

Mr. Sinn's & Mr. Johnson Civics Syllabus

Course Description:

Welcome to Civics! Civics is a required course for graduation and covers several aspects of government. Civics will explore the origins of the American democratic system while looking at how the constitution embodies the values and purposes set up by the founding fathers. The structure and function of the government will be analyzed on a national, state, and local level while showing how each level is interrelated. This will launch the class into discussing how constitutional values relate to other nations and world affairs. Throughout the course we will focus on how the people play an active role in government and the importance each citizen contributes to society.

By the end of this year, you will:

- Demonstrate and strengthen your ability to write formal essays/research papers/research projects.
- Compare/contrast/synthesize and analyze information.
- Exercise critical thinking and communication skills in formal and informal discussions.

Unit 1: Political Ideology and Participation

Unit 2: Foundations

Unit 3: The Constitution

Unit 4: Legislative Branch

Unit 5: Executive Branch

Unit 6: Campaigns and Elections

Unit 7: Judicial Branch and Criminal Justice

Unit 8: State and Local Government

Course Methods:

1. Reading from text, literature and other material
2. Lectures and note-taking
3. Class discussions relating to assigned readings
4. Films and slide shows
5. Homework including both assigned readings and written responses
6. Individual and group projects
7. Small group activities

Expectations:

This class and the manner in which it is taught have a HUGE amount to do with your behavior and maturity levels. You are all young adults and need to act like it. I will use activities, projects, discussions, and a bunch of other ways to ensure your success. But, the bottom line is that **you get out of this class what you put into it.** If your effort is high, your grade will likely be high, and vice versa. Remember, you earn your grade. I do not give it to you.

1. **Speak considerately**
 - o This includes your classmates, the instructor, and even yourself. Profanity, narrow-minded comments, obscene gestures, raising your voice, and threats.
2. **Be prompt**
 - o "Miss a little you miss a lot". Students are considered to be tardy or late to class if they enter the classroom after the bell rings. All tardies will be monitored by the office.
3. **Bring materials/Be Involved**
 - o Every day you will need a **notebook, writing utensil (pencil or pen), folder/binder**, and any instructional materials passed out to you during class.
 - o Remember that class participation matters
 - o Make it interesting, make it a learning experience.
4. **Listen for instructions**
 - o Listen when the teacher is talking because important information is being shared for you and the entire class. Avoid feeling the right to ignore or have private conversations with others while the teacher is instructing class.
5. **Honor self and others**
 - o If you're not sure if it's objectionable or offensive, don't wear it, say it, or do it.
 - o Do not restrict or inhibit the rights of others to learn.
6. **Accept ownership of my choices**

Classroom Behavior Expectations

- I. **Follow directions.**
- II. **No swearing, teasing, or put-downs.**
- III. **Be in your assigned seat when the tone sounds.**
- IV. **Do not work on other homework during my class.**
- V. **No Cell Phones/MP3/Headphone while instruction is happening.**

Consequences:

Any expectations not met will fall into the Discipline Hierarchy.

1st offense: Verbal warning

2nd offense: Stay in class 1 minutes after bell

3rd offence: Stay in class 2 minutes after the bell.

4th offence: Call parents/detention after school

5th offence: Send to principal or administrator

Severe clause: Send to dean or administrator

HAVE A POSITIVE ATTITUDE - 90% of achievement is from ATTITUDE; 10% is ABILITY. Be willing to try; do everything to the best of your ability, without whining or excuses. You can do hard things! We can do hard things! Grit!

Grading Policy:

Major Grades 30%: Assessments of complex assignments typically requiring more than one day to complete are called major grades. Advance notice will be given to students of any activity or test that constitutes a major grade. Some examples of major grades may include:

- **Chapter or unit test**
- **Projects**
- REsearch paper
- Skill assessments, i.e. essays, performances, oral presentations, portfolios

Daily Grades/ In Class Work 25%: Assessments of assignments completed in class or at home, typically requiring only one day to complete, are called daily grades/in class work. Some examples of daily grades/ in class work may include:

- Guided or independent practice
- Quizzes
- Activities
- Participation
- Teacher observation, i.e. small group participation, labs, oral presentation

Homework 15%: Graded homework should be based on previously taught materials. Homework should be used neither for punitive purposes, nor as a substitute for classroom instruction. It is understood that homework (completion of) is the responsibility of the student. Adequate time should be provided for the assignment to be completed, and appropriate resources need to be accessible to the student. When making assignments, the teacher needs to keep a perspective of the student's cumulative homework requirements.

Academic Integrity:

Students are expected to do their own work, whether in class or at home. There will be no toleration for cheating. Students who copy, students who let others copy, and students who plagiarize are all considered to be cheating. No matter what the value of the work, students will receive a zero. The assignment may not be made up. In addition, students will be subject to school sanctions as well (see the student handbook for further information).

An Important Distinction: Collaborating vs. Copying

Students are welcome to ask each other about homework they find confusing. In fact, discussion among peers is both beneficial and encouraged. However, such cooperation is only truly helpful if all parties come to understand the material on their own. Students should then be able to leave the discussion, return to their own homework, and use their own words to explain the answer. This means that the submitted work should be individualized, reflecting each student's own wording and understanding. Work which does not meet this standard will be considered plagiarism.

Participation/Homework Late Policy:

1. Participation/Homework assignments received when due (or before) will earn full credit.
2. Participation/Homework not turned in on time will receive a **mandatory 20% off deduction**. You may still turn in late work on Participation/Homework assignments up to the date of the major grade assessment. Once the major grade assessment has been taken you are not longer allowed to turn in missing work from the Unit.
3. If you are absent on the due date of an assignment, please turn in the assignment upon returning to class for full credit.
4. You will have one day for each day missed to complete assignments when absent. Assignments given prior to the absence will be turned in the day you return. Example: Honeybear was assigned work that was due tomorrow. The next day Honeybear was sick from school. The next day I expect Honeybear to have his work done. If Honeybear does not have his work done then it is late and will receive a 20% deduction.

I have read Mr. Sinn's classroom guidelines and expectations. I take ownership for consequences received if I do not follow these guidelines and expectations during class.

Student signature: _____

Date: _____