U.S. Government Mr. Garrod Fernau

**Ansley Public Schools Room: 205 (upstairs – across from library)**

**1124 Cameron St. Class Time: M-Th: 10:57-11:46, F: 10:15-11:00**

**Ansley, NE EMAIL:** [**gfernau@ansleyps.org**](mailto:gfernau@ansleyps.org)

[**https://www.ansleynebraska.org**](https://www.ansleynebraska.org) **Course Info: Schoology**

**308-935-1121 Class Website: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Welcome to American Government class. The following information is very important as it describes what you need to do in order to be successful in this class.

**Classroom Policies**

* Cell phones must be placed on the rolling cart next to the door OR in your bag (out-of-sight). Smart watches may be worn until it becomes obvious that they are a distraction to you and then you will be made to remove it during this class.
  + May be used in LIMITED activities, but only with teacher permission.
  + Laptop may be booted up, but lid must be closed until permission is given to use them (limited time)
* ALL smart watches will need to be put away before any test (THIS IS MANDITORY – NO EXCEPTIONS)
* Treat each other with respect and common courtesy.
* Come to class prepared – ex: notes, book, writing utensil, computer, bag, etc. (you will not be allowed to leave to go get whatever it is that you forget). It’s called growing up.
* Abide by school policies regarding attendance and discipline.

**Course Description:**

The intent of this yearlong course is to increase your understanding of the American political system, its frameworks, traditions and values with the goal of having each student pass the Naturalization and Final Class Comprehensive Exit exam. This course is concerned with the nature of the American political system, and its development over the past two centuries. We will examine in detail the principle processes and institutions through which the political system functions, as well as some of the public policies which these institutions establish and how they are implemented.

**Overall Course Goals:**

Students successfully completing this course will:

* Understand the structure of the U.S. Constitution and its functions/influence on the people of America.
* Know important facts, concepts, and theories pertaining to U.S. government and politics.
* Be able to analyze and interpret basic data relevant to U.S. government and politics (Census).
* Read and interpret primary resources/documents relevant in the making of our government.
* Pass the U.S. Naturalization test with an 80% or above.
* Civilly engage/debate in political/current even topics.
* Become an active member in their community/state (volunteerism).

**Course Materials**

* **Text:** Richard C. Remy, *United States Government: Democracy in Action.*

* **Companion Website:** <https://app.schoology.com/home> and <https://billofrightsinstitute.org> and <https://www.icivics.org> and <https://www.loc.gov> (Library of Congress) and <https://www.whitehouse.gov> and <https://www.senate.gov> and <https://www.house.gov> and <https://supremecourt.gov> and <https://nebraskalegislature.gov> and [www.nebraska.gov](http://www.nebraska.gov) and others that may become relevant throughout the school year.
* **Supplemental Text**: Select readings from 1) *Constitution Study Guide* by Prentice Hall, 2) *Elements of Democracy* from Center for Civic Education, 3) Our *Constitution* by Donald A. Ritchie, 4) *The Pursuit of Justice: Supreme Court Decisions that Shaped America* by Kermit L Hall and John J. Patrick, 5) *Our Rights* by David J. Bodenhamer, 6) *Our Documents: 100 Milestone Documents from the Nation Archives* from The National Archives.
* **Other Materials:** Assigned and used in class: *The Week*: *The Best of the U.S. and International Media*, articles from current newspapers; news magazine excerpts; news footage and documentaries; C-SPAN’s coverage and current events materials; numerous websites.
* **Student Materials**

Writing utensil will be need everyday, so please bring your own pencil or pen. Please do not use RED ink on quizzes or test.

**Bonus Points**

* 10 points (added as a test grade) will be placed in a bonus category in PowerSchool (5 points for the 1st semester/5 points for the 2nd semester) Points can be applied at the end of each quarter toward your grade in a positive manner, but they cannot be used to put you over a 100%. At the same time these points can also be LOST for any of the following: excessive tardiness, having food or drinks in class (Exceptions discussed- Definitely NO plastic disposable bottles), not arriving to class prepared, excessive talking, disruptions, or off-task activities.

**Tardies/Absences:**

* You are allowed 2 minutes between classes. (Any restroom use should be done during this time – come to class and tell me where you are going and quickly return to class).
* After 3 tardies - 1 bonus point will be lost. (1 more for 5 tardies, 1 more for 7 tardies, after 10 tardies no bonus points will be allowed during that semester).
  + After 3 tardies, you and I will need to meet to discuss why this has been a problem. After 5 tardies, a meeting between you, myself, and Mrs. Fessler will take place to find out WHY you continue to be tardy and we will come up with a solution in solving the problem. After 10 tardies (see student handbook).
* If there is a scheduled assignment due and you are absent on that day, you may hand in that assignment first thing the following day, OR you may hand it in previous to the date. Upon returning to class, make sure to check the ‘While you were gone’ folders to collect any missed handouts – It is your responsibility to check this (I may not remember who was gone each day)
  + MAKE SURE TO ALWAYS CHECK SCHOOLOGY.
  + You will have as many days as you were absent to turn in late work for the possibility of full credit. (EX: Gone two days, you have two days to turn in)
* ALL Late work will be accepted, but ONE letter grade will be deducted for each day late. After 5th day, the grade will be a 50%, BUT you will still be responsible for turning in assignments. (So do your work the first time)
* If you are found cheating or plagiarizing on any tests, projects, assignments, current events, etc., you will receive a “0” on that assignment and/or an “F” in the class. (Revert to the student handbook for cheating and plagiarizing)
* If you miss a test or a quiz, you must come in and complete ASAP. If not completed after 2 days, it will be recorded as a zero, until taken. (ACCESS PERIOD is a great time to get these made up)

**Grading Scale:**

A – 93-100%

B – 92 – 85%

C – 84-77%

D – 76 – 70%

F – anything below 70%

**Grading Policy**

* Grading will be weighted. All Test/Quizzes/Homework will be 1 point per each question.
  + Test = 50%
  + Projects = 20%
  + Citizenship Activities 15% (more on these at a later date)
  + Quizzes = 10%
  + Homework = 5%
  + Bonus – Each student receives 10 free bonus points. (No extra credit offered in class)

Grades will be updated weekly.

- School policy = at-least 2 grades per week

**Course Outline and Reading Assignments**

**Course Introduction**

**Foundations of United States Government**

Readings:

* *Democracy in Action* Text- Chapter 1, 2, 3, and 4
* Selections from the Federalist Papers

**Constitutional Amendments, Civil Right and Civil Liberties**

Readings:

* *Democracy in Action* Text- Chapters 13, 14, and 15
* *Assorted Selected Readings*

**State and Local Government (Public Policy)**

Readings:

* *Democracy in Action* Text – Chapter 23 and 24
* *Assorted Selected Readings*

**Political Participation, Special Interest Groups, Political Parties, Elections and the Media**

Readings:

* *Democracy in Action* Text – Chapter 16, 17, 18, and 19
* *Assorted Selected Readings*

**Article 1 – Legislative Branch (Congress & Public Policy)**

Readings:

* *Democracy in Action* Text – Chapters 5, 6, 7, 20, 21, and 22
* *Assorted Selected Readings*

**Article 2 – Executive Branch (The President, the Budget, and Bureaucracy)**

Readings:

* *Democracy in Action* Text – Chapters 8, 9, and 10
* *Assorted Selected Readings*

**Article 3 - Supreme Court and important cases**

Readings:

* *Democracy in Action* Text – Chapter 11, 12, and 13
* *Assorted Selected Readings*
* *Multiple Supreme Court cases*

**CONTENT - What you need to learn before taking the FINAL Comprehensive Exam and Naturalization Test (% of question from each content area, that will be on the FINAL Comprehensive Exam)**

A) Constitutional Underpinnings of United States Government (5%)

a) Theories of Democratic Government

b) Considerations that influenced the formulation and adoption of the Constitution

c) Principles outlined within the Constitution

B) Constitutional Amendments (30%)

a) Understanding how amendments are proposed and ratified

b) Memorization of the 27 amendments

b) History and reasoning behind each Amendment

C) Political Beliefs and Behaviors of Individuals (10%)

a) Beliefs that citizens’ hold about their government and its leaders

b) Processes by which citizens learn about politics

c) The nature, sources, and consequences of public opinion

d) The ways in which citizens vote and otherwise participate in political life

e) Factors that influence citizens to differ from one another in terms of their political beliefs and behaviors

D) Political Parties, Interest Groups, and Mass Media (10%)

a) Political parties and elections

i) functions

ii) organization

iii) historical development

iv) effects on the political process

v) Electoral laws and systems

b) Interest groups (including PACs)

i) the range of interests

ii) the activities of interest groups

iii) the effects of interest groups on the political process

iv) The unique characteristics and roles of PACs in the political process

c) The mass media

i) The functions and structures of the news media

ii) The impacts of the news media on politics

iii) The news media industry and its consequences

E) Institutions of National Government: The Congress, the Presidency, and the Federal Courts (25%)

a) The major formal and informal institutional arrangements of power

b) Relationships among these three institutions and varying balances of power

c) Links between these institutions and the following:

i) Public opinion and voters

ii) Interest groups

iii) Political Parties

iv) The media

v) State and local governments

F) Civil Liberties and Civil Rights (10%)

a) The development of civil liberties and civil rights by judicial interpretation

b) Knowledge of substantive rights and liberties

c) The impact of the 14th Amendment on the constitutional development of rights and liberties

G) Public Policy (10%)

a) Policy making in a federal system

b) The formation of domestic & foreign policy agendas

c) The role of institutions in the enactment of policy

d) The role of the bureaucracy and the courts in policy implementation and interpretation.

e) Linkages between policy processes and the following:

i) Political institutions and federalism

ii) Political parties

iii) Interest groups

iv) Public opinion

v) Elections

vi) Policy network