

“What we need in the United States is not division; what we need in the United States is not hatred; what we need in the United States is not violence or lawlessness but love and wisdom, and compassion toward one another, and a feeling of justice for those who still suffer within our country, whether they be white or whether they be black. So I ask you tonight to return home, to say a prayer for the family of Martin Luther King – yes, that’s true – but more importantly, to say a prayer for our own country, which all of us love, a prayer for understanding and that compassion of which I spoke. We can do well in this country. We will have difficult times; we’ve had difficult times in the past. And we will have difficult times in the future. It is not the end of violence; it is not the end of lawlessness; and it is not the end of disorder. But the vast majority of white people and the vast majority of black people in this country want to live together, want to improve the quality of our life, and want justice for all human beings who abide in our land.”

Senator Robert Kennedy on the death of Martin Luther King, Jr., 1963

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## **Introduction**

In the 2000 presidential election two parties became embroiled in a legal and political battle over ballots cast in Florida, the state that would decide the election. The American people watched and waited for weeks for the process to end and for the new president to be named. While they waited, the importance of the United States Constitution and its provisions became very clear to people who had not thought about the electoral college in years. Indeed, the whole question of the electoral college process and continued usefulness of the electoral college became a major issue that will continue to be debated and perhaps will never be resolved.

Today there are no shortage of political issues and problems facing this country. New demands are being heard about solving the present and future problems related to social security, Medicare, Medicaid, campaign finance reform, cloning, poverty, gas prices, health care, and the economy. These are just a sample of the problems that your generation will face as you get closer to being able to participate in the political process by voting. Whether you know a lot about politics or just a little, my hope is that you will find the study of American government to be as fascinating and useful as I do.

## **Course Objectives**

***Knowledge of government and politics.*** I will evaluate your progress toward this goal based on the quality of your performance on the tests, activities, journals, and essays. The components of this objective include your knowledge of the:

1. political ideology and political parties
2. citizenship
3. Congress and Special interest groups
4. President and Executive branch
5. US Supreme Court and the Judiciary
6. Bill of Rights

## **Resources**

Readings, both current and historical (there is not a text until the Bill of Rights unit)

Monk, Linda. *Bill of Rights: A Users Guide*. Close Up Publishing. Washington, DC. 1999

## **Grading Policy**

	<i>Quarter Grade</i>		
Essays/Journals	25%	Exam Grade	15%
Tests/Quizzes	15%		
Class Participation	10%		
Projects/Activities	25%		
Homework	15%		

## Assessments

- Unit Tests – these tests follow most units with multiple choice questions and short answers.
- Journals – Students will receive numerous articles and readings from books, newspapers, magazines, and journals assigned (see each unit calendar for specifics). After each reading students are to complete an analysis of the article or activity that was completed. Each journal will present a prompt or questions to have students think about the reading or activity in more detail.
- Essays – Students will be asked to continue to practice their ability to write a five paragraph, persuasive essay where they are asked to take a stand on an issue and support that stand. This is continued practice for the CAPT test.
- Final Exam – Students will be asked to complete 50 multiple choice questions on the Bill of Rights unit as well as write a persuasive essay on a current controversial, constitutional topic where they are asked to take a stand on an issue and support that stand. Students will receive both a study guide and a pre-reading packet to prepare for the exam.

## Course Outline

- See calendar of assignments and class work

## Expectations:

- You are responsible for your own work, in class and make up. If you miss work due to absences, you are responsible for making it up in the required time. Always remember that you can get work or announcements from the web site. Since summer school is very condensed, missing assignments or being absent will affect your ability to do well in this course.
- Annoying or rude behavior such as chewing gum, putting on make up, writing notes, working on other subject material, or sleeping will not be tolerated.
- Come prepared each day with necessary materials.
- Cheating and/or plagiarism are grave offenses and will be handled immediately by appropriate school authorities. You are encouraged not to tolerate anyone you know is cheating and can notify me of any incident (anonymously if you wish) so I can deal with it.
- You are tardy to class if you are not in your seat when the bell rings.
- Due to the accelerated nature of this course, you can expect 2 -4 hours of homework per week as well as the community service requirement. I have made sure that you have a calendar with all of the assignments as well as most assignment are on my web site at [www.nniland.com](http://www.nniland.com) Therefore, you will know about all work in advance (i.e. no whining!).

