



*Introduction:*

**Founding Principles of the United States and North Carolina: Civic Literacy** has been developed as a course that provides a framework for understanding the basic tenets of American democracy, practices of American government as established by the United States Constitution, and the basic concepts of American politics and citizenship. The essential standards focus on Civics and Government -- framed to develop students' increased understanding of the institutions of constitutional democracy and the fundamental principles and values upon which they are founded, the skills necessary to participate as effective and responsible citizens, and the knowledge of how to use democratic procedures for making decisions and managing conflict.

I am here to work *with* you and serve as a mentor to you as well. My job is to provide structure, organization, and expertise. Ultimately, though, *what you learn from this course will depend on your level of commitment to your education!*

*"Teachers open the door, but you must enter by yourself." – Chinese Proverb*

*Course Goals:*

Upon successful completion of this course, you will have learned to:

1. Understand the purpose, nature, and sources of law in the United States.
2. Describe the civil & criminal justice systems, analyze their operations, and assess their effectiveness.
3. Differentiate between the roles and responsibilities of the federal and state judicial systems and assess their effectiveness.
4. Compare and contrast the roles and responsibilities of local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies.
5. Identify correctional theories and evaluate their effectiveness in federal and state correctional systems
6. Identify and analyze the purposes of the Bill of Rights, the 14th Amendment, and other relevant provisions of the Constitution, as well as the Supreme Court's application of such principles over time.

*Class Rules:*

1. **DISPLAY RESPECT.**  
Respect yourself, classmates, peers, teachers, and administrators. Respect others' right to have an opinion different from yours on various social, political, legal, and religious issues.
2. **ACT RESPONSIBLY.**  
Always think before you act. Allowing time to think before you speak will ensure that you ask better questions and make intelligent statements.
3. **KEEP AN OPEN MIND.**  
Throughout this course, you will come in contact with many cultures, beliefs, behaviors, etc. You will encounter what you may consider strange ideas and practices and it is my hope that they will challenge you to think about your own beliefs and think logically through the applications and results of legal principles and procedures.

*Classroom Supplies:*

You are *required* to bring these items with you to class each day:

1. **2.5-inch, 3-ring binder**
2. **Blue or Black Ink Pens**
3. **Pencil(s) & Colored Pencils**
4. **Paper**
5. **Completed Assignments**

*Procedures & Requirements for Completing Assignments:*

1. Complete assignments to the best of your ability. Anything less will be graded accordingly.

- Homework assignments are due at the beginning of class. Assignments being turned in due to absences have a maximum of two days to be turned in. After the two days, it is at the teacher's discretion as to whether to accept the work or not.
- Make-up work, including any missed test, is your responsibility. I will repeat that it is **YOUR** responsibility to pick up missed work. Do not expect the teacher to track you down to make up work.
- When making up a test or major quiz, it is your responsibility to arrange transportation to get home. You may also miss any extracurricular activity planned for that afternoon.
- Plagiarism is presenting another author's language and/or thoughts/ideas as your own either through direct quotation or close imitation. Plagiarism is cheating and will be dealt with by giving you a zero and submitting a discipline referral to an administrator. At the university level, plagiarism is grounds for expulsion.
- Late work grading policy is as follows:
  - Late work: maximum grade of 70 out of 100.
  - If work is over 2 days late, it is the discretion of the teacher to accept it.

#### *Class Procedures:*

- BE IN CLASS AND ON TIME.**  
Excessive absences and/or tardiness will result in lunch detention, parental contact, and/or a referral to administration for further disciplinary action.
- RESTROOM POLICY.**  
Students are expected to use the bathroom between classes and/or during lunch breaks.  
\*On infrequent occasions, students must use the bathroom during class time, they must use the class pass.
- ELECTRONIC DEVICES.**  
Phones must be **off and out of sight!** (Unless express permission is given by the instructor to use devices in conjunction with assignments) **NOTE: Hoggard's new 'Away for the Day' Policy.**
- E-MAIL.**  
*New Hanover Public School System policy dictates that all communication between teachers and students be done through the student's school email account. **Please adhere to this policy and do not use your personal email account to contact the instructor!***
- FOOD, ETC.**  
\*Only bottled water is acceptable.

#### *Grading Policies:*

Quarter Grading for OL Civics		Quarter Grading for <u>Honors</u> Civics	
Major Assessments: Unit Tests, Assessments, Projects, & Papers	50%	Major Assessments: Unit Tests, Assessments, Projects, & Papers	50%
Quizzes	25%	Quizzes	30%
In-Class Assignments	25%	In-Class Assignments	20%
Total	100%	Total	100%

#### **Final Semester Grade for Both OL and Honors Civics:**

First Quarter Grade	40%
Second Quarter Grade	40%
Final Exam	20%
Total	100%

**\*Assessment Mastery Policy: (a.k.a. "Do-over" Policy):** If a student received less than a grade of 80 on a major assessment, that student may retake the assessment and receive a grade of up to 80 if the following conditions are met:

- The student did not have an unexcused absence/tardiness on the day of the test.
- The student has completed all assignments pertaining to that unit.
- The student completes test corrections in accordance with the teacher's specifications.
- The student notifies the teacher within 3 days of receiving the test grade back that he/she is requesting to retake the assessment.

\*The "retake" assessment will be at a time **outside of class time** (before school or after school), set by the teacher.

\*The "retake" assessment will be an alternative (not the same exact test as the first assessment).



## Cell Phone & Device Policy (Per New NC Law)

In alignment with North Carolina's new state law on student devices, **all wireless communication devices—including cell phones—must be turned off and put away during instructional time.** This includes class lectures, discussions, group work, activities, and assessments. Devices should not be visible on desks or in laps.



### Permitted Exceptions

- **Teacher-approved use** for specific instructional purposes.
- **IEP or 504 plan accommodations** that require technology access.
- **Health-related needs** (e.g., monitoring medical devices, communication with parents in emergencies).
- **Emergencies** as directed by staff.



### Not Permitted

- Texting, calling, or using apps/social media during class.
- Having earbuds/AirPods in during instruction unless specifically approved.



### Consequences

Violations of this policy will result in:

1. **First offense** – Verbal warning.
2. **Second offense** – Device confiscation until the end of class.
3. **Repeated offenses** – Referral in accordance with school discipline policy and parent/guardian contact.



### Why This Policy Matters

This policy is designed to:

- Protect focus and attention during class time.
- Support a healthy learning environment, free from digital distraction.
- Ensure fairness by applying the same expectations across all classrooms.

Student Data Form  
Teacher: *Mr. Cummings*

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address (**Required**): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address (**Required**): \_\_\_\_\_

List any health conditions that may affect your classroom performance:

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Please list any extracurricular activities that you may participate in at JTH or elsewhere:

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School Schedule	Subject	Teacher	Room Number
First Period			
Second Period			
Third Period			
Fourth Period			

Dear Parents/Guardians & Students:

Welcome, parents and students, to *Civics Literacy*!

**Civic Literacy** provides a framework for understanding the basic tenets of American democracy, practices of American government as established by the United States Constitution, and the basic concepts of American politics and U.S. citizenship. The essential standards of the course focus on Civics and Government, framed to develop students' increased understanding of the institutions of constitutional democracy and the fundamental principles and values upon which they are founded, the skills necessary to participate as effective and responsible citizens, and the knowledge of how to use democratic procedures for making decisions and managing conflict.

I believe that the success of students is dependent upon the cooperation and communication of all parties involved – teachers, parents, and students. My e-mail address is [taylor.cummings2@nhcs.net](mailto:taylor.cummings2@nhcs.net). I encourage you to contact me with any questions, comments, and/or concerns you may have. E-mail is the preferred means of communication. To ensure that I can add you to our parent email list and contact you if necessary, please provide a telephone number *and* an email address on the **Student Data Form** provided in this packet.

Important Information:

\*This course is an elective course.

\*Students will have *assignments* daily. This often translates into homework.

\*Grades may be checked through *Canvas / Infinite Campus*, located on the JTH website. If you do not already have an IF account, sign up to receive a login name and number from the JTH website, or request one in the main office at WHS.

\**Tardiness, as well as absences*, are recorded in the school's computerized system. Excessive tardiness and/or absences will result in a *discipline referral*.

\*Students who accumulate *ten (10)* or more absences during the semester will need to make up their time. Failure to make up the absences will result in the student *failing the course*.

Parents/Guardians & Students, please review all information in this packet and sign below to acknowledge that you have **read** and ***understood*** all the information contained in this packet. If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact me.

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(Parent/Guardian Name – print)

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(Parent/Guardian Signature)

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(Student Name – print)

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(Student Signature)

The following documents are included in this packet:

1. **Civics Lit. Syllabus** – please read thoroughly.....(**student keeps in his/her binder**)
2. **Student Data Form** – information required.....(**return to teacher**)
3. **Academic Integrity Contract** – initials & signatures required.....(**return to teacher**)

Again, I am incredibly excited about this school year and look forward to working with your student and you!

Thank you very much,

Mr. Cummings  
Hoggard High School