

<p align="center"> <b>Instructor:</b> Mr. Bob Poelking  <b>Office Hours:</b> 4th pd by appt + 7th pd Study Hall  <b>E-Mail:</b> rpoelking@helenaschools.org  <b>Phone:</b> 1-406-324-2264  <b>Website:</b> <a href="http://hhs.helenaschools.org/teachers/rpoelking/">http://hhs.helenaschools.org/teachers/rpoelking/</a>  <b>Twitter:</b> @HhsAmerican  <b>Remind:</b> @mrpoelk (Gov)/ @poelki (US History) </p>
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**American Government**  
**2019-20 Syllabus and Student Contract**

**Course Introduction**

Government is the study of power and the relationship between those in an authoritative position and their citizens. It is the fundamental belief system of laws that our country is based upon. This class is designed to enhance, stimulate and encourage the growth of your knowledge on what it means to be a citizen as well as to better grasp how our system of government functions. Government, unless you are an anarchist, is a necessary part of life, and we must learn as citizens how to utilize our power in order to keep our society functioning properly.

I encourage and hope that you all will do more in this class than skim the book for notes and stare at the clock. I hope you will THINK, QUESTION, AND DEBATE every situation, issue, and topic at hand. I cannot be expected to make this class work on my own. Therefore, you all must take part in this democracy that includes constant, open dialogue between me the teacher and you the student. Ultimately, you will take on the everyday role of decision makers tasked with trying to resolve current policy issues.

This class is not intended to be a homework factory, it is intended to help you become an active, well-informed citizen. This is your class, GET INVOLVED!!

**Requirements: What will it take for you to pass this class?**

1. Be Responsible
  - a. Sit in your assigned seat in class when the bell rings
  - b. **Suggested Supplies:** Three ring binder, Lined Paper or Notebook, writing implements.
  - c. Be prepared to not use your electronic device unless directed by me.
  - d. YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR GETTING MATERIALS AND HOMEWORK WHEN YOU ARE ABSENT!!!-Check the website, ask a fellow student, ask me, look at the calendar.
2. Be Involved
  - a. Participation and discussion are LARGE parts of this class, get into it.
  - b. Do your homework- there won't be much (yay!), but that means what is there matters.
  - c. TRY! CARE!
  - d. Ask questions if you need help. Ask questions if things don't make sense. Ask Questions.
  - e. Voice your opinion in such a way that it progresses conversation and dialogue.
3. Be Respectful
  - a. No profanity or disrespectful language.
  - b. Voice your opinion in such a way that it is respectful of others' ideas and progresses the dialogue. IN OTHER WORDS-THINK BEFORE YOU SPEAK!
  - c. You do not have the right to interfere in your classmates' education.
  - d. Do not use your electronic device unless directed by me. For real, I don't want to take phones.
  - e. Communicate with me if you are having issues with someone in the class, including me.
  - f. Remember, opinions aren't a contest- not everyone will agree with you and that's cool.
4. Be a Graduate
  - a. Take pride in your work.
  - b. Set a goal and go for it. Talk with me or your peers if you want help- we're a community.
  - c. **Cheating:** There is no need for cheating in this class to get a better grade. Therefore, cheating will not be tolerated. Your parents will be contacted and a referral will be written if you are cheating. I'm here to help, all you've got to do is ask.
  - d. Pass this class. This class is not out to get you, it's here to help you better yourself.

- e. Utilize all supports that are provided by our school or community.

**If you cannot meet classroom expectations or follow directions, you will first receive a warning. Continued poor choices will result in a written referral that will be sent to your principal. I want every student to reach their maximum potential in this class and I will not tolerate poor behavior that infringes on other people's right to learn.**

**Absences:**

1. Students have 3 days to make up work from an excused absence
2. Students may not make up work with an unexcused absence.
3. Make-up work is the responsibility of the student. Whenever possible arrangements for make-up work should be made with the teacher prior to the absence.

**Tardies:**

After 3 tardies (per semester), you will receive lunch detention with me. After 4 tardies I will automatically write a referral. It does not matter why you were tardy! For further tardy policy information please refer to the student handbook.

**Late Work:** I try to be flexible with late work, but the bigger the assignment, the more rigid I get; that is to say, missing something small isn't the end of the world, but flaking out on a presentation or semester-ending product could result in a 20% deduction per day. Turn your stuff in, you'll have time to work on it. Precluding extenuating circumstances, I enforce hard deadlines at the end of each quarter- if I don't have it, it's a zero. If I don't have your work when I grade an assignment, I put a 0 in the gradebook until I am holding your late assignment- it can really mess with your grade and trigger alerts on PowerSchool and that's the point.

**Hall passes:**

You're upperclassmen, I'll trust you to take one of the two passes by the door if you need them. If there isn't a pass, wait.

**Food & Drink:**

Food and drink (water is fine) are allowed in the classroom unless it becomes a distraction or messy.

**Grading Criteria.**

You will be graded on the following categories (Grades will be 40% 1st Qtr, 40% 2nd Qtr, 20% Final)

- Tests/Quizzes - all sizes and types, keep up in class and you will be fine
- Writing Assignments - there will be more than one, some will be big, prepare yourself
- Daily work and Participation - this is working in class, group work, effort, and
- Projects- large projects are broken into pieces (e.g. research, outline, presentation, etc.)
- Semester Cumulative exam (20%)

**Topics and Units;** So just what will we be studying?

**Semester 1:**

1. Introduction—Types of Government
2. Foundations of American Government (John Adams)
3. The Constitution
3. Elections (The War Room)
4. Civil Rights/Civil Liberties (The Most Hated Family In America)

**Semester 2:**

1. Executive Branch (All the President's Men)
2. Judicial Branch (The Loving Story)
3. Legislative Branch (Lincoln)
4. The Legislative Branch (Project/ Simulation)

## FILMS

Please note that pg-13 or R-rated/ TV MA-rated films and are used for educational purposes. By signing below, you authorize your child to watch rated R films in class. I will use discretion on the content, and fast forward through scenes I feel are inappropriate. Please note if you would like them removed for an alternative assignment.

A sample of the films that may or may not be shown throughout the year include,

*The Most Hated Family in America, The Thin Blue Line, Lincoln, John Adams, The War Room*

**\* By signing below, the student and parent / guardian acknowledge and agree to the above expectations and requirements.**

**Please return bottom portion of this paper with your permission for your son/daughter to watch R rated films and your contact information.**

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Student Name (PRINTED): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name (SIGNED): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent / Guardian Name (PRINTED): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent / Guardian Name (SIGNED): \_\_\_\_\_

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Parent Signature to allow R movies: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature to **NOT** allow R movies: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I look forward to working with your son/daughter and would like to communicate with you throughout the year. Please provide the best way to get in contact with you, whether it is your work phone, cell phone, or e-mail.

Best way to contact me (the parent) is: E-mail \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\* If you have any questions or concerns with the Syllabus, please contact me at your earliest convenience.

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