



## MERRIMACK GOVERNMENT SEMINAR

### Abbott Lawrence Academy

### 2019 - 2020

**Teacher** Sean Fabun

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**Office Hours**

Classroom: H-106

Day/Time: Tuesday/2:45-4p

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course is an introduction to American politics, in terms of the institutional and outside influences that help shape and make policy and politics in America. We will start by exploring the historical background of the American founding, focusing on the Constitution and the Federalist Papers. The historical discussion will be followed by an overview of the institutional construction of American politics, looking at the inner workings and interactions between the branches of government. Finally, we will focus on factors outside of the government that have influence on the process, from political parties and interest groups to the political media.

Your ALA sections are designed to you in your Merrimack Government course, and will include previews and reviews of material, additional readings, academic extensions, and workshops.

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

- Kollman, Ken. 2017. *The American Political System, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company
- Additional readings will be distributed as handouts and/or online throughout the course of the year

**MEANS OF EVALUATION**

The list below generally describes the assignments that each student will be expected to complete during the course. Guidelines for each assignment will be distributed individually.

**GRADE BREAKDOWN**

Merrimack Grade	(50%)
Assessments	(15%)
Notebooks/Classwork	(20%)
Homework	(15%)
Marking Period	(100%)

**GRADING SCALE**

Letter Grade	Numerical Equivalent	Letter Grade	Numerical Equivalent
A+	97 - 100%	C+	77 - 79%
A	94 - 96%	C	74 - 76%
A-	90 - 93%	C-	70 - 73%
B+	87 - 89%	D+	67 - 69%
B	84 - 86%	D	65 - 66%
B-	80 - 83%	F	0 - 64%

An “A” grade represents outstanding work that is good enough to be shown to other students as an example.

A “B” grade indicates better than average work that demonstrates excellent effort and understanding.

A “C” grade is assigned to work that demonstrates competence but does not display any attempt to shine.

A “D” grade indicates work that is lacking in some important way.

An “F” is a failing grade. It will be given if an assignment or exam is not submitted or is extremely poorly executed, or in the case of plagiarism or other failure to adhere to norms of academic honesty.

## CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

1. Engage with the material, ask questions, and give your best effort during all parts of class.
2. Keep our shared space clean and collegiate at all times.
3. Respect each other and treat each other with kindness and compassion.

## ATTENDANCE

It is the expectation of the Lawrence Public Schools that all students are to attend all classes. While the district strives for 95% attendance, there are consequences for students whose attendance in their courses falls to 90% or less - including credit loss and/or retention. To earn credit in any course, a student is obligated to:

1. Fulfill the course requirements as defined by the content and performance standards for the course;
2. Maintain above a 90% attendance rate in all courses, no more than eight (8) absences per semester and no more than sixteen (16) absences for the year.
  - a. While credit is only earned at the end of a semester or year-long course, to earn a grade for the quarter, no more than four (4) absences are permitted.

If a student accumulates more than four (4) absences per quarter in any course, s/he will receive a grade of “N” on the report card, indicating that s/he is “Not on Track for Credit” due to poor attendance. If a student receives an “N” for one quarter, s/he can still receive a passing grade for the semester or year if the student maintains a passing grade average and is not absent more than four (4) times in the remaining quarters. It is important to remember that “N” represents a notice to both students and parents that they need to monitor their school attendance more closely and set a goal to improve attendance. One “N” does not represent that a student is failing the course from a lack of achievement. (If a student is failing the course for lack of achievement, the report card would reflect the failing grade, not an “N.”) If a student receives one or more “N” grades, they will also be ineligible for Honor Roll.

Students may also convert an “N” acquired for a course to a letter grade by pursuing credit recovery options available at his/her school or programs. Options may include enrollment in extended day classes, Saturday programs, Acceleration Academies, or online course work as appropriate/available. These options should be discussed directly with the student’s classroom educator.

If a student earns two “N’s” in a semester course, s/he will receive No Credit for the course and likewise, if the student receives four “N’s” in a full year course, s/he will receive No Credit for the course. The absences would meet the threshold for chronic absenteeism and the student should set up a meeting with his or her guidance counselor to make arrangements to repeat the course or its equivalent in summer programs or future terms. For students who have otherwise achieved or exceeded the course standards, an alternative opportunity may be created.

Students who are consistently late to classes will receive disciplinary action. Consequences are as follows:

- One** detention after a student’s **3<sup>rd</sup>** unexcused tardy in a class.
- Two** detentions after a student’s **6<sup>th</sup>** unexcused tardy in a class (parent phone call).
- Three** detentions after a student’s **9<sup>th</sup>** unexcused tardy in a class (parent meeting).
- A Week** of detention after a student’s **12<sup>th</sup>** unexcused tardy in a class.
- Students will be referred to **in-school suspension** after their **15<sup>th</sup>** tardy. Disciplinary action after the **18<sup>th</sup>** tardy will be at the discretion of the principal and may include an attendance hearing at Central Office and/or disqualification from taking Early College courses.

### *Make-up Work*

If a student is absent, it is their responsibility to get assignments from their teachers. Students who are absent on a due date need to turn in their work the following day that the class meets at the start of class. If students are absent when major assignments are due, they must turn in their work the next calendar day.

### *Late Work*

Written assignments are due at the beginning of each period. Late work will incur penalties. Teachers determine the point deductions for each assignment.

### *Snow Days*

Students are encouraged to check the Lawrence Public Schools webpage, the Superintendent’s Twitter account, and their local news station for information about Snow Days. If a Snow Day is observed on a “A-Day” schedule, upon returning to school students will follow a “B-day” schedule. In the event that a due date for a major assignment falls on a snow day, students must still turn in the assignment only if it required electronic submission.

## ACADEMIC SUPPORT

An important skills we expect ALA students to continually development throughout their high school career is *Self-Advocacy*, which is identifying what you need to be successful and seeking out the resources or people to help you. ALA provides numerous opportunities for students to advocate for themselves.

#### *Office Hours*

Teachers are available to help students in their classrooms each day until 3:15 pm. In addition, teachers hold office hours from 2:45 - 4:00 pm once a week so that students can discuss their work in the course and ask questions. Students are encouraged to attend office hours to seek extra support. If a student cannot make a teacher's scheduled office hours, they should contact them directly to set up a meeting.

#### *Study Hall*

All ALA students have at least an hour and thirty minutes of Study Hall per week where they can work on assignments and meet with teachers. Students can sign-up for an extra Study Hall period during our Advisory block.

### **GUIDANCE POLICY**

Students are required to set up appointments to meet during the school day with the guidance counselor. She also holds drop-in times before and after school and during Advisory. In an emergency, a teacher can refer students immediately to the guidance office.

### **HALL PASSES**

Students should obtain a Hall Pass from a teacher to use the restroom or travel within ALA. Students are also required to sign-in/out when leaving and re-entering a classroom. A separate written pass is required to go to the nurse. Students cannot leave any class during the first or final ten minutes of a 90-minute class. This is known as the 10/10 rule. Teachers will use their discretion on a case-by-case basis.

### **UNIFORM**

Students are to be in uniform at all times. The uniform consists of an ALA black or maroon polo, khakis, and closed-toed shoes. Other acceptable garments include crew neck sweaters, fleeces, cardigans, or ALA track jackets in black, maroon, navy, or white. These garments must be solid colored and should not have any designs or stripes. Polo shirts must always be worn underneath these garments. Hooded sweatshirts and denim are not allowed in any way. Student cannot wear these garments through their arms. Students may wear LHS or ALA gear so long as they have a visible ALA polo underneath. Students who have any concerns regarding uniforms should reach out to any ALA teachers or administrators who will help resolve any issues discretely.

Students who do not adhere to our uniform guidelines will be subject to the following disciplinary action:

- -**One** detention after a student's **3<sup>rd</sup>** offense.
- -**Two** detentions after a student's **6<sup>th</sup>** offense (parent phone call).
- -**Three** detentions after a student's **9<sup>th</sup>** offense (parent meeting).
- -A **Week** of detention after a student's **12<sup>th</sup>** offense.
- -Students will be referred to **in-school suspension** after their **15<sup>th</sup>** offense. Disciplinary action after the **18<sup>th</sup>** offense will be at the discretion of the principal and may include a hearing at Central Office and/or disqualification from extracurricular activities, school events, and taking Early College courses.
- Teachers have the authority to confiscate items of clothing that are not in adherence with the dress code. Items will be returned to students at the end of the day.

*\*We acknowledge that situations may arise throughout the year where a student may not have access to a uniform. We ask that students have a parent inform us when such situations arise. A parent can notify the school by phone, email, or note before 8:00am on that day.*

### **ACCEPTABLE USE OF TECHNOLOGY**

The use of technology in classrooms and throughout ALA should be viewed as a privileged resource and not a right. Each teacher will determine when technology may be used in the classroom. Any inappropriate use of laptops or phones (such as texting, internet browsing, Facebook/ Twitter, etc) will negatively impact student grades and result in further disciplinary action. Teachers reserve the right to confiscate laptops/phones until the end of the period. If further issues arise, administration will confiscate devices for the rest of the day and notify parents.

#### *School Computers*

ALA has several computer carts equipped with Chromebooks and full-service Laptops. Many of the carts are only for classroom use and some are reserved for individual student sign-out.

- Classroom Carts – computers in these carts are not to be taken out for student’s individual use. The only exceptions to this rule are during a Study Hall period and before/after school. Students using Chromebooks before or after school must use the device in the classroom where the cart is located.
- Overnight Reservations – students who require a computer to take home to complete assignments can do so. Please be aware that computers are limited and we will try to fulfill every request as best we can.

*Google Account*

ALA students are given a Google account that is tied to their LPS ID Lunch number. We strongly encourage students to use this account given that many assignments are done through many of the Google Suites applications. Here is how to log-in to Google:

- Username – [12345@students.lawrence.k12.ma.us](mailto:12345@students.lawrence.k12.ma.us)
- Password – 00012345
- Replace “12345” with students’ unique LPS ID number.

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**Electronics Policy**

- Cell phones should be put away and silenced during class time.
- When we use laptops for class assignments, please do not open extraneous tabs.
- You may plug in headphones and listen to music while typing or reading on a laptop if it helps you focus.



**ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

Students are expected to maintain the highest level of academic integrity. When using ideas, words, and short passages from other people’s writing, students are required to acknowledge the source. Failure to acknowledge the contribution of others is considered plagiarism. Submitting plagiarized work, failing to properly cite or fabricating sources, and any other academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and will automatically result in a failing grade for the given assignment and further disciplinary action. Students will not be allowed to make up any plagiarized work for credit. Plagiarism includes copying directly from the Internet, a book or article, or another student’s work (with or without their permission). In order to avoid these issues, students are encouraged to speak with any teacher or administrator if they have any questions (no matter how small) about their work or citing sources.

Students who are found to be academically dishonest will be subject to the following disciplinary action:

- 1<sup>st</sup> offense – Week of after-school detention.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> offense – In-school suspension.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> offense – Out of school suspension.
- 4<sup>th</sup> offense – Disciplinary Hearing at District Office (action to be recommended by hearing officer). At this point students may be disqualified from participating in Early College courses in their Junior or Senior year and/or placed on Academic Probation.

\*All offenses come with a grade of a “0” for the assignment in which the student was academically dishonest.

**DETENTION PROTOCOL**

An ALA staff member will inform students if they have received an detention. Detentions are usually served for infractions related to tardiness, uniform, academic dishonesty, and incidents related to behavior. Detentions will occur during lunch (12:40-1:10) or after school (2:50-3:20pm). Students must be at the designated location by the start time or they will not be allowed to serve their detention. As a consequence, students will have to make up the detention they missed in addition to another day for arriving late.

**FINAL TAKEAWAY**

Welcome to 11th grade U.S. Government! I am excited to spend the year together! The Merrimack Government course is an opportunity for you to push yourself and develop your skills while learning about how the world you live in functions. It is also an opportunity to ease into the demanding and different environment of a college classroom. I am here to help you through that transition. Remember that understanding government is the first step towards understanding *how* the world works, and can therefore be a key to both personal success and to making the world a better place. I will leave you with the words of Thomas Jefferson:

“...experience hath shewn, that... those entrusted with power have, in time... perverted it into tyranny; and it is believed that the most effectual means of preventing this would be, to illuminate, as far as practicable, the minds of the people at large...”

## MERRIMACK GOVERNMENT SYLLABUS VERIFICATION

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*I ask that you **and** a parent/guardian sign and date to acknowledge that you have read the information contained above. Please detach and return this portion of the syllabus to confirm receipt of the syllabus. This will be counted as a homework grade for the course. Thank you.*

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_