**Government**

*What is justice?*

*What is a “good” citizen?*

This course is designed to build the skills and knowledge you will need to be active citizens agents of change throughout your life. Although not all of you can currently vote, you all are residents and citizens of our shared community. Each one of you has ideas and opinions about what you would like your lives and communities to look like. Our country has been and continues to be formed by residents (not always legal citizens) speaking out and acting up to ensure that their rights are respected and protected. Women have marched for the right to vote, to work, and to not be physically assaulted, Civil Rights struggles to end racial segregation were both non-violent and required protections through the 2nd Amendment. From groups of citizens in frontier experiences chartering towns, cities, and homesteads the United States is unique because of its aspirations for justice, equality, equity, and freedom.

A major focus of this class will be doing the work of democracy as active citizen agents of change. This semester we will construct a Master Plan for the Butte Falls Natural Resource Center. This project will require working with multiple stakeholders, collaborating for a shared vision, and when finished we will present our plan to the Butte Falls Charter Board and the Butte Falls School District for adoption. In constructing this plan we will evaluate multiple options for how to utilize the NRC space and choose a best option. Once completed and adopted this plan will serve as a road map which will be used by different school groups and the district to develop the grounds.

American’s often over-emphasize the historical importance of our country. Invoking a deity as having preordained our government and economic success. However, the United States is a unique experiment in government. We have often compared ourselves to totalitarian governments around the world, whether it is China today, the Soviet Union of the 20th Century, or the British and French Empires of the 18th & 19th Centuries. Our history has never been static and our country’s notion of itself is always evolving.

Your generation will face future tests to the U.S. Constitution, many of which today are unknown. This course will prompt you to think about justice and what is at stake. During this semester we will look at a few topics in depth and begin to craft solutions for some of the pressing challenges in our future. Specifically, we will look at our form of government and compare it to other governments around the world. We will also spend time learning about and discussing Supreme Court cases that have shaped what it means to be a U.S. Citizen and what rights we have under that Constitution. We will look at the mechanisms of our government and evaluate whether tools such as , elections, political parties, polling, public participation, etc. are adequate to deliver the ideals intended by the Declaration of Independence.

**Course Format**

This course will combine readings, films, group projects, art projects, primary & secondary documents, and lecture with discussions. Class lectures will generally build upon and not simply restate course materials and the focus will be to learn about crafting arguments, interpret historical documents, write, think critically, use technology, and develop the skills to do the work of democracy.

This class will also have a significant field trip component as we will be traveling regularly to the Natural Resource Center as well as other Nature Centers and Environmental Centers in Southern Oregon. It is the goal of these outings to investigate watershed health in the region and observe first hand the government systems we are studying in class. I hope to organize a trip to Salem this semester to visit the State Capitol, the Oregon Gardens, and Willamette University.

**Course Alignment with Standards**

This course is designed to develop the skills, knowledge, and dispositions which global citizenship requires. Students completing this course will learn and practice skills that will be applicable in their present and future lives and careers. Students who successfully complete this course will be able to merge political theory and practice as they discuss, reflect upon, and act on their civic concerns. This Government course is aligned with several of the Oregon State Social Study Standards.

**Classroom Rights**

This list, co-created by students and Mr. Sixta, lists some of your rights as students in this classroom.

1. You have the right to an education.
2. You have the right to property and privacy.
3. You have the right to health and safety.
4. You have the right to give input and be heard regarding your educational environment.
5. You have the right to be treated with respect from your peers, teachers and others in this classroom.

**Mr. Sixta’s commitment to ensuring student rights**

1. Every student in my class has the opportunity to receive an equitable education that is relevant, engaging, interesting, and useful for their life.
2. This classroom is a safe environment for all students. Hateful speech and violent actions will not be tolerated.
3. Students and their families receive the respect of person, property, and privacy that they deserve and are entitled to as students, citizens, and residents of the Butte Falls High School Community.

**Texts**

Center for Civic Engagement. *We the People: Citizenship and the Constitution.* Level 2. Calabasa: 2007. Textbook.

Center for Civic Engagement. *We the People: Citizenship and the Constitution.* Level 3. Calabasa: 2007. Textbook.

Zinn, Howard. *A People’s History of the United States. New York:* HarperCollins Publishers, 2003.

**Course Requirements**

Students are expected to:

* Prepare for every class by completing assigned readings and written work
* Actively participate in all learning experiences in every class discussion
* Support the learning of their peers

**Course Outline**

This is a tentative outline of the topics and dates that will be covered over the course of the year. The schedule may change as relevant opportunities arise.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Unit** |
| Week 1-2 | NRC SWOT & Possibilities* SS 35, 63
 |
| Week 3 | Political Parties and Mechanics* SS 30, 33
 |
| Week 4 | Polls & Media* SS 58, 59
 |
| Week 5 | City Debate, Levels of Government (OR)* SS 28, 29,33, 58
 |
| Week 6-8 | Master Plan Mapping and Presentations* SS 57, 58
 |
| Week 9 | Pet Elections |
| Week 9-10 | War and Balance of Powers* SS 33
 |
| Week 11-12 | Philosophies of Government* SS 35
 |
| Week 13-14 | Bill of Rights* SS 24
 |
| Week 14-15 | Evolving Ideas of Government* SS 5, 32, 35
 |
| Week 16-17 | American Revolution, Articles of Confederation, Federalist Papers* SS 25
 |
| Week 18 | Finals, Reflection Piece, Printing of Master Plan* SS 34, 62
 |

**Evaluations**

There will be multiple types of evaluation over the course of this semester. I am a firm advocate that consistent qualitative and quantitative feedback will help you get more out of your studies. In addition to receiving traditional grades for this course, I will regularly write comments on papers, tests, projects, and other assignments for this course. During class, I will make time to talk with you about the projects you are working on and expect that you will hold me accountable for providing feedback on your work or clarifying assignments. Other forms of communicating evaluation will be done by:

1. **Quarterly conferences** conducted between student and instructor to discuss classroom learning, social skill development, and portfolio projects.
2. **Proficiency:** School Districts in the State of Oregon are moving to a proficiency-based approach of measuring student achievement. As a result, we will have at least one proficiency report card showing which Oregon Social Study Standards you have mastered and which still need to be completed. As we progress this year, I will communicate with you and your caregiver more about the goals and meaning of this proficiency report card.
3. **Formal Course Grades**
	1. **Units** (60% = 8 Units x 7.5%): Each unit will have a culminating activity to demonstrate knowledge.
	2. **Natural Resource Center** (30%)
		1. *Part I Planning* (5%): SWOT, Reflections & Possibilities, Art Experience
		2. *Part II Group Project* (15%)
		3. *Part III Final Project* (10%)
	3. **Final** (10%): At the end of first semester there will be a culminating final covering the material from the semester. At the end of the year there will be a culminating project that will include a paper, presentation, and discussion.

**RCC College Credit Option**

This class course is aligned with Government 101 at Rogue Valley Community College and pending final approval from RCC it can be taken for college credit.

**Policy On Electronic Devices**

Though we will use cell phones and laptops in class many times to reference information and to support one another’s learning, to better enhance individual and collective focus all phones need to be silenced during class sessions. In addition, please refrain from texting and other forms of electronic “chatting” and “surfing” the web during class activities and discussions. Use of Facebook, Snapchat, and other social media that doesn’t relate to class material are not allowed during the class period. If you need to communicate electronically or check the Internet, please do so before or after class. Electronic devices cannot only distract the user but they can also be disruptive to your peers’ ability to focus and learn. Your cooperation is appreciated.

**Academic Integrity**

There will be no tolerance for plagiarism or any other academic dishonesty. In particular, papers with plagiarized ideas or languages will be graded “NC” and must be rewritten with proper citations and references if the student intends to pass the course for credit. A student will receive the grade of “NC” for any unit that contains plagiarised or other academic dishonesty.