

U.S. GOVERNMENT – COLLEGE PARK HIGH SCHOOL

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SPRING SEMESTER, 2026. Welcome! I look forward to exploring the discipline of political science and government with each of you and assisting you with other academic problems or concerns. I will be available before and after school to answer any questions you may have.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: During this course, we will examine various historical, philosophical, and legal aspects of our government, to gain a fuller understanding of how we as a nation fit into a rapidly changing world. Using the “4 Theories of American Government” as a theme, we will explore the numerous institutions and processes which comprise our system of government.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: By the completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate a *basic* understanding of some of the concepts and terminology used in the field of political science.
2. Identify and explain the four most commonly debated theories used to describe our system of government.
3. Identify the historical context and the philosophies of those who framed the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.
4. Understand the dynamics of our “separation of powers” and the institutions (the courts, the executive, the legislature, and the media) that comprise them.
5. Identify the principles of federalism and how state and local governments differ from those at the federal level.
6. Analyze and *critically* evaluate some of the important and contemporary issues in the world today, based on 1 – 5 above.

COURSE TEXT: Magruder’s American Government. The instructor will provide other assigned readings which will be available on the class website.

COURSE METHODOLOGY: Class will consist primarily of lectures and class discussions, which will serve to amplify and clarify text materials. Student progress will be evaluated through text assignments, discussion of articles, a written research project and evaluation of documentary videos.

EXAMINATION/EVALUATION: Students should be prepared to do a significant amount of reading and writing to complete a college-level research project. Homework will consist of reading and preparing your written research project. There is no planned mid-term but there will be a cumulative final exam. Class participation in discussions is encouraged. Student participation in class is an indicator of interest and shows that the student is keeping up with the assigned readings. Grades will break out over a normal letter grade percentage scale (100-90% = “A”, 89-80% = “B”, etc...) Assignment weights will be the following:

10% - Documentary Video Assignments

10% - Text Assignments

25% - Final Exam

55% - Research Project

Extra credit projects are neither necessary nor allowed for this course.

COURSE OUTLINE – U.S. GOVERNMENT

MAG = Magruder's American Government (class textbook)

Lecture One: *Foundations of Government and Citizenship*

Readings: MAG, (Topics 1.1 – 1.4: pp. 2 – 40).

Lecture Two: *Political Ideologies and Parties*

Readings: MAG, (Topics 2.1, 2.2: pp. 44 – 66 / 11.1: pp. 558 – 577).

Lecture Three: *The Founders and the Constitution*

Readings: MAG, (Topics 2.3, 2.4, 3.1, 3.2: pp. 67 – 114).

Lecture Four: *Federalism*

Readings: MAG, (Topics 3.3, 3.4: pp. 115 – 138).

Lecture Five: *The Legislative Branch (Congress)*

Readings: MAG, (Topics 4.1 – 4.6: pp. 142 – 218).

Lecture Six: *The Executive Branch (President)*

Readings: MAG, (Topics 5.1 – 5.4: pp. 222 – 260).

Lecture Seven: *The Judicial Branch (The Courts)*

Readings: MAG, (Topics 7.1 – 7.3: pp. 330 – 358)

Lecture Eight: *The Federal Bureaucracy*

Readings: MAG, (Topics 6.1 – 6.3: pp. 264 – 292).

Lecture Nine: *Public Opinion and the Mass Media*

Readings: MAG, (Topics 10.5, 10.6: pp. 514 – 537).

Lecture Ten: *Voting and Elections*

Readings: MAG, (Topics 10.1 – 10.4: pp. 474 – 513 / 11.2 – 11.4: pp. 578 – 620)

Lecture Eleven: *Interest Groups*

Readings: MAG, (Topics 10.7: pp. 538 – 554).

Lecture Twelve: *Public Policy*

Readings: MAG, (Topics 12.4, 12.5: pp. 657 – 676).

Lecture Thirteen: *Economic Policy*

Readings: MAG, (Topics 12.1 – 12.3: pp. 624 – 656).

Lecture Fourteen: *Foreign Policy*

Readings: MAG, (Topics 6.4 – 6.6: pp. 293 – 326).

Lecture Fifteen: *Civil Liberties and Civil Rights*

Readings: (Topics 8.1 – 8.7: pp. 362 – 428 / 9.1 – 9.4: pp. 432 – 470).