

Principles of American Democracy

Ribét Academy – Rm. 502

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

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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on analyzing the relationship among federal, state, and local governments, with particular attention paid to important historical documents such as the *Federalist Papers*.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**.

Students are required to **purchase** the textbook for this class, **Magruder's American Government** (ISBN: 978-0-13-365331-1), as well as the accompanying workbook for the text. (ISBN: 978-0-13-067955-0).

This course is up to date with the **California State Standards** for 12th grade Principles of American Democracy. Below is a list of the major standards that will be covered this semester.

12.1 – Students explain the fundamental principles and moral values of American democracy as expressed in the U.S. Constitution and other essential documents of American democracy.

12.2 – Students evaluate and take and defend positions on the scope and limits of rights and obligations as democratic citizens, the relationships among them, and how they are secured.

12.3 – Students evaluate and take and defend positions on what the fundamental values and principles of civil society are, their interdependence, and the meaning and importance of those values and principles for a free society.

12.4 – Students analyze the unique roles and responsibilities of the three branches of government as established by the U.S. Constitution.

12.5 – Students summarize landmark U.S. Supreme Court interpretations of the Constitution and its amendments.

12.6 – Students evaluate issues regarding campaigns for national, state, and local elective offices.

12.7 – Students analyze and compare the powers and procedures of the national, state, tribal, and local governments.

12.8 – Students evaluate and take and defend positions on the influence of media on American political life.

12.9 – Students analyze the origins, characteristics, and development of different political systems across time, with emphasis on the quest for political democracy, its advances, and its obstacles.

12.10 – Students formulate questions about and defend their analyses of tensions within our constitutional democracy and the importance of maintaining a balance between the following concepts: majority rule and individual rights; liberty and equality; state and national authority in a federal system; civil disobedience and the rule of law; freedom of the press and the right to a fair trial; the relationship of religion and government.

Units of Study

Part I (5 weeks)

12.1, 12.2, 12.3, 12.4, 12.5, 12.9

Unit I – Political Foundations

Ch. 1 – Principles of Govt.

Ch. 3 – The Constitution

Ch. 4 – Federalism

Ch. 19 – Civil Liberties

Ch. 21 – Civil Rights

Part II (5 weeks)

12.2, 12.3, 12.6, 12.8, 12.10

Unit II – Political Behavior

Ch. 5 – Political Parties

Ch. 6 – Voters & Voter Behavior

Ch. 7 – The Electoral Process

Campaign Project

Part III (6-8 weeks)

12.1, 12.4, 12.5, 12.7, 12.10

Unit III – Political Action

Ch. 10 – Congress

Ch. 12 – Congress in Action

Ch. 13 – The Presidency

Ch. 14 – The Presidency in Action

Ch. 18 – The Federal Court System

Global Governments Project

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.

• **No iPods, cell phones, or any electronic/noise-making devices are to be permitted in the classroom.**

• **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 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

Tests (30% Q1, 20% Q2)

This course is split into three parts. You will take three exams covering roughly 5 chapters apiece at points throughout the semester. The first two are worth 15% each, and will be administered halfway through Q1 and as your midterm. The third will be worth 20%, and will be administered as your final.

Quizzes (20% Q1, 30% Q2)

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%)

Completed workbook pages (**still in the workbook, DO NOT tear them out**) are due the day of the quiz for that chapter. I will collect them the day of the quiz, and they will be given back to you at the next class meeting. They will be accepted

for half credit the next class meeting after the quiz, and then **I will not accept them** after that.

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: 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.**