

# PETERS TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL

## COURSE SYLLABUS: ACADEMIC GOVERNMENT

### Course Overview and Essential Skills

This course is an academic look at American Government. Through this course students will observe the creation and history of the American system of government. As students construct their own understanding of American politics, they will begin to breakdown the system into specific units of study. Units will include an introduction to governmental systems, the *US Constitution*, the three branches of government, participation in government, and state and local level governments. Each unit of study will provide students with an opportunity to look, in detail, at various facets of the U.S. Constitution and contemporary issues surrounding the government of the United States.

At the completion of this course, students will have a firm knowledge of the U.S. Constitution, American politics today, and insight on becoming an active American citizen. In addition, students will learn to become proficient in providing argumentation through analyzation of evidence and primary resources.

### Course Textbook and Required Materials

- United States Government: Our Democracy (2016) ISBN#:978-0-07-663453-8
- Other: Students will receive a login to the following websites:
  - <https://connected.mcgraw-hill.com/connected/login.do> (online textbook)
  - [www.edmodo.com](http://www.edmodo.com) (teacher website)
- Binder, writing utensils, daily planner
- **Online Resources-** due to the nature of this course, lessons, activities, and content will often deviate from the class text. In an effort to understand and contextualize current events in American Government; students will receive articles and videos from reputable news and educational sources. Examples of these sources may include: *CNN, MSNBC, CSPAN, FOX News*, etc.

### Course Outline of Material Covered:

Unit or Topic	Concepts/Skills/Resources	Timeframe
Introduction to Government and the US Constitution	<p>The purpose of this unit is to provide students with an introduction to the idea of government and the foundations of our American government. Students will consider the origins and purposes of governmental systems as well as their role in our modern world. Additional topics will include theories of government, types of government, and the methods by which the <i>U.S. Constitution</i> can be amended. At the conclusion of this unit, students will have an understanding of why governments are created, what impacts this formation, and how these factors have led to the structure and principles of the American form of government.</p> <p>Students will create their own examples of various governmental systems, compare and contrast the positives and negatives of various governmental structures, identify different types of government internationally, research the events that lead to the writing and passing of the Constitution, analyze and categorize the various amendments, write their own "Classroom Constitution", and evaluate the principles of democracy found in the US Constitution.</p> <p>CNN/MSNBC/FOX News – Current events</p> <p>The purpose of this unit is to familiarize students with the</p>	6 weeks

<p>Legislative Branch</p>	<p>organization, development, powers, and duties of Congress. A major focus of the unit will be on the legislative process, how a bill becomes a law, and influences on the legislative branch. By the end of this unit, students will be able to discuss the powers, responsibilities, influences, and actions of the United States Congress.</p> <p>Students will participate in a mock congress, pass a bill through the appropriate steps, analyze powers provided by Article 1 of the US Constitution, question the impact of lobbying and polarization on the US Congress, analyze the impact of redistricting and the use of gerrymandering, assess the impact of party majority in the House and Senate.</p> <p><i>Frontline:</i> Documentaries (Immigration Battle) C-SPAN/ C-SPAN2</p>	<p>7 weeks</p>
<p>Executive Branch</p>	<p>The purpose of this unit is to familiarize students with the role of the President and Vice President in the American government system, introduce the concept of the Presidential Cabinet, and create an understanding of the various parts of the federal workforce. Additional topics will include steps to electing the President, how citizens participate as voters, presidential powers and roles, the influence of cabinet members, the need for an Executive Office of the President, the changing civil service, and the continued role of the federal bureaucracy.</p> <p>Students will participate in a mock election, create a Presidential line of succession, Analyze powers provided to the president by the US Constitution and how these powers have changed over time, identify the changing role of the Vice President</p> <p><i>PBS:</i> Inside the Obama White House <i>NBC:</i> Mike Wallace: A Day in the White <i>Frontline:</i> Documentaries CNN/MSNBC/Fox News election coverage</p>	<p>7 weeks</p>
<p>Judicial Branch</p>	<p>The purpose of this unit is to familiarize students with the role of the US Supreme Court and the federal court system in American government. Additional topics include the structure of the federal courts, how the Supreme Court functions, and landmark court decisions. By the end of the unit, students should have a strong understanding of the role of the federal court system in American life.</p> <p>Students will participate in a mock trial, analyze article 3 of the Constitution and several influential Supreme Court cases, analyze the role of law and an independent judiciary, apply first amendment rights to real world scenarios, consider new amendments to the Constitution, write amicus briefs and writs of certiorari, evaluate the backgrounds and political ideologies of Supreme Court justices</p> <p><i>Frontline:</i> Documentaries (Gunned Down) <i>SCOTUS Part 1-3</i> (PBS) C-SPAN, Comedy Central, CNN, MSNBC, FOX News</p>	<p>6 weeks</p>

<p>Participating in Democracy</p>	<p>The purpose of this unit is to familiarize students with the different ways in which citizens can participate in the democratic process. Additional topics include the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, the types of elections, the various influences on voting, political parties and interest groups, and the role of mass media in today's society. By the end of the unit, students will be able to utilize the knowledge they have gained through research and group projects highlighting special interest groups and mass media.</p> <p>Students will identify with political ideologies and parties, research the impact of lobbying, assess the impact of money in politics, debate campaign practices, build an understanding of multiple perspectives on contemporary issues, understand the impact of the <i>Citizen's Untied</i> case.</p> <p>I Side With.com poll  Comedy Central: Stephen Colbert creates a SuperPAC  OpenSecrets.com  Think tanks: KATO, Center for American Progress  CNN: Race for the White House</p>	<p>8 weeks</p>
<p>Foreign and Domestic Policy Intersections</p>	<p>Students will investigate the role of American Democracy in the contemporary world. Content will include previous American foreign policy, impact of and changes considered to American Foreign policy. Students will use currents to analyze the international role of American government. Students will analyze the various methods used to conduct foreign policy and the impact on other nations.</p> <p>Students will investigate historical and current goals of foreign policy, analyze various policy tools available, complete a contemporary issue case study, investigate the foreign policy powers of the branches, discuss successes and failures and differing policy prescriptions, consider the impact of isolationism vs globalization</p> <p>CNN, MSNBC, FOX News  <i>Frontline: Putin's Plan/ Return of the Czar</i></p>	<p>2 weeks</p>

***\*Depending on the needs of the class or changes in the school year, the course outline is subject to change.***