

COURSE OUTLINE

U.S GOVERNMENT & POLITICS (WITH THE CIVIC MIRROR)

COURSE OVERVIEW

This course is a study – and experience – in government, politics, and citizenship in the United States. You will not only learn about the various institutions, principles, and realities of U.S. Government, but you will be given an opportunity to experience these things for yourself by participating in *The Civic Mirror*: an online and face-to-face simulation that will turn our classroom into a country and you and your classmates into citizens.

The aim of this course is twofold:

1. To provide you with a better understanding of and perspective on U.S. government, politics, and related issues, and
2. To enhance your abilities and your willingness to participate actively and responsibly in civic life.

In other words, as you study and learn the course content in the usual ways (i.e. readings, lectures, group activities), you will also be given the opportunity - via *The Civic Mirror* - to experience these things for yourself ... opportunities to practice American-style government and effective citizenship in-class and online.

ACTIVITY & MARKS SUMMARY

ATTITUDE & PARTICIPATION ----- %

These marks are yours for the taking. It's really quite simple: come to class (on time), be respectful when you speak and when you listen, and get involved. If you do all that, you've added % to your final grade.

HOMEWORK & READING CHECKS ----- %

Homework is the work you are supposed to do on a daily basis – not work that you necessarily have to do “at home”. When you do well on your homework, it's like giving yourself a gift that keeps on giving: First you get a high homework mark; Second, your high homework mark will give you game-play advantages in *The Civic Mirror* (more \$\$, more points, immunity from “steals”); Third, you will likely do better on the unit exams and tasks (because you did your homework); and Finally, you'll likely get more out of the course and *The Civic Mirror* because of the above.

UNIT VOCAB & UNIT EXAMS ----- %

In each unit of study you will be expected to learn new facts, concepts and terminology well enough to be able to ‘talk about’ them at length. To help ensure this happens, you will be given a vocabulary list for each unit where you will write/print the definition for each term/concept and either a) write your own, paraphrased definition for the term/concept, or b) create or draw some sort of memory trick that will help you understand what it means and remember how to use it. *Unit Vocab* lists will be DUE the day of your unit exams. *Unit Exams* will ask you to recall, remember, and respond to the major facts, concepts and terms covered in each unit.



CIVIC MIRROR PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS ----- %

When *The Civic Mirror* officially begins, you will be evaluated at the end of every simulated year in four areas:

1. *Success in the Simulation (Status Pts)* - The level of 'success' you had in *The Civic Mirror*
2. *Involvement & Attitude* - Your involvement in the simulation and your attitude towards the experience.
3. *Initiative* - Your ability to implement initiatives of your own.
4. *Learning (i.e. Incorporating Course Material into the Game)* - Your ability to incorporate what you've learned into *The Civic Mirror* and related discussions.

Like *The Civic Mirror*, this evaluation system also attempts to reflect the real world by evaluating your performance, not your ability to remember facts and information. It was also designed to be incredibly fair in a few key ways:

- You evaluate yourself first, communicating to your instructor why you gave yourself the grade you did.
- Your instructor will review your self-evaluation and, if he/she finds that you've graded yourself honestly and accurately, will give you the grade you gave yourself. If you attempt to bump yourself up a few marks higher or grade yourself too low, your instructor will correct this before entering the marks.
- You can still earn a very respectable grade even if you don't gain Status Points in a given year, the points you need to win *The Civic Mirror*.

REFLECTION & CONNECTION TASKS ----- %

You will be asked to complete at least one "Reflection & Connection Task" for every unit of study. These activities are crucial steps in the learning process, tying together what was learned from the readings, lectures, and videos *with* what was experienced in your *Civic Mirror* nation. In fact, we often never realize how much we've learned from our experiences until we stop and reflect on them ... making an effort to connect what happened and what we learned to our lives and the world in general. That's what these tasks will ask you to do, and they will be the last thing you'll do at the end of each unit. You'll likely find the ups-and-downs, mistakes, and successes that you experience in *The Civic Mirror* to be gold-mines of insight and understanding ... helping make the course material more fun, relevant, and meaningful.

