

Participation in Government Honors Course Syllabus

INTRODUCTION AND GOALS

Welcome back to your FINAL YEAR AT LAG!! As the title of this course suggests, you will be “participating in government” during this class. What exactly does that mean? You will not only gain an increased understanding of our Constitution and how our government operates, but you will be able to apply your enhanced knowledge to current (and past) political, social and economic situations that face(d) our country and ultimately the international community. A stress will be placed on the 2012 Presidential Election as well as relevant current events. This class will also help prepare you for what will be expected of you in college.

Throughout the semester, you will

- *communicate ideas through increased participation in class discussions about current events and politics
- *improve listening , note-taking, information literacy and writing skills
- *analyze and synthesize varied sources of information, citing sources accurately using a recognized and accepted system when necessary

REQUIRED MATERIALS

- *Assigned government textbook
- *Class notebook solely for this class divided into 3 sections: classnotes, homework, vocabulary
- *A folder for handouts and collected HWs OR a method of inclusion into your notebook. There will not be too many.
- *Various media
- **Internet access and use of a printer....Speak with me ASAP if this poses a problem for you.

ASSUMPTIONS YOU CAN MAKE ABOUT ME

derived from <http://bellarmine2.lmu.edu/theology/amir/assumptions.html>

- *I will give you the respect that I ask you to give me and the other members of this class.
 - *I will begin and end the class on time.
 - *I will grade fairly and responsibly, returning your assignments to you in a timely manner.
 - *I will regularly update our class website, msberger.weebly.com
 - *I will assign work that is meaningful.
 - *I will accept late homework (with penalty) only before I have returned the assignment to the class.
 - *I will be available to help you, but you must let me know that you need help. I will be available during period(s) 6 and 8, and I can often schedule appointments at other times. I will return emails as promptly as possible, but not after 8pm. Please contact me when you first have a problem. If you wait until it is too late, then it is too late! I will do my best to help you, but I cannot learn the material nor do the work for you.
 - *I will establish neutral grounds of discussion where all opinions are welcomed and nurtured.
 - *I will be receptive to and encourage constructive comments about our class and welcome any suggestions you may have for our class.
 - *I will follow and enforce both the Social Studies Department Expectations as well as official school policy; thus, familiarize yourself with both.
- ****Plagiarism, or failure to acknowledge the words and/or ideas of another writer, can result in a failing grade in our course and/or school suspension or worse. You must write using your own words! There are a variety of acceptable ways to acknowledge outside sources. If you have any uncertainties or questions, please ask before you act!*

ASSUMPTIONS I MAKE ABOUT YOU

derived from <http://bellarmine2.lmu.edu/theology/amir/assumptions.html>

- *You will be an active, engaged learner.
- *You will attend class regularly and on time. You will provide notes for absences and sign the latebook when tardy. Points for excessive lateness may be deducted from test grades.
- *You will observe basic classroom decorum. Please refrain from: side conversations, putting on makeup, doing puzzles or math HW...etc.
- *You will follow all Department and school-wide policies.
- *You will have an organized, neat notebook, and you will take notes in it daily. You will create 3 distinct sections and maintain any handouts.
- *You will participate in class discussion and will be prepared to be called on at random. You will participate in various group activities.
- *You will show respect and not interrupt others when they are speaking, and when possible, will refer to your classmates by name.
- *You will be open to new ideas (you do not have to agree) and feel comfortable asserting your opinion.
- *You will turn off and put away electronic devices. I will assume that any student with hands in lap, behind a book or in a bag is texting, and you can assume I will take your phone away.
- *You will not use the pass excessively.
- *You will complete all assignments, on time. If you are experiencing difficulties, you will talk to me about working something out.

- *You will number your HWs
- *You will regularly and responsibly monitor the class website, **msberger.weebly.com**. If you are unsure of the requirements for an assignment, or when it is due, you will find the information there. *Several tasks throughout the semester will be online.*
- *You will print out and bring in any required documents from the class website.
- *You will be responsible for all of the material that we cover in class. If you miss a class, you will call a friend or consult the website to find out what you missed. *If you are absent on the day of a test, you may only take a make-up exam (at my discretion) with a valid absence note. It is YOUR responsibility to arrange a make-up.* Do not assume you will take the same test that you missed.
- *YOUR PARENT/GUARDIAN WILL CALL THE SOCIAL STUDIES OFFICE IF YOU ARE ABSENT ON A TEST DAY OR MAJOR DUE DATE.
- *You will work to improve your writing skills and verbal communication throughout this class.
- *If you have a question, any question, you will ask it.
- *You will use the Tutoring Center if you need additional help.
- *You will share your personality, knowledge, skills and special expertise with the rest of us throughout this semester. ☺

BASIC TOPICS OF STUDY

2012 Presidential Election
 Basic Principles of Government (roots of America's "Great Experiment")
 The Political Process (voting, elections, political parties)
 The Constitution
 Federalism (America's unique form of government)
 The Legislative Branch (Congress and how it creates law)
 The Executive Branch (the President and most other government departments)
 The Judicial Branch (important decisions of the Supreme Court, including those that affect your rights)
 The Role of the Media
 Local and National Politics/Current Events

COURSEWORK

- *Coursework will be varied and specific to each topic.
- *Work will often be dictated by current news and events.
- *You will be expected to keep up with any reading from the textbook if assigned; it is suggested that you take notes for retention while reading. If it appears you are not doing the reading, I will assign and collect chapter outlines.
- *Any film or other media viewed in class will be followed by a formal assessment.
- **All major assignments must be typed (12 pt font, double-spaced, 1" margins).*
- *Exams will be varied in format and length and will not cover any material not discussed in class or assigned for homework.
- *Assessments will be varied.

GRADING POLICY remember—each marking period is cumulative

50% MAJOR ASSESSMENTS: exams, quizzes, projects, essays, critiques, research papers, etc
 20% CLASSWORK: punctuality and attendance, respectful attitude, participation in discussions and group work, note-taking, attentiveness
 20% HOMEWORK: will vary; may or may not be collected (please number all homework assignments)
 10% FINAL ASSESSMENT: mid-term and final exams

TUTORING

There is tutoring available in every subject in the library during every lunch period. No appointment is necessary! Please take advantage of this service should you need some extra help

A FINAL NOTE

Please, I implore you, protect yourselves and take precaution against the deadly Senioritis! You will always be given ample notice for all assignments. **DO NOT FALL BEHIND.** If you keep up with your work it will be impossible for you not to pass (and do well in) this class. You absolutely need this class to graduate. You will find that I am a very reasonable person, but, I cannot fudge the numbers to make it work for you. As previously stated, I will help you, but I will not do your work for you or make any special exemptions. Bottom line: I will work with you if you work with me.

AGREEMENT

I have read and understood the minimum requirements necessary to succeed in this class. I will conduct myself in a manner appropriate for a High School Senior. I will take ownership of my studies and be responsible for work both in and out of class. I will communicate with my teacher if I am experiencing a problem. **I will keep this syllabus as a part of my notes, and I will consult it often.**

Ms. Berger

Fall 2012

I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTOOD THE REQUIREMENTS NECESSARY TO SUCCEED IN THIS CLASS!!
I WILL KEEP THE COURSE SYLLABUS AND ASSUMPTIONS AS THE FIRST PAGE OF MY NOTES AND I WILL CONSULT IT OFTEN!

Name: _____

OP: _____

EMAIL: _____

Internet Access? Yes _____ No _____ Adobe Acrobat Reader? (for PDFs) Yes _____ No _____

Printer? Yes _____ No _____

I AGREE TO THE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSUMPTIONS AS STATED IN THE COURSE SYLLABUS.

SIGNATURE

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Dear Parent/Guardian,

You can keep up with your child’s assignments at **msberger.weebly.com**. If you need to reach me, please email **msbergernyc@gmail.com**.

*I am aware must call the Social Studies office if my child is absent on the day of a test or when a major assignment or project is due.

*I have read the course expectations for your class and know how to reach you.

Parent/Guardian Name (please print): _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Parent/Guardian email: _____ phone # _____