

Mark Twain (Samuel Clemens) once said: "Government is not reason; it is not eloquence; it is force! It is a dangerous servant and a terrible master."

Instructor Information:

Instructor: George Blair

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Government Course Description: Government is an 18-week course that is required for graduation. Students who do not successfully complete this course will need to complete the course in a later semester in order to graduate.

This is a senior level course that requires commitment & work to successfully complete. I take for granted that students in this course have suitable study skills, critical thinking, research skills, & have the personal responsibility to complete reading, homework, & research at home. We have to move through a large amount of material very quickly to survey all of the required information in the short time available.

Specific Course Objectives: This course meets the requirements of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). You can see specific course objectives at:
<http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/rules/tac/chapter113/ch113c.html#113.35>

Grade Categories & Weighting

-All semester grades count 80% of the final grade and fall into the following categories:

-Test Category	(50% of semester grade)	Includes all tests & most projects
-Quiz Category	(30% of semester grade)	Includes all quizzes
-Daily Category	(20% of semester grade)	Includes all daily work & homework

-The Final Test is in a separate category and counts 20% of the final grade.

-Absence, Tardy, and Grading Procedure:

-Tardies: Habitual tardiness shows disrespect and a lack of courtesy toward the class as a whole, and toward the teacher. All unexcused tardies will be handled in accordance with District and Clemens policies. Additional information can be found in the Student Handbook.

-Absence & the Role of the Attendance Office: Only the attendance office can determine if an absence is marked "excused" or not. I have no input into this decision. The attendance office is the final authority on all things that have to do with attendance.

-Here is how I work absences:

-You have 5 days following your return to class to complete work missed due to absence. (Unless your absence was more than 5 consecutive days in length.)

-It is your responsibility to obtain & complete missed work. I do not take "I didn't know I missed work" as an excuse. An alternate assignment may be necessary for missed videos or other classwork, so check the calendar or see me immediately if you missed a video or an in-class project.

-Any work turned in after the 5 day limit is considered late and will be graded to a maximum of 50.

Late Work: Any assignment not turned in when collected or not completed by the 5 day makeup limit following an absence is considered late. Late work will be graded to a maximum of 50%. Long term assignments are not extended due to periodic absences after the project was assigned. See me if you have emergencies that may prevent you from turning assignments in on-time.

-Grades:

- I update grades in Gradespeed (the District's online electronic gradebook) at least once weekly.
- Grades may be checked anytime on Gradespeed.

Computer Access Requirements: In today's world, computer literacy is necessary for college and most jobs. Most of my written homework and projects require the use of a computer with Internet access. If you do not have a computer at home that can be used, you will need to use the computer labs at school. These computers are usually available before & after school, & during lunch.

Extra Help: Let me know if you need extra help so that we can set up an appointment.

The Basic 8 Classroom Rules:

- You are here to learn. Behavior that distracts from teaching and learning will not be tolerated.
- Treat everyone in my room with courtesy & respect at all times.
- Be in your assigned seat throughout the class unless given permission to be up.
- Please follow all rules. If you break the rules, be willing to accept the consequences.
- I expect students to clean up after themselves. Nobody leaves until the room is clean.
- Take care of school property. Willful damage is considered vandalism.
- As in life, minimum effort will usually result in a minimum reward (or grade). Always do your best.
- Class ends when the teacher dismisses the class. Stay in your seats until class is dismissed.

Dishonesty & Cheating: Dishonesty & cheating of any kind is not tolerated. The most obvious forms of dishonesty & cheating are copying answers during a test or plagiarizing someone else's written work on a project. Cutting and pasting directly off the Internet is also a common form of plagiarism. Copying answers directly from a classmate's homework in order to complete your own homework is also considered cheating. Unless the assignment is specifically a group assignment, then I expect you to complete your own work. If you are caught cheating you will receive a zero for the assignment, a referral will be written, and your parents will be notified. If the cheating involves sharing homework answers, then the grade of both people involved will be reduced.

George Blair

Social Studies Department Chairman

Teacher of AP Government, Dual Credit Government, Standard Level Government, & Dual Credit US History

Adjunct Instructor of Government, St. Philips College