**Government & Civics**

Course Outline and Guiding Questions

**Week #1-2**

**Week #3**

**Week #4**

**Week #5-6**

**Unit 1**

**Ch1: Gov 101 (Principles of Government)**

What is Government and what is its purpose?

What is the difference between Government and Economy? (See also Ch 22 & 23 content)

What kinds of governments exist? What makes them different? (Ch 22 content)

What form of government do we have?

Who has power/authority?

What does it mean to be a citizen?

Why do we use Capitalism as our system of Economy? (see also Ch 23)

**Ch2: Origins of the US Government**

What are the origins of our governmental system? (see Ch 22 content)

When and why did the American Revolution take place?

What was the Declaration of Independence?

What was the Articles of Confederation?

What is a constitution? What is its purpose?

How and why was the American Constitution created?

How does he Constitution reflect the times in which it was written?

**Ch3: The Constitution**

What is the purpose of the Constitution?

What guiding principles is the Constitution based on? (see also Ch 22 sec 2)

How can changes be made to the Constitution?

What changes have been made in the past?

How has the Constitution lasted through changing times?

**Ch4: Federalism**

What is Federalism?

How is power shared between the Federal, State, and Local levels?

**Ch19-20-21: Civil Liberties**

What are civil liberties and “unalienable rights”?

What rights are protected by the Bill of Rights?

How can the judiciary balance individual rights with the common good?

Why are there ongoing struggles for civil rights?

**Week #7**

**Week #8**

**Week #9**

End 1st Quarter

**Week #10**

**Week #11**

**Unit 2**

**Ch5: Political Parties**

What is a Political Party?

What do Political Parties do?

Why do we have a Two-Party system?

Are Political Parties helpful or harmful to our democracy?

**Ch6: Voters and Voter Behavior**

What is the history of the right to vote in America?

-Why and how has the right to vote been withheld from certain groups of people; who and when?

Why do voters act as they do?

-What factors might prevent a person from casting a vote in an election?

-What factors influence how a person votes in an election?

**Ch7: The Electoral Process**

What is the electoral process and what are its parts?

How fair and effective is the electoral process?

How are candidates nominated?

How does money and fundraising rules affect campaigns and their outcomes?

**Ch8: Media and Opinion**

What sources and factors influence public opinion?

How is public opinion measured?

How has mass media evolved in contemporary American history (especially recently)?

What is the place of the media and public opinion in a democracy?

**Ch9: Interest Groups**

What is an interest group… and what isn’t?

Are interest groups good or bad?

To what extent do interest groups advance or harm democracy?

How do interest groups apply direct pressure on government?

**Week #12**

**Week #13**

**Week #14-15**

**Week #16**

**Unit 3**

**Ch10: Congress**

What is Congress and what does it do?

Whose views should members of Congress represent?

What is and why do we have a bicameral Legislative body?

Who are our (we here in SW Florida) Congressional representatives and what are their political views?

**Ch11: Powers of Congress**

What powers does Congress possess?

What are the limits of Congress’ powers?

Are the limits that the Constitution places on the powers of Congress too narrow, too broad, or about right in today’s world?

**Ch12: The Legislative Process**

How are laws made?

How is Congress organized?

What powers are granted to the Congress by the Constitution?

How are Congressional powers limited by the Constitution?

How do Congressional Committees influence the legislative process?

How do the House and Senate compare?

Can or should the lawmaking process be improved?

**Unit 4**

**Ch13: The Presidency**

What is the President’s job description?

What is the role of the Vice President?

What is the electoral process for nominating candidates for president?

How are Presidential campaigns organized?

What is the role of the media and interest groups in the selection of a president?

Does the current electoral process result in the best candidates for President?

**Ch14: The Presidency in Action**

What powers and roles are given to the President in the Constitution?

How have the powers of the President changed over time?

How are the powers of the President limited by the Constitution?

How have past Presidents used or abused the powers of the presidency?

How much power should the President have?

**Week #17**

**Week #18**

End of Semester

Final Exam!

**Ch16: Financing Government**

How does the Federal Government get the money it needs to run the country?

What does the Constitution say concerning the funding of government?

What are tax dollars used to pay for?

How are decisions about spending and the nation’s budget made?

Why does the Federal Government borrow money?

How should the federal budget reflect Americans’ priorities?

**Ch17: Foreign Policy and National Defense**

What is a foreign policy? What is diplomacy?

What issues shape a foreign policy between two or more nations?

How has America’s history of foreign policy had an impact on the development of world affairs?

How is the issue of national security handled in our government?

What organizations and agencies have come into existence for the sake of national, regional, and global safety?

How should the United States interact with other countries?