Applied Government

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**“If we're going to have a successful democratic society, we have to have a well educated and healthy citizenry.”
 -Thomas Jefferson

COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This course will take a *college-prep* approach to understanding the formation and application of the United States government. During the course of the year we will examine the historical foundation of the Constitution, evolution and modifications to the Constitution, historical interpretations, current trends, and the future of our government. Understanding of not only how the government runs, but the theories behind its application will be essential as contemporary and historic trends will be explored.

Particular importance will be placed on the following themes:
 1) What is power and where is it derived
 2) What is meant by the “American” mind and American Exceptionalism.
 3) What is the history and structure of government created by our founders
 4) Why our founders did not establish a democracy and if not a democracy, what are we
 5) How the Constitution affects our lives and protects our rights
 6) What landmark court cases helped to reshape the landscape of America
 7) Why political parties developed and what purposes do they serve
 8) What is ideology, what factors affect its development, and how does it skew our views on policy
 9) How candidates for office are nominated and the evolution of the election process
 10) What cleavages are found in society and what issues affect a voter’s preference

Through lively dialogue this class will help promote greater civic participation by ensuring that when it comes time to vote in an election or take a stand on an issue students can and will do so from a thoughtful and informed perspective. Students will also be provided with the knowledge and skills they need to make sense of the headlines and form reasoned judgments. Students are encouraged but not required to attend the week-long Close Up program in Washington DC during the spring.

Unlike regular government, advanced government will work toward a deeper level of learning which includes multiple debates, projects, and simulations to get an in-depth look at the material being studied. However, as a college-prep course, there will be college-like expectations that include homework, critical thinking, and class participation. Moreover, emphasis will be placed on writing and public speaking. Involvement in this class demonstrates a willingness to engage in each of those aforementioned criteria. **That said, I will try to limit homework to readings and videos but with the understanding at certain points there will be a significant amount.** If you ever feel overwhelmed or inundated, please chat with me and I will make every effort to allay your concerns within the parameters of class needs.

Another difference with regular government is advanced government is class is discussion oriented. Participate. Participation in discussions and asking questions undoubtedly will help someone shyer and meeker who has the same misunderstanding understand the class material better. Last year's class said they learned a lot from each other. Each person has a unique life experience and outlook. Do not deprive anyone of the opportunity to learn from your uniqueness. Make this class your own. Let's go down some rabbit holes. After all, my goals with applied government is for you to believe in something, know what you are talking about, and being able to articulate and convince others of those views.

If you are a grade grubber, someone that values grades more than learning and/or prefers to just do worksheets and notes so you can move on-this class is not for you. Please transfer to the regular government class. I want active participants that are willing to be the time, energy, and effort into making this class a success.

Lastly, this is a dual credit class and college credit may be earned through Miles Community College by successfully completing the course requirements. Talk to Mrs. Collins for more information.

**The 3 C’s of Government Class:** Citizenship (What are your ***responsibilities*** as a citizen), Civility (treat each other with ***respect***), and Consensus (common ground).

 ***“In the long run every Government is the exact symbol of its People, with their wisdom and unwisdom; we have to say, like people like government.”*  -Thomas Carlyle**

**Why Take Government? What is the Point?:** Government is the story of ***us***-of the people and their interactions, laws and institutions, both past and present and how they came to be and this helps us understand the country and our place in it.

**Teach Them: On Parents and Civic Duty**This is a guest blog post written by: Amber Coleman-Mortley [@MomOfAllCapes](https://twitter.com/momofallcapes)



Many current events highlight the failings of parents as civic educators… Whether it’s the death of an endangered zoo animal; the passing off of a rape as a frivolous, “boys will be boys” sexual encounter; to even the ways in which we interact with each other around controversial issues… the media has been inundated with stories about the inability of young adults and children to respectfully and productively participate in the world around them.  What responsibility do parents have in releasing good citizens into the wild?

We think of civic education (or the lack thereof) as the sole responsibility of our already crumbling education system… But kids spend a vast majority of their time watching their parents. And although we cannot guarantee that parents can cultivate a completely tolerant, loving, compassionate, and civic minded person, we can at least try to ensure that we build mindsets in our children that can hopefully combat their primal urges of selfishness.

Parents, 

Don’t be afraid to teach your kids right and wrong. To undo any “rights and wrongs” you learned from your own parents that don’t apply today…

Don’t be afraid to teach your children…
Teach them about respect…
Respect for boundaries, bodies, ideas, time, effort, voices, and differences

Teach them about the post office, the capital building, NASA, the NSA, the water treatment plants, landfills, museums and other public entities that guide our daily lives.

Teach them about why states rights and federal mandates are important tensions to thoughtfully consider when issues like Flint, Michigan arise.
Teach them to learn from the past.

Teach them how to vote on issues and not with party.
Take them with you to the poll booth
Teach them HOW our government works,
Who does what, and how it effects change.

Teach them that marching and using hashtags are nothing without micro-solutions
Teach them to feed the poor, to clothe the naked, to heal the sick
Teach them that one person can make great positive or negative change.
Teach them that they can be that person. It’s up to them to make that choice.

Teach them that their mayor and school board are more important than the president on the majority of the days in their lifetime

Teach them that the community they live in is a direct result of the income you make, the people you vote for, the allocation of tax dollars…

And that citizens can change that significantly with petitions, meetings and voting booths.

Engage them in debate
Have them question family values and religious beliefs
Show them what forgiveness is
Emulate compassion.

Teach boys to be loving, strong men, but not in opposition to or replacement of femininity
Teach girls to be strong, loving women, but not in opposition to or replacement of masculinity
Teach them that the way we treat each other is a reflection on how much we love ourselves
Teach them that kindness is a democratic religion not the result of religious dogma.

Teach them that boundaries are necessary for all of us to survive safely
Teach them that everyone deserves to be heard but not everyone will get their way

Teach them about violence and where it leads
Teach them that fear is easier than love but decisions rooted in love are everlasting.

Teach them that the garbage man is just as important as the governor
And that both are respectable, important members of an effective society.

Teach them to listen…
Teach them to challenge their beliefs by listening to people with opposing vantage points
Teach them to bring everyone to the table
Teach them that giving rights to everyone does not take rights away from anyone.

Teach them that the media is an entertainment vehicle but not necessarily an educational platform
Teach them that we lose some stories in one-sidedness
Teach them that many histories exist at once
And that all stories have multiple truths

Don’t be afraid to Google what you don’t know, using judgement to discern fact from fiction
Don’t be afraid to say you were wrong
Don’t be afraid to look back with shame
Don’t be afraid to feel for someone who looks and lives nothing like you
Don’t be afraid to boldly stand up for what is best for our society even if it’s not best for your family
Don’t be afraid…

And when all else fails…. we all must remember that we all live here together. For now, the earth is our home.

The future is placed on the backs of our children. All of our failed policies, wars, environmental destruction, and political mistakes are their burden… All of our victories are their future ways of life. We must create individuals who are strong enough to hold society high above their heads and walk boldly together into the light without fear.  But first, you must teach them.

Blog post written by: Amber Coleman-Mortley [@MomOfAllCapes](https://twitter.com/momofallcapes)

See more at: <http://www.momofallcapes.com/blog/teach-them-on-parents-and-civic-duty>

**“Uncoachable kids become Unemployable Adults; let your kids get used to someone being tough on them. It’s life, get over it.” -Patrick Murphy, Alabama Softball

Class Philosophy:** Like a coach, a teacher’s job is more than teaching the A, B, C’s and 1, 2, 3’s. Consequently, like a coach, I will harass, cajole, compliment, critique, and do whatever is necessary to not just work on improving your content knowledge but to motivate you to become a democratic citizen worthy of calling yourself a Sidney High School graduate. If I am tough on you, it is because I see potential.
 **Class Preparation:** If you forget your notes, pocket constitution, assignment, etc. in your locker, car or anywhere else, you can either take a tardy and retrieve the item or either not use the material or receive a zero.

**LATE WORK IS NOT ACCEPTED:** Class assignments will be expected to be completed and turned in on time. If the due date is at the end of the class, any material that is handed in after the bell signifying the start of the next class period, the assignment will be counted as a zero. If the due date is the following day, homework should be handed in as you enter the classroom and any assignment handed in thereafter will also be counted as a missed assignment.

 **Class Expectations:** If you are on time, you are late.  If you are early, you are on time.  If you are late, you are left. Can be described as coming to class prepared and ready to be productive. This involves paying attention and taking notes, participating in class discussions, asking and answering questions, and by positively contributing to class on a regular basis. Participation in class discussions will not only help you learn more about the topic being covered but will also makes the class more enjoyable. Take ownership of the class and direct the class towards the type of materials and topics you would like to discuss and find enjoyable. This does not involve misusing your phone, sleeping in class, being disruptive, talking when I am talking, etc. We will try to work bell to bell. Please do not close your book early and anticipate me finishing a lecture, etc. I’ll try not to waste your time if you do not waste mine and your peers.

**General Class Rules:** Cell Phones, Masks, Bathroom, Food and Drink, etc.

**Questions/Comments/Concerns:** If you have any questions, comments, or concerns throughout the course of the school year please do not hesitate to come and discuss the issue with me. My door is always open for discussion and you may come and discuss any problem before or after class/school. I will be more than willing to discuss any problems that you might have concerning class. I cannot help you if you choose not to make the effort to visit with me! I appreciate any and all feedback that I can receive and I hope you enjoy the class and this school year.

**Why Take Government? What is the Point?:** Government is the story of *us*-of the people and their interactions, laws and institutions, both past and present and how they came to be and this helps us understand the country and our place in it.

*In the long run every Government is the exact symbol of its People, with their wisdom and unwisdom; we have to say, like people like government.***-Thomas Carlyle**

Your kids bored at school? Tell them to get over it
BY LAURA HANBY HUDGENS: *Laura Hanby Hudgens is a part-time high school teacher, a freelance writer and a mom of four. She lives with her husband and children on a buffalo farm in the Ozark Hills.*

*Special to The Washington Post*
Any discussion about the problems in American education – and what is to blame for these problems – will likely include one or all of the usual suspects: inadequate and unequal funding, a lack of resources, underpaid and overworked teachers, over-testing, poverty and heavy-handed legislation.

As a teacher and the mother of four public-school-educated children, I can tell you that all of these things have negatively impacted our schools. All of these things are problems.

But there is another problem, one that is plaguing many of America’s classrooms and jeopardizing the future of our children, yet it is rarely addressed - at least not as it should be. That problem is apathy. In classrooms all over the country, the teacher cares more about her students’ grades, learning and futures than they do.

Teachers are expected to combat apathy by continually finding new and innovative ways to reach students - through multimedia lessons, group work, games, alternative assessments or whatever it takes. To ensure student engagement and skill acquisition, we must teach to the individual learning styles, interests and abilities of each of our students. If a student can’t learn the way we teach, we must teach the way he learns - times infinity.

Sadly, all the attempts to dazzle and awe eventually wear some teachers down. They burn out. They leave a profession they are good at and once felt called to.

However, the loss of good teachers isn’t even the worst effect of the be-all-things-to-all-people mentality. The real danger is that this way of thinking has shifted the responsibility of learning, and of caring about learning, from the student to the teacher. Because it isn’t just administrators and parents who believe that it is a teacher’s job to make learning fun. Kids believe it, too. As a result, we have a generation of students who think that if a lesson or an assignment or a class is not interesting, if it isn’t engaging and fun and inspiring, then it simply isn’t worth caring about. They are not obligated to care about it. It’s a teacher’s job to make all learning exciting. If the teacher hasn’t lived up to her responsibility, why should the child?

In a workshop I recently attended, teachers were told that kids are so attracted to video games because of the constant feedback - the progress, praise and prizes. We were encouraged to design our instruction more like a video game. How else can we expect to hold their attention?

That is a frightening mentality because it has created a generation of consumer learners. Many students don’t see education as a privilege. They see it as a product. And if they don’t like the salesperson, if they aren’t impressed with how it’s packaged, they aren’t buying.

But our kids have to learn to be self-motivated because at some point in every person’s life, either at school or in a job or in a marriage, he or she will have to buck up and say, “This is hard. This is boring. I don’t want to do this. But I’m doing it anyway. And I’ll do my best.”

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So how do parents and educators teach kids to be self-motivated? There are no easy answers. But there are two things that need to happen.

First, we have to change the national conversation about education. This doesn’t mean that educators should stop trying to improve instruction, but it does mean that there have to be more conversations about the role students play in ensuring their own learning. Teachers, parents, administrators and, of course, the students have to start making self-motivation an educational focus and priority. Self-motivation should be the new educational buzzword -- every bit as prevalent and powerful as any we’ve seen shape our classrooms in the last few decades.

In the meantime, teachers and parents need practical strategies for encouraging students to take responsibility for their own learning. That is the second thing that has to happen. On a basic level we need to help our kids develop habits and discipline that will lead to academic success.

Unfortunately in a consumer-oriented educational system, words such as habit and discipline have all but gone by the wayside. We emphasize concepts like differentiation, higher-order thinking, cooperative learning and data-driven instruction over student responsibilities like organization, perseverance and hard work.

The good news (at least for kids) is that the best hope for developing any habit is to start small - especially when good habits need to replace bad ones.

I’ve used the start-small strategy with my kids. Maybe it’s because he’s the baby of the family, but I have somehow let 12 years go by without helping my youngest son develop good habits when it comes to keeping his room clean and taking care of his things. Now his room is a disaster.

The solution isn’t to insist he do one massive overhaul. If I do that, I am likely to walk into a seemingly spotless room only to discover 400 baseball cards, half his spring wardrobe and last year’s Halloween candy stashed under his bed. Instead, I’m encouraging him to take one thing at a time and do it little by little. Twenty minutes a day. First the closet. Then the drawers. Then under the bed. This keeps him from becoming overwhelmed and frustrated and allows him to experience several small successes.

When the job is done, not only will he have a clean room, but he will have learned that perseverance pays off.

This is the same approach I take with my students who struggle with apathy. I encourage them to start small, to start with one class and to give 100 percent in that class. I talk to them about specific strategies: Sit in the front. Take notes. Ask questions. Be organized. Do all the work. Find a study partner. It might be difficult for a struggling student to take on that kind of responsibility seven periods a day, but often students are willing to commit to 100 percent in one class.

And when students experience hard-won success in one class, they will be empowered by that success and likely apply that newly learned work ethic to other classes and pursuits.

Success breeds success, and success is an excellent motivator.

Not only does success motivate, but it can also inspire, and here is where we move from sheer determination to passion - the true goal of education. No matter how innovative the instruction, it’s unlikely that a student will grow to love a class if he is just getting by. But the kid who started out just trudging through history might find that he has a passion for it once he applies himself. A student who once wrote half-hearted essays might find her talent and her voice when she begins to take writing seriously.

The fact is that it’s rare (except in the movies) that even the most brilliant teacher can motivate an apathetic student to embrace a lifetime of learning. On a really good day, we can spark a child’s interest in the lesson. But in the long term, the desire to learn and improve has to come from within.

The world isn’t a video game. It doesn’t always offer fun and exciting paths through the mazes of life. So unless we change the way we approach education to include an emphasis on student responsibility, and unless we give our students the basic tools they need to accept that responsibility, we really haven’t taught them much at all.

**GRADING:** Each quarter grade will be based on a variety of in-class exercises, projects, and tests that will ALL be categorized together. The Semester grades will be figured with each quarter grade counting towards 2/5 of the final grade and the semester exam/project accounting for the remaining 1/5.

* **DAILY WORK/HOMEWORK:** Each week there will be a number of in-class and homework assignments given. Note packets culminating in a true-false review, icivics and other government related games, discussion reflections, exit tickets, etc are among the other classwork we will be using to provide a well-rounded understanding of the chapters we are covering.

If we become ideological, then we’re blind to evidence. We can only hear people that already agree with us. We think we know everything right now, we’ve got nothing to learn from anybody, and the most important thing we can do is impose our views on everyone else. And you can choose that course here. But I am telling you it doesn’t work…The only thing that works is cooperation. -Bill Clinton 2013

* **ARTICLE REVIEW/DISCUSSION WORKSHEETS/NEWS DAY EXIT TICKETS:**
* Don’t deprive others of your unique life experiences and take advantage of others unique life experiences, especially your Parent, Guardians, Adults in your life.
* Respect others people enough you understand their opinion BEFORE you agree/disagree.
* “My Thoughts Now” Section: writing sometimes allows you to formulate an opinion, maybe different than you started. Take your time and write longer than you normally think necessary. Think of this as brainstorming.
* Don’t be beholden to your initial thoughts or opinions. Read all the material BEFORE you make your final conclusion; Be Open-Minded and be willing to change your mind.
* **ESSAYS/POLITICAL CARTOONS:** The ability to critically think, write, synthesize information, and cogently articulate a response appears to be fading away in the quick response world of 140 characters that epitomizes social media. We will occasionally analyze a political cartoon or primary source document such as the Federalist Papers.
* **PROJECTS: MOOT COURTS, DEBATES, HARKNESSES, SIMULATIONS, POSTERBOARDS, etc:**
These are the heart of the class and periodically assigned to reinforce class material. We will attempt to enrich our understanding of complex issues by engaging in projects to “apply” government knowledge that we are learning. Janet Christoffersen, Kathy Bidegaray, Thom Barnhart, or whomever else has graciously volunteers will help you get ready and be successful. These activities will focus on a landmark court case and/or a contemporary issue that will require your thoughts and opinion using logical reasoning and critical thinking. It is expected you perform some independent research with the knowledge that you will only have the expertise of Janet, Kathy, or Thom to supplement your research, not provide it to you. Many, if not all, of these will be performed in public at Kiwanis, the Middle School for the 8th Graders, or in the High School Commons area.

**Note:** Project grades almost universally will be self- graded. These self-evaluations have historically been very effective (although not universally loved) and work best when students are truthful, reflective, honest with yourself and not too critical or complimentary, thoughtful, and deliberative.

* **EXAMS:** If we have them, Tests will be approximately 50 questions worth 100 points that you have bell to bell to complete. No more time. Any handouts or handwritten notes may be used, but be aware that if you are constantly flipping through notes, you may not have time to finish the test.
* **CIVIC EXTENSIONS:** To be a member of the community means to volunteer, join civic associations, run for public office, etc. These are also essential elements to a democracy. Consider yourself lucky to live in an active community in which so many normal, everyday people volunteer their time to benefit others and make Sidney a better place to live. Consequently, each student is expected to complete minimally one of each of the following:
* ***CIVIC ENGAGEMENT (conducted outside the school/in the community and outside of school hours)***
* 1 hour minimum unless it’s a short meeting in which you must attend and stay for the **entire** community meeting (city council, school board, county commissioners etc), get a signed agenda verifying your attendance, and take avid notes on the meeting on that back of the agenda that you will turn in for credit with a reflection.
* Attend political function and take avid notes that you will turn in for credit with a reflection
* Attend a Mondak Heritage Center event related to civics education, get a program signed by the director or volunteers and write up a reflection **or** visit the museum (minimum 1 hour) and review artifacts **(second option only available until mid-term)**
* Set up and participate in a police ride along. Take notes of the experience or reflect on what occurred.
* If there are any other ideas, please chat with me about pre-approval. I will not negotiate after the fact.
* ***CIVIC ENRICHMENT (associated with the school BUT conducted outside of school hours)***
* APC Meeting: Attend, participate, and fill out the reflection form.
* TED Talk: Attend, participate, and fill out the reflection form.
* Attend a social science video when offered and fill out the required form.
* If there are any other ideas, please chat with me about pre-approval. I will not negotiate after the fact.
* ***CIVIC PARTICIPATION (volunteerism completed outside of school hours to benefit the school and/or community)***
* Talon/Concessions (Max 1 Per Quarter): Have your advisor sign a form signifying your completion with a short synopsis of what you did and how it fulfilled the obligation.
* Volunteer at the MonDak Heritage Society, Boys and Girls Club, etc.
* If there are any other ideas, please chat with me about pre-approval. I will not negotiate after the fact.

**Extra Credit Note:** THREE civic extensions grades each quarter will be applied to the gradebook representing each of the aforementioned three categories. Any additionally civic participation will be extra credit for the subsequent project or test. For those who do not complete any of the civic participation, a blank will remain in the gradebook.

 **\*\* bonus points can never allow a test score to surpass the 100% mark. \*\***

* **OTHER:** “The American Revolution” by Gordon Wood and “1984” by George Orwell will likely be assigned. Other crazy ideas not mentioned about possibly could be added. For example, it not uncommon that we will Zoom with our U.S. Senators and other elected leaders or have them in class, or deliberate with other schools via zoom or another platform. The class will try and utilize our wonderful textbook but expect to spend most of our class otherwise.
* **SEMESTER PROJECT:** In lieu of a semester exam the first semester there will be a semester project which will require prep work completed outside of class and completed during the assigned testing period.