

United States Government & Politics

Ribét Academy – Rm. 502

Office Hours: M-F 7:30-8:00 AM & by appointment

Mrs. Jamie Martin

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www.martinsocialstudies.com

Students will pursue a deeper understanding of the institutions of American government. They will compare systems of government in the world today and analyze the history and changing interpretations of the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the current state of the legislative, executive, and judiciary branches of government. An emphasis is placed on analyzing the relationship among federal, state, and local governments, with particular attention paid to important historical documents such as the *Federalist Papers*. These standards represent the culmination of civic literacy as students prepare to vote, participate in community activities, and assume the responsibilities of citizenship.

All curriculum and assessments are designed to implement and reinforce Ribét Academy's **Expected School-wide Learning Results (ESLRs)**. It is the mission of Ribét Academy to empower and enable all students, regardless of age, ability, or background, to become **enthusiastic life-long learners, creative problem solvers, and effective communicators**.

Required Materials

 **Textbook:** Magruder's American Government, 2006 Edition or Newer (ISBN: 978-0-13-365331-1)

 **Notebook:** 1-subject, spiral-bound or composition. Will be collected periodically in-class.

Units of Study

Part I (Q1/Q3)

Unit I – Political Literacy & Foundations

- Ch. 1 – Principles of Government
- Ch. 3 – The Constitution
- Ch. 4 – Federalism
- Ch. 19 – Civil Liberties
- *Ch. 21 – Civil Rights
- Ch. 5 – Political Parties

Part II (Q2/Q4)

Unit II – Political Behavior & Action

- Ch. 6 – Voters & Voter Behavior
- Ch. 7 – The Electoral Process
- *Campaign Project
- Ch. 10 – Congress
- Ch. 13 – The Presidency
- Ch. 18 – The Federal Court System
- *Global Governments Project

*omitted in shorter semesters

Classroom Rules

- Be respectful of others' views. We will be debating things frequently, and there are going to be several times where you will not agree with what is being said. Wait your turn, and prepare your argument. When it is your turn, we will be happy to listen to what you have to say, but if you consistently call out or become disrespectful you will be asked to refrain from commenting any further.
- Be on time. If you are late, you will lose out on participation credit for the day. **If you are absent and/or tardy (unexcused) more than 10 times in one semester, I reserve the right to fail you for the course.**
- Bring supplies with you to class. This is an upper-level class, and I expect that you will have learned by now what is needed in a classroom. Books should be brought every day unless otherwise specified.
- **Phones, tablets**, etc. should be silenced & put away during class time unless expressly allowed (and used) for class purposes. **If it becomes a distraction to you, I, or anyone else, it will be confiscated and turned over to the dean's office.** No headphones are allowed during class.
- **Plagiarism** is not accepted in any way, shape, or form. Consequences for cheating are laid out in the Handbook, and it will earn you an F in my class, not to mention some pretty severe consequences from the school. It's really not worth it. **If I suspect cheating and/or plagiarism, I reserve the right to give you a zero for the assignment and may require you to redo it. If it becomes a problem, I WILL fail you for the course. Copying from another source is NOT your work and is NOT acceptable in my class.**

Make-Up Policy

Check the website (www.martinsocialstudies.com) for all assignments/upcoming quizzes! I realize you have other classes and obligations--I'm willing to be flexible. Don't abuse it! (This does not apply to Projects—on those, there is no grace period.)

Make-up exams/quizzes are generally administered the day you return to school from an absence. **It is up to you to come to me and tell me you need to take the make-up exam.** I will not come find you. If you do not take it the day you return, you forfeit the points and take a 0 for the exam (Exceptions will be made only on a case-by-case basis). You may choose to use a missed quiz as your dropped one. **Make-up work/exams will only be given with a verifiable excuse!** No make-ups will be allowed for truancies or other unapproved absences.

Grading Policy

I grade by percentages and points. There will traditionally be no curves, but I reserve the right to implement one if the situation calls for it. **I often will bump you if you are at a “_9” (79, 89, etc.), but I am not REQUIRED to do so. I bump on a case-by-case basis, and your participation and effort in class is what I will use to decide.** Grades are available through RenWeb, and I try to update it as often as possible. Rubrics will be given for large projects **in advance**.

90.0 – 100% = A 80.0 – 89.9% = B 70.0 – 79.9% = C 60.0 – 69.9% = D 0.00 – 59.9% = F

Midterm/Final (20% - 10% each quarter)

This course is one semester long, and covers roughly 10-11 chapters, depending on the semester & calendar. Midterms & finals are cumulative up until that point in the semester, cover about 5-6 chapters a piece, and do not overlap. (Meaning: material on the midterm **won't** be on the final.) This grade may also include other large “final” projects as part of its total calculation (e.g., History Fair, etc.).

Quizzes (30%)

There will be a quiz at the end of each chapter. You will always be given advance notice of a quiz, and we will always try to review in class the day before the quiz. You will be allowed to drop one quiz grade per semester. If you miss a quiz, you can use your “dropped quiz” to replace that grade. **Midterms and finals are NEVER eligible to be dropped. You must take your midterm and final.**

Classwork (20%)

This includes all work done during class (group and individual). Classwork may include reading, research, writing, design of games and other review activities, alternative and contemporary political issue seminars, and much more.

Homework (5%)

Readings and other small assignments will be given periodically throughout the semester for homework. Homework not turned in by the due date may be turned in the following school day for ½ credit. After the 1-day grace period, the assignment will no longer be accepted for credit. Current events will comprise most of this grade, which are assigned weekly on timely topics.

Projects (15%)

You will have several projects in this class. Many will require work outside of class. **Projects must be turned in on the due date, even if you are absent that day.** Dates will be given **far** in advance—there is no excuse to be late! Projects in this class include debates, PowerPoint presentations, participation in History Fair (in applicable years), research & essay writing, and primary source interpretation and analysis. There is also a semester project that requires students to simulate a political campaign within the school, including debates and an election.

Participation (10%)

GOOD: Good attendance, raising your hand, answering questions, asking questions, putting in effort on group projects, following directions, otherwise being ENGAGED in class. **Doing these things gets you POINTS!**

BAD: Using cell phones, doing work for other classes (unless I have given permission to do so), using laptops inappropriately, talking/being a distraction, being late, leaving a mess, disrespecting/abusing the classroom materials, falling asleep, being rude to other classmates and/or me. **Doing these things gets you an unhappy teacher and possibly a trip downstairs to the dean's office.**

In conclusion, WELCOME to U.S. Government! I hope you learn some things about the city, state, and country you're in and that you become a more “politically-engaged” person!

I'm excited to have YOU in my class this semester! Have fun, work hard, and let's have a good semester! ☺