

VA and United States Government

Fall 2022

Teacher: Mrs. Shannon Johnston

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Room: 203

Canvas: <https://madisonschoolsva.instructure.com/login/canvas>

Welcome to Virginia & United States Government. You will be studying how our government was founded along with the structure of government. You will be learning how the government affects us everyday through a variety of institutions and agencies that have been created by the Constitution and by custom. We will investigate the differences between our State and local governments and develop an understanding of how both fit into and work with our national government. Throughout the course, we will focus on citizenship and continuing to work towards becoming more engaged citizens. Finally, we will participate in a class community service project and experience how engagement with and volunteering in the community benefits all.

Topics studied include:

- Foundations of American Government
- The Constitution
- Federalism
- Legislative Branch
- Executive Branch and Bureaucracy
- Judicial Branch
- State and Local Government
- Civil Liberties and Civil Rights
- Political Beliefs and Behaviors
- Public Policy

* [Units of Study and course pacing](#)

*[Virginia Department of Education Standards of Learning for Virginia & US Government](#)

Classroom Values:

Behavior expectations in this class are simply summarized in the following statement: My classroom is a safe space in which everyone is learning and is RESPECTFUL of one another. If further clarification is needed, see below:

- “Safe Space” refers first and foremost to the physical safety of both individuals and their property, but also to social and emotional safety. This does NOT mean that we will avoid controversial issues or that we will be placing undue limits on free speech; it DOES, however, mean that such issues will be approached respectfully, and that the right of free speech will be exercised productively and responsibly, that the classroom is and should always be a welcoming social environment, and that bullying or intentionally making others feel unwelcome or uncomfortable will not be tolerated.
- “Everybody is learning” means not only that you enter the classroom each day prepared both physically and mentally to learn, but also that you refrain from any activity that might distract from your learning or the learning of others.

- *To be sure we are on the same page in terms of these expectations, here are a few guidelines that will help make the classroom a safe space where everyone is learning:*
 - Students are expected to be in their assigned seats on time at the beginning of every class period, with the necessary materials to begin class.
 - Students are expected to participate actively in class, which means listening attentively to the individual speaking (whether a student or the teacher), and making constructive comments and/or asking questions at the appropriate times.
 - **Students are expected to avoid distracting or disruptive activities, including (but not limited to) consuming large quantities of food, or using personal electronic devices for non-academic purposes.**
 - **Students are expected to use academic and classroom-appropriate language, and to speak respectfully to and about their peers and teachers.**
 - Students are expected to respect the personal space and property of others, and to avoid doing anything that might intentionally or unintentionally cause harm to a person or their property.
 - And perhaps most importantly, **STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO MAKE MISTAKES**, but also to **own up to them** and to be **willing to work to fix them**.

GRADING POLICY:

Quarter Grade

- Classwork, Homework, and Quizzes –40%
- Tests and Projects—60%.

Final Grade—

- Quarter 1: 45%
- Quarter 2: 45%
- Cumulative learning experience: 10%

* Students are encouraged to check PowerSchool to keep track of their grades.

POLICIES:

1. MAKE-UP WORK:

- a. STUDENTS are responsible for make-up work. Be sure to check **Canvas** if you are absent. Please do not wait for your teacher to initiate make-up work or to seek you out to make up a test or quiz.
- b. Procure any class notes missed either from a classmate, Canvas, or your teacher upon your return.
- c. The student and Mrs. Johnston will make arrangements for the appropriate time frame to have make-up work completed, **however**, a general rule is that work should be completed within the number of days the student was absent.
- d. **SPECIAL NOTE:** If a student is absent the day a test or quiz is given, OR the day an assignment is due, the student should be prepared to take the test or quiz, or submit the assignment, upon his/her return to class.

2. LATE WORK: Late work will not be accepted after 5 school days beyond the due date for credit. Extenuating circumstances may be the exception. The overall score for late work will be deducted by 10 points per day.

3. TARDY TO CLASS?

**When you are late to class, you miss valuable instruction AND class is disrupted, so

please be on time!

*3rd tardy: Parent will be notified and advised next tardy will result in a referral

*4th tardy: Disciplinary Referral

4. ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:

Be SURE to read the MCPS policy carefully. See me if you have questions.

SUGGESTED SUPPLIES:

- 3 - Ring Notebook 1 ½ inch
- College Ruled Notebook Paper
- Dry Erase Marker and Eraser
- Colored Pencils or Markers
- 3 pieces of Poster Board to use throughout the semester

CANVAS:

Canvas will be updated daily for students to review or retrieve information from the class. Canvas should ALSO be checked and utilized when a student is absent from class.

COURSE TEXTBOOK:

Shea, Daniel M. (2018). *Magruder's American Government*. Pearson Education Inc.

COMMUNICATION:

The best way to contact me is via email. I will do my best to respond within 24 academic hours. The best time to reach me by phone is after 3PM. Please note, I do not have a planning period 1st semester, so I will not be able to make or return phone calls until after 3:15 each afternoon.

*I'm looking forward to a great semester with you all as you embark on your senior year!!!