



## GOVERNMENT

2011 - 2012 / 5771 - 5772

Instructor: Mr. Cook

Room: A

Time: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday: 3:13-3:59; Thursday: 9:27-10:12

Contact Information: rcook@temima.org; phone number available by request

**GOALS:** The goals of this course are as follows:

- To give students an understanding of the structures and institutions of the American government
- To study the long debate about the meanings of the Constitution and the proper role of the federal government
- To improve students' critical thinking, researching, and writing skills

We will use as many tools as possible to reach these goals over the course of this year. This means, certainly, that we will have reading and writing assignments. We will also use other means to attain these goals: research papers, debates, speeches, and other projects.

**SUPPLIES:** All students are expected to have the following in class:

- A loose-leaf binder with lined paper for taking notes, capable of accepting handouts, and
- Pens or pencils for note-taking.
- In addition, all students will be expected to bring relevant books, readings, or work to class when necessary.

Please remember: All assigned books are the property of Temima, and therefore may not be bent, highlighted, written in, or otherwise damaged. Students will be responsible for any damage done to books.

**GRADING:** The course grade will consist of the following parts:

**Papers / Tests / Projects** **60%**

- Papers, projects and test are weighted the same. The final exam represents three test grades. I will drop the lowest test/paper/project score over the course of the semester. If the final is your lowest grade, I will drop one of the three tests it represents.

**Weekly Quizzes** **25%**

- As a rule, we have a short quiz at the end of each week. The quizzes will ask you basic questions about what we covered that week, in order to keep you on top of the material as we move through the semester.
- The quizzes are scored cumulatively, meaning that I add up the number of answers you have gotten correct during the semester, and divide that number by the number of total quiz questions asked. Therefore, a 5-question quiz is not scored on a 0-100% scale, but rather represents 5 of the total number of questions asked in the semester.

**Homework / Classwork**

**15%**

- There are two types of homework: *completion* assignments, and *graded* assignments. Completion assignments are those checked off as “complete” or “incomplete.” Graded assignments are scored based on their accuracy.

**COURSE SCHEDULE:** The following is a rough schedule of our course. This schedule is subject to change, as our pace may accelerate or decelerate depending throughout the year.

<u>WEEK</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>
23 – 26 August	Orientation
 <b><u>Unit One: The Institutions of American Government</u></b>	
29 Aug – 1 September	The Constitution & Federalism
6 – 8 Sept.	The Legislative Process
12 – 15 Sept.	The Presidency
19 – 22 Sept.	The Court System
<b>22 September: Test – Unit One</b>	
<b><u>Unit Two: Government in Action</u></b>	
26 – 27 Sept.	Parties and Elections
3 – 10 October	The Role of the Media
<b>3 November: Paper</b>	
	<i>Sukkot</i>
24 – 27 Oct.	Lobbying and Pressure Groups
31 Oct – 3 November	State Government
<b>10 November: Test – Unit Two</b>	
	<i>End First Quarter</i>
<b><u>Unit Three: America after the Second World War</u></b>	
7 – 10 Nov.	The Civil Rights Movement
15 – 17 Nov.	JFK: The New Frontier
22 – 23 Nov.	The Great Society
	<i>Thanksgiving Break</i>
29 Nov. – 1 Dec.	The Vietnam Era
6 – 8 Dec.	Nixon and Détente
<b>8 December: Interview Project</b>	
13 – 15 Dec.	The End of the Cold War
20 – 21 Dec.	The End of History?
<b>21 December: Test – Unit Three</b>	
	<i>Winter Break</i>
<b><u>Unit Four: American Government After the Cold War</u></b>	
3 – 6 Jan.	Terrorism
10 – 13 Jan.	America after 9/11
17 – 20 Jan.	Review
Final Exam	

A NOTE ON GRADES

The grade of "A" reflects superior achievement. This work demonstrates outstanding competence in *both* cognitive understanding and communication skills. To earn this grade the student must demonstrate exceptionally strong base-level cognitive abilities, including detail recall, listing, and memorizing. The student would also show accomplished proficiency in higher-level cognitive skills, including:

- The ability to understand the significance of specific information, to draw larger conclusions or recognize interrelationships, continuities, or contradictions
- The ability to reflect critically about perspective or to recognize ambiguity
- The ability to think creatively about the possibility of alternate applications

The student must also be able to communicate her understanding skillfully or explain her insights with elaborate, thorough analysis using effective and appropriate language. On objective evaluations (true-and-false, matching, fill-in-the-blank, chronological order) the "A" would reflect an extremely high level of achievement. Since this grade reflects exceptional results, it will be used only occasionally.

The grade of "B" reflects an excellent standard of work. A "B" student might typically possess base cognitive skills at an "A" level, while being less able to recognize trends, generalizations, or ambiguities. Or the student might be less skillful in communicating, or less thorough in analysis. On objective evaluations, the "B" would reflect a high level of proficiency.

The grade of "C" reflects a completely satisfactory standard, fully exceeding the minimum required level of the course. A "C" evaluation would reflect competent cognitive proficiency, and limited but adequate analytical skills. On objective evaluations, the "C" would reflect satisfactory levels of proficiency.

The grade of "D" is an unsatisfactory evaluation, only just meeting the minimum acceptable standards of cognitive knowledge and communication abilities.

The grade of "F" reflects the student's demonstration of incompetence and failure to meet minimum cognitive knowledge and performance standards.

## Classroom Procedures

History – Mr. Cook

---

As a rule, we will read a chapter section or two from the textbook each week. The idea is for the students to familiarize themselves with the *upcoming* material before we deal with it in class. (This means that the textbook readings are, usually, intended to be done on the weekend.) On Mondays, students will turn in the textbook questions (or other homework). On Thursdays, we take our weekly quiz. In between, the class will follow a lecture/discussion format, with various class activities and other assignments.

In order to best assure the academic success of the class as a whole, I expect you to behave in a manner appropriate to Temima classrooms. These expectations include, *but are not limited to*, the following:

- I will speak only when the room is quiet. I will respond to students when they request permission to speak by **raising their hand** and waiting to be called upon. Interruptions may result in demerits.
- I will allow students to use the restroom *once per week*, **provided** that the area between Rooms A and B is not occupied.
- Late entry will count as a tardy. "Late entry" is defined as not being inside the door when the bell has rung.
- I will accept assignments handed in when due for full credit; late assignments will be docked one letter grade *per day* late. (Work due on days when a student's absence is excused is not considered late.) For personal days, I expect you to complete any assignments in advance of the absence, as per the Student Handbook.
- I will make every effort to end class with time enough to allow you to pack up your materials. Please be respectful of your fellow students and refrain from packing up before being dismissed.
- All other rules in the Temima Student Handbook apply, including those regarding electronics and dress code.

In order to uphold these expectations, the following system of consequences will be used throughout the year:

- I will notify you when your behavior is putting you in jeopardy of receiving a demerit, and will discuss the issue with you at the end of the period. Continuation of inappropriate behavior will result in a demerit.
- If you receive two or more demerits within one academic semester, I may discuss the issue with you, the administration, and/or your parents.

### Student Expectations

You may expect me to be available to assist in your understanding of course material, both within class and without, as needed. I will respond to your questions during class whenever possible, and will arrange to meet with students upon request to communicate about class material, assignments, and other concerns. I am always available by email, at [rcook@temima.org](mailto:rcook@temima.org). **Remember: more communication is always better than less.**

Please sign and return the following form by Monday, 29 August 2011

I have read the class syllabus, as well as Mr. Cook's Classroom Procedures handout,  
and understand the rules and expectations contained therein.

Signed,

\_\_\_\_\_ (student)

\_\_\_\_\_ (parent)

( )

( )

( )