

**KENYON ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIP (KAP)  
AMERICAN GOVERNMENT  
COURSE SYLLABUS  
2015-2016**

Buckeye Valley High School  
740/363-1349

Mrs. Velalis  
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Conference Period  
9:26 a.m. - 10:14 a.m.  
11:43 a.m. - 12:13p.m.

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

The emphasis of the KAP American Government course is a concentration of the government's role in influencing the social structure of the nation and our understanding of the American political system. The themes of democracy and the scope of government provide a basis framework for analysis that students will find practical and worthwhile. Extensive study will be made of the US Constitution, political parties, government policy, the framework of government and the traditions and the values of American politics. We will examine in detail the processes and institutions through which the political system functions as well as some of the public policies the political system develops. Students will also learn concepts of financial literacy, including the relationship of income level to supply and demand in the market, the roles of people in the economy, consequences of choices affecting budgets, savings, credit, philanthropy, and investments, and the effect of interest rates on savers and borrowers. This course will involve critical analysis, writing, and discussion of the assigned texts and is designed to create good citizens, who are knowledgeable and active in their government. To receive Kenyon college credit a student must receive a letter grade of "C" or better.

**TEXTBOOK AND READING MATERIALS:**

**Text:** *Government in America - People, Politics, and Policy* (2002 Edition) by George C. Edwards III, Martin P. Wattenberg, Robert L. Lineberry. PRIMARY TEXTBOOK

**Summer Reading:** *Hardball, How Politics is Played Told by One Who Know the Game* by Chris Matthew

**Supplemental Reading:** *The Federalist Papers* by Hamilton, Jay, Madison  
(will be studied throughout the year)  
*Democracy in America* by Alexis de Tocqueville  
*Congress - The Electoral Connection* by David R. Mayhew  
*Elections of 2012* by Michael Nelson  
*Presidential Powers and the Modern President* by Richard E. Neustadt  
*The Supreme Court and Constitutional Democracy* by John Agresto  
*Notes of Debates in the Federal Convention of 1787* by James Madison  
*The Founders' Constitution, Volume I Major Themes* edited by Philip B. Kurland & Ralph Lerner  
Constitution of the United States  
Supreme Court Cases  
School library resources will also be used.  
Miscellaneous articles collected and presented by your teacher throughout the year.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Textbook reading  
Additional required reading  
Taking notes  
Daily Participation  
Follow-up questions  
Vocabulary and identification words  
Study Guide

Tests  
Comprehensive Final Exam  
Small group work  
(involving teamwork, cooperation, and creativity)  
Large-scale group projects  
Writing papers(includes written responses to videos shown)

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Academic dishonesty is considered a serious offense and will involve parents being notified each time a violation is reported to a principal. Academic dishonesty and plagiarism occur in many situations and will absolutely NOT be tolerated. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to unauthorized copying any section of any assignment or assessment. *(Both the individual "copying" homework AND THE STUDENT WHO GIVES ANOTHER THEIR COMPLETED HOMEWORK are considered to be in violation)*. Plagiarism, improper or illegal downloading of information from the Internet, CD ROM programs, and any misrepresentation of work not completed by the student is also considered academic dishonesty and consequences will be strictly enforced. Consequences will be a failing grade for the assignment or assessment and may include detention, Wednesday school, reverse suspension, or out-of-school suspension. Repeat violations of academic dishonesty individually and collectively may result in a failing grade for the quarter and/or removal from the class for the year with a failing grade. Consequences will be strictly enforced.

**Honesty is essential!**

## COURSE SEQUENCE BY SEMESTER:

### First Semester

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| Introducing Government in America .....   | Chapter 1  |
| The Constitution .....  | Chapter 2  |
| Political Parties .....   | Chapter 8  |
| Civil Rights and Public Policy .....  | Chapter 5  |
| Public Opinion and Political Action .....   | Chapter 6  |
| The Mass Media and the Political Agenda .....   | Chapter 7  |
| Interest Groups .....   | Chapter 11 |
| <b>When covering Chapter 9 and 10 students will begin reading <i>Elections of 2012</i> by Michael Nelson</b>                        |            |
| Nominations and Campaigns .....   | Chapter 9  |
| Elections and Voting Behavior .....   | Chapter 10 |
| <b>When covering Chapter 13 students will begin reading <i>Presidential Powers and the Modern President</i> by Richard Neustadt</b> |            |
| The Presidency .....  | Chapter 13 |
| Constitution - Article II, Sections 1-4 .....   | Appendix   |

**\*\*First Semester Project:** *Select and research an executive policy and behavior during a recent presidential "crisis". Paper will be 5-10 pages with bibliography and a 5-8 minute PowerPoint "executive summary" presented in class.*

Second Semester

Students will also read *Democracy in America* by Alexis de Tocqueville

Federalism ..... Chapter 3  
Constitution - Article I, Sections 8-10 ..... Appendix  
The Congress, The President, and the Budget: The Politics of Taxing and Spending ..... Chapter 14  
*The Federal Reserve Bank*Teacher Supplementals ..... Teacher Supplementals

When covering Chapter 12 students will begin reading *Congress - The Electoral Connection* by David R. Mayhew

Congress ..... Chapter 12  
Constitution - Article I, Sections 1-10 ..... Appendix

Legislation Project: Research past legislation, create a written bill and presentation of bill. (Depending on time)

Civil Liberties and Public Policy ..... Chapter 4  
Constitution - Amendments 1-27 ..... Appendix

When covering Chapter 16 students will begin to read *The Supreme Court and Constitutional Democracy* by John Agresto

The Federal Courts ..... Chapter 16  
Constitution - Article III, Sections 1-3 ..... Appendix  
Constitution - Articles IV-VII ..... Appendix  
The Face of State and Local Government ..... Chapter 21

**\*\*Federalist Papers by Hamilton, Jay, Madison\*\* These will be read and discussed throughout the year.**

*If time permits:*

**\*\*Second Semester Project:** Each student must choose and complete one major project. **Legislative:** Select and research the legislative history of a major public policy issue OR **Judicial:** Select and research recent Supreme Court decisions on a major issue. *Paper will be 5-10 pages with bibliography and a 5-8 minute PowerPoint "executive summary" presented in class.*

**HOMEWORK:**

Textbook and supplemental readings, follow-up questions, study guide worksheets, writing papers, etc. will be assigned each week.

*You will be required to submit by August 1st a paper regarding your required summer reading assignment. You will also be writing papers on different themes discussed in class as well as various reflections on assigned readings.*

**IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES:**

You may be required to work in small groups and complete long-term assignments from time to time. These will involve teamwork, cooperation, and creativity on your part. Large-scale projects may be worth as much as test grades and will often involve doing outside research activities for completion.

**FINAL EXAM:**

You will be required to take your final. At the end of the course, you will be given a **COMPREHENSIVE** exam. In order to successfully receive college credit you must have a C as a final grade.

Please realize that **I do not GIVE grades....YOU must earn them.** I am always willing to help you with questions, problems, assignments, etc. I truly value your opinions and hope that you share them with me.

