

# United States Government Syllabus 2009-2010

**Course Title:** American Government

**Prerequisites:** United States History

**Course Goal:**

- To study the origin and development of democratic government for a better understanding of the American democratic system under the Constitution.
- To create a greater awareness of the individual role of a responsible citizen.
- To gain an appreciation for the many forms of government found in the world today.

**Course Objectives:**

- To gain the historical, ethical, cultural, geographic, economic, and sociopolitical literacy of the representative democracy in the United States.
- To examine our national identity.
- To describe the civic values, rights and responsibilities of a United States citizen.
- To refine basic study skills.
- To expand critical thinking skills.
- To enhance participatory skills necessary in a representative democracy.

**Enabling Objectives:** Specified in class

**Content Topics:**

- a. Foundations of American Government
- b. Legislative Branch
- c. Executive Branch
- d. Judicial Branch
- e. Civil Rights and Civil Liberties
- f. Participation in Government
- g. Public Policies and Services
- h. Political and Economic Systems
- i. State and local governments

**Basic Text:** Remy, Richard C., *United States Government Democracy in Action.*, New York, NY., Glencoe, 2003.

**Course Website:** [www.mrswilkesclasses.weebly.com](http://www.mrswilkesclasses.weebly.com)

Use the above website to follow assignments and access course handouts and information on a weekly basis. The site will be updated each weekend and will include course information for the upcoming week.

## Expectations for Government Students

All work is to be turned in on time. Late work will be graded as follows:

- Major Assignments: Highest grade awarded for late work is 69/F. After seven days, the student will receive a zero. Teachers may announce a “drop dead” date on a major assignment which means that it must be turned in on the due date whether or not the student is in school. Failure to do so will result in a zero.
- Come to class prepared: students are given a participation grade which will be lowered if a student is unprepared for class.
- Students should always use complete sentences when appropriate for written work.
- All major papers are to be typed and, in addition to a hard copy, should be turned in on a thumb drive for review at *turnitin.com*.
- Students should prepare their own study guides with teacher providing focus for exams.
- Minor assignments:
  - a. Work (including homework assignments) turned in late 10% for each day it is turned in late. After three days, students will have seven days to turn in late assignments and can only earn a grade of 69%.
  - b. Work assigned prior to student’s absence will be due when the student returns.
  - c. Work assigned during a student’s absence will be due on a date agreed upon by the teacher and the student.
  - d. Planned absences require the student to inform the teacher in advance and develop a plan for completing all work to be missed. Planned absences must be cleared by the Administration prior to absence.
  - e. Missed tests and quizzes will be made up after school on the day after the student returns unless otherwise coordinated with the teacher.

- f. Homework is due at the beginning of the class period and will be considered late after that point in time.
- g. If a student is in school on any part of the day on which the assignment is due, even if not this class, assignments must be turned in on that day or they will be late.
- h. Any exception to these policies is at the discretion of the teacher for exceptional situations.

**Evaluation:** Grades are weighted to achieve term averages. Items to be evaluated are:

- Homework assignments 15%
- Quizzes, worksheets, etc. 15%
- Tests 40%
- Projects, Papers, and Reports 20%
- Participation 10%
- Exams: Mid Term and End of Term exams will be administered.
  1. Mid Term Exam 20% of the Mid Term grade.
  2. End of Term Exam 20% of the End of Term grade.
  3. Final Course Grade Average of Mid Term and End of Term Grades

**Grading Scale:** The Peninsula Catholic grade scale will be used.

**Materials required:**

- Three-ring binder with pocket folders and dividers
- One, thumb drive to be used for Social Studies only
- Loose leaf paper
- One composition book

**Intellectual honesty, integrity and respect:** Students are expected to abide by the highest moral and ethical standards of conduct in the preparation and presentation of graded materials and will abide by the **PCHS Honor Code**. Such standards are founded on the basic concepts of honesty, integrity, and respect for self and others.

The **PCHS Honor Code** is based on the premise that PCHS students will not cheat, lie, or steal, nor tolerate those who do. During the course the following will apply: on written assignments and tests the student will hand write “I will abide by the Honor Code”. Violation of the Honor Code will be referred to the Honor Council.

**Test and Quizzes:** All work must be performed individually using only the resources specifically authorized by the teacher.

**Homework Assignments:** Students are expected to complete homework assignments individually, unless otherwise specified by the teacher, as a means to enhance the learning and mastery of critical information. When answering “Main Idea” and/or “Critical Thinking” questions the students will use their own words.

**Research assignments and projects:** All work must be original to the individual or assigned group. All research assignments will be typed, double-spaced, MLA standard for internal and works cited documentation and in 12 point font. In addition to the paper copy, research papers are to be copied on a thumb drive. All research assignments are subject to review by utilizing [turnitin.com](http://turnitin.com) to ensure the work is original to the student with proper documentation.

**Honors Credit:** Students may also pursue this course for **Honors** credit. This demands a greater expectation in the quantity and quality of the work as additional quality points will apply.

The expectations include the following:

1. Complete regular assignments and projects on time and in a quality manner
2. Complete additional Section questions in each chapter as assigned.
3. Complete Critical Thinking question on chapter tests.
4. Complete additional assignments such as reports and research.
5. Serve as group discussion leaders.

**Criteria for Honor’s Credit:** Maintain an 89% or higher average in every graded category (Homework, Tests, Quizzes, Class Work, Projects, Participation) which will be evaluated at the first Progress Report.

Students who meet these criteria will be allowed to continue pursuing American Government for Honors credit. In the event a student is unable to maintain the required 89% in all graded categories through the first progress report, the grades from work completed, to include the additional Honors Credit work, will be retained as a part of the student’s nine weeks grade with the understanding that no additional Honors assignments need to be completed and no honor credit will be given.

Honors students are expected to continue to maintain an overall 89% or better average for the remainder of the course.