify key terms and to summarize the big ideas for each lesson.
- 2. Learn to read more effectively.** You can read more effectively by reading actively (using sticky notes or highlighters as you read), paying attention to pictures, diagrams, tables, and sidebars in your textbook and by taking notes as you read. Ask questions about what you read, then look to see if the reading passage answers your question. Always source, corroborate, contextualize, and closely read each passage.
- 3. Enrichment Opportunities are your ticket to success in this class. . Don't cheat yourself out of this opportunity to enrich your understanding of history and score some bonus points on unit exams.**
- 4. Study and participate in class.** Don't just complete the assignments. Be sure to understand the material and apply it to your life.