

American Government

Information For Parents

Mr. Coverstone

This course is designed to provide an intensive study of the history, institutions, groups, beliefs, and ideas that constitute political life and activity in the United States. Students will master the foundations, principles, and practices of government. This mastery will form the base upon which analytical frameworks for understanding political realities will be built. Analytical rigor will be achieved through examination of both historical and contemporary controversies. Each student will produce several analytical essays which convey clear and concise political thought and argumentation.

TYPES OF ASSIGNMENTS

Reading: Assignments from the textbook lay the foundation and some supplementary primary documents expose the students to the actual dialogue of American politics.

Essay Journal: Approximately three entries every two weeks. These essays are written in response to prompts designed to ensure application of the principles we study.

Tests: Composed of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions.

Class Presentations: Students will wrestle with the controversies of our time in several second quarter discussions lead by the students themselves.

TEXTS

Benjamin Ginsberg, Theodore Lowi, and Margaret Weir, *We The People: An Introduction to American Politics*, (2nd edition, shorter) New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1999.

George McKenna and Stanley Feingold, *Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Political Issues* (Eleventh edition) Dushkin Publishing Group, Inc., 1999.

PROBLEMS AND CONCERNS

If your son is having problems in government, please encourage him to speak with me right away. Knowledge in this course is cumulative and concepts which are not learned initially may prove troublesome later. The greatest help you can offer is daily conversation about political issues and ideas that are important to you. I challenge the boys to defend their political views fully, and my greatest strength is an ability to articulate many points of view. The boys learn more when the class discussions seriously challenge them to defend their views. Your interest in sharing their political development with them is an irreplaceable benefit to them.

Controversial Issues To Discuss At Home

Abortion	Affirmative Action	Environmental Regulations
Gun Control	Criminal Rights	Workplace Regulation
The Merits of an Independent Prosecutor	Military Spending	The Media's Role in Politics
Welfare	Balanced Budget Amendment	Social Security Reform
Capital Punishment	Campaign Finance Reform	Health Care Financing
Education Reform	Taxes, Lotteries, and Budget Cuts	Character in Politics