

Government and Economics – Course Syllabus
Mr. Bakka

Course Description

This course is designed to provide the students with a basic understanding of the fundamental principles and key institutions of our country's political and economic systems. Within this framework the development of the students' knowledge of how our government system functions, of how to become an active participant in the political process and of how our economy affects their life will be stressed.

Another component of this course will consist of a review of various skills that are designed to increase the effectiveness of your study habits and the introduction of a series of skills that will help you interpret, analyze and evaluate social studies concepts. These skills will be reviewed and introduced as they relate to the content of study, to classroom activities or homework assignments.

Skill Development

Study Skills

- listening
- taking notes from a lecture
- studying from your notes
- test – taking strategies - for objective and essay tests
- how to write a position paper
- how to summarize a magazine article
- using resources responsibly

Social Science Skills

- identifying, locating, and evaluating a variety of sources of information
- identifying main ideas and supportive details in print and nonprint sources
- using precise summary notes and proper documentation from your sources
- categorizing researched information by:
 - selecting appropriate headings for your information
 - distinguishing between relevant and irrelevant information
 - understanding how the origin and purpose of a source affects its values and limitations
- speaking and writing effectively by:
 - talking in complete sentences
 - keeping to the topic
 - using appropriate visuals
 - spending sufficient time in planning and preparation for the presentation
 - thinking logically
 - communicating ideas coherently

- using a format that includes an introductory element, a body containing the basis of the exposition and a conclusion

Problem Solving Skills

- identifying and clarifying a problem
- the collection and the evaluation of data related to the problem
- using critical thinking skills to analyze and solve problems

Current Events

Whenever appropriate a part of each class will involve a discussion of important events that have occurred over the past 24 hours. To facilitate such discussions the students are requested to keep informed of the news by either reading a daily newspaper or by watching or listening to a daily newscast.

Text

The Challenge of Democracy – Janda, Berry, and Goldman

Supplements

- Various videos
- Class readings

Technology Quotient

By the conclusion of your senior year you are expected to demonstrate a proficiency in a variety of computer skills. Students will be assessed on 19 different computer skills throughout their four years at Mercyhurst. Each student will have to achieve a minimum technology quotient (TQ) of 3.5 on a 5.0 scale. This TQ achievement will be reflected in the student's personal Technology Accomplishment portfolio. The portfolio will be a cross-curriculum collection of projects.

Basis for Grading

Exams, homework assignments, participation, presentations, and writing assignments all will be used to determine a student's grade. Students are advised to save a copy in their server folders of all graded work generated by computer and a hard copy of all other work. In the event of a missing assignment, the burden of proof that the assignment was completed by the deadline rests with the student. Students should also save all graded and returned papers in case of a grade question. As a faculty member I will strive to respect each individual as not only a student but also as a person. As a community we will strive to make the statement of integrity an integral part of our development as teachers and students.

Course of Study

United States Governments – Terms 1 and 2

- forms of governments
- purposes of government
- characteristics of a democracy
- historical and theoretical origins of the United States government
- fundamental principles of the U.S. Constitution
- process of constitutional change
- citizenship rights and responsibilities
- parties and politics
- voting rights and elections
- role played by public opinion and interest groups in the U.S. political system
- national government – the Congress, the Executive Branch, the Judicial Branch
- state and local governments
- current local, state and national political issues

Economics – Term 3

- American capitalist system
- globalization
- production possibilities curve
- opportunity cost
- supply and demand
- elasticity of demand
- marginal product and diminishing returns
- costs in production
- marketing
- role of the government

Have a great year