

# *American Government & Economics Course Syllabus*

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## **Course Information**

**0969 American Government & Economics**

**Credit: .50 per semester**

**Full year course**

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## **Teacher Contact Information**

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*Office Hours: Daily from 2:30-2:50 or by appointment*

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## **Course Pre-requisites, Co-requisites, and/or Other Restrictions**

**Prerequisite:** Required of all juniors

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## **Course Description**

Interest and participation in all levels of government and the economy make our American representative democracy work. Students will use a variety of activities to pique their interest in our federal, state and local government systems, studying theories of the founding era, principles and structure of the Constitution, the three branches of government, political parties, electoral politics, public opinion, civil liberties and civil rights, and opportunities for civic involvement. In addition, they will learn fundamental economic principles and financial skills, such as scarcity, supply and demand, entrepreneurship, insurance, and saving and investing options, which are necessary for a lifetime of financial responsibility and security.

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**Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes (From the Ohio Department of Education Website)**  
**American Government & Economics Standards will be interwoven in this full year course.**

## **Course Syllabus: American Government**

Theme: How the American people govern themselves at national, state and local levels of government is the basis for this course. Students can impact issues addressed by local governments through service learning and senior projects.

### **TOPIC: CIVIC INVOLVEMENT**

Students can engage societal problems and participate in opportunities to contribute to the common good through governmental and nongovernmental channels.

#### **CONTENT STATEMENTS:**

1. Opportunities for civic engagement with the structures of government are made possible through political and public policy processes.
2. Political parties, interest groups and the media provide opportunities for civic involvement through various means.

### **TOPIC: CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND SKILLS**

Democratic government is enhanced when individuals exercise the skills to effectively participate in civic affairs.

#### **CONTENT STATEMENTS:**

3. Issues can be analyzed through the critical use of information from public records, surveys, research data and policy positions of advocacy groups.
4. The processes of persuasion, compromise, consensus building and negotiation contribute to the resolution of conflicts and differences.

### **TOPIC: BASIC PRINCIPLES OF THE U.S. CONSTITUTION**

Principles related to representative democracy are reflected in the articles and amendments of the U.S. Constitution and provide

structure for the government of the United States.

**CONTENT STATEMENTS:**

5. As the supreme law of the land, the U.S. Constitution incorporates basic principles that help define the government of the United States as a federal republic including its structure, powers and relationship with the governed.
6. The Federalist Papers and the Anti-Federalist Papers framed the national debate over the basic principles of government encompassed by the Constitution of the United States.
7. Constitutional government in the United States has changed over time as a result of amendments to the U.S. Constitution, Supreme Court decisions, legislation and informal practices.
8. The Bill of Rights was drafted in response to the national debate over the ratification of the Constitution of the United States.
9. The Reconstruction Era prompted Amendments 13 through 15 to address the aftermath of slavery and the Civil War.
10. Amendments 16 through 19 responded to calls for reform during the Progressive Era.
11. Four amendments have provided for extensions of suffrage to disenfranchised groups.
12. Five amendments have altered provisions for presidential election, terms, and succession to address changing historical circumstances.
13. Amendments 11, 21 and 27 have addressed unique historical circumstances.

**TOPIC: STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT**

Three branches compose the basic structure of the federal government. Public policy is created through the making of laws, the execution of the laws and the adjudication of disputes under the laws.

**CONTENT STATEMENTS:**

14. Law and public policy are created and implemented by three branches of government; each functions with its own set of powers and responsibilities.
15. The political process creates a dynamic interaction among the three branches of government in addressing current issues.

**TOPIC: ROLE OF THE PEOPLE**

The government of the United States protects the freedoms of its people and provides opportunities for citizens to participate in the political process.

**CONTENT STATEMENTS:**

16. In the United States, people have rights which protect them from undue governmental interference. Rights carry responsibilities which help define how people use their rights and which require respect for the rights of others.
17. Historically, the United States has struggled with majority rule and the extension of minority rights. As a result of this struggle, the government has increasingly extended civil rights to marginalized groups and broadened opportunities for participation.

**TOPIC: OHIO'S STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS**

The State of Ohio acts within the framework of the U.S. Constitution and extends powers and functions to local governments.

**CONTENT STATEMENTS:**

18. The Ohio Constitution was drafted in 1851 to address difficulties in governing the state of Ohio.
19. As a framework for the state, the Ohio Constitution complements the federal structure of government in the United States.
20. Individuals in Ohio have a responsibility to assist state and local governments as they address relevant and often controversial problems that directly affect their communities.

**TOPIC: PUBLIC POLICY**

Federal, state and local governments address problems and issues by making decisions, creating laws, enforcing regulations and taking action.

**CONTENT STATEMENTS:**

21. A variety of entities within the three branches of government, at all levels, address public policy issues which arise in domestic and international affairs.
22. Individuals and organizations play a role within federal, state and local governments in helping to determine public (domestic and foreign) policy.

**TOPIC: GOVERNMENT AND THE ECONOMY**

The actions of government play a major role in the flow of economic activity. Governments consume and produce goods and services. Fiscal and monetary policies, as well as economic regulations, provide the means for government intervention in the economy.

**CONTENT STATEMENTS:**

23. The federal government uses spending and tax policy to maintain economic stability and foster economic growth. Regulatory actions carry economic costs and benefits.
24. The Federal Reserve System uses monetary tools to regulate the nation's money supply and moderate the effects of expansion and contraction in the economy.

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## Course Syllabus: Economics and Financial Literacy

Theme: This course explores the fundamentals that guide individuals and nations as they make choices about how to use limited resources to satisfy their wants. More specifically, it examines the ability of individuals to use knowledge and skills to manage limited financial resources effectively for a lifetime of financial security.

**TOPIC: ECONOMIC DECISION MAKING AND SKILLS**

Economic decision making relies on the analysis of data. Economists use data to explain trends and decide among economic alternatives. Individuals use data to determine the condition of their finances and to make savings and investment decisions.

**CONTENT STATEMENTS:**

1. Economists analyze multiple sources of data to predict trends, make inferences and arrive at conclusions.
2. Reading financial reports (bank statements, stock market reports, mutual fund statements) enables individuals to make and analyze decisions about personal finances.

### **TOPIC: FUNDAMENTALS OF ECONOMICS**

Productive resources are limited and allocated in a variety of different ways. An efficient way to allocate productive resources is through markets.

#### **CONTENT STATEMENTS:**

3. People cannot have all the goods and services they want and, as a result, must choose some things and give up others.
4. Different economic systems (traditional, market, command, and mixed) utilize different methods to allocate limited resources.
5. Markets exist when consumers and producers interact. When supply or demand changes, market prices adjust. Those adjustments send signals and provide incentives to consumers and producers to change their own decisions.
6. Competition among sellers lowers costs and prices, and encourages producers to produce more of what consumers are willing and able to buy. Competition among buyers increases prices and allocates goods and services to those people who are willing and able to pay the most for them.

### **TOPIC: GOVERNMENT AND THE ECONOMY**

The health of a nation's economy is influenced by governmental policy. Fiscal policy can be used to spur economic growth. Monetary policy can be used to moderate fluctuations in the business cycle.

#### **CONTENT STATEMENTS:**

7. A nation's overall level of economic well-being is determined by the interaction of spending and production decisions made by all households, firms, government agencies and others in the economy. Economic well-being can be assessed by analyzing economic indicators gathered by the government.
8. Economic policy decisions made by governments result in both intended and unintended consequences.

### **TOPIC: GLOBAL ECONOMY**

Global issues and events influence economic activities.

#### **CONTENT STATEMENTS:**

9. When regions and nations use comparative advantage to produce at the lowest cost and then trade with others, production, consumption and interdependence increase.
10. Government actions, such as tariffs, quotas, subsidies, trade agreements and membership in multinational economic organizations, significantly impact international trade.

### **TOPIC: WORKING AND EARNING**

Employment provides a means of creating personal income.

#### **CONTENT STATEMENTS:**

11. Income is determined by many factors including individual skills and abilities, work ethic and market conditions.
12. Employee earning statements include information about gross wages, benefits, taxes and other deductions.

### **TOPIC: FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND MONEY MANAGEMENT**

Responsible personal finance decisions are based upon reliable information and used to reach personal goals.

#### **CONTENT STATEMENTS:**

13. Financial decision-making involves considering alternatives by examining costs and benefits.
14. A personal financial plan includes financial goals and a budget, including spending on goods and services, savings and investments, insurance and philanthropy.
15. Different payment methods have advantages and disadvantages.

### **TOPIC: SAVING AND INVESTING**

Saving and investing strategies help individuals achieve personal financial goals.

#### **CONTENT STATEMENTS:**

16. Saving and investing help to build wealth.
17. Savings can serve as a buffer against economic hardship.
18. Different costs and benefits are associated with saving and investing alternatives.
19. Banks, brokerages and insurance companies provide access to investments such as certificates of deposit, stocks, bonds and mutual funds.

### **TOPIC: CREDIT AND DEBT**

Credit and debt can be used to achieve personal financial goals.

#### **CONTENT STATEMENTS:**

20. There are costs and benefits associated with various sources of credit available from different types of financial institutions.
21. Credit and debt can be managed to maintain credit worthiness.
22. Consumer protection laws provide financial safeguards.

### **TOPIC: RISK MANAGEMENT**

There are various strategies to help protect personal assets and wealth.

#### **CONTENT STATEMENTS:**

23. Property and liability insurance protect against risks associated with use of property.
  24. Health, disability and life insurance protect against risks associated with increased expenses and loss of income.
  25. Steps can be taken to safeguard one's personal financial information and reduce the risk of loss.
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**Required Textbooks and Materials**

Pocket Declaration of Independence, U.S. Constitution & Related Documents (Provided)

ISBN: 1-878802-23-2 or like Documents

-Supplemented with Unit packets of readings, activities, and projects that must be organized in a 1- to 2-inch binder

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**Suggested Course Materials**

Watching, reading and discussing political news events as home will greatly benefit the student.

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**Assignments & Academic Calendar**

An updated calendar of daily topics, homework and scheduled tests will be available each semester for students.

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**Assignments are weighted as follows:****Each quarter grade will consist of:**

70% Tests, Quizzes, and Projects/Assessments (larger and more involved than daily assignments)

30% Daily homework and summaries, class work, binder checks, and participation in/contributions to group work and daily activities

**Each semester grade will consist of:**

40% 1<sup>st</sup> quarter,

40% 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter, and

20% Semester Exam.

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**Academic & Classroom Policies**

Make-up exams, tests and homework must be completed according to school policy (in as many days as the student was absent). Students are responsible for their own make-up work.

Extra credit opportunities are offered infrequently, so students should take advantage of them if and when they arise.

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