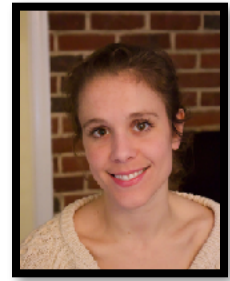




American Government

Yearlong 2018-2019



ELIGIBLE STUDENTS:

Rising 9th - 10th grade students who are avid readers with an interest in American Government and Democracy. Students must have successfully completed an 8th-grade-level writing course; they will be expected to have a basic grasp of grammar and know how to write a summary and reflect on a text (though the instructor will work to develop these skills throughout the course). Students are expected to have strong reading and writing skills as well as the interest and capacity for engaging in discussion about literature and history.

Class Dates: Begin Tuesday, September 4, 2018; running through Thursday, May 23, 2019.

Class Times: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12:30 - 1:45 p.m. (EST)

Instructor: Emily Gerard

E-mail: egerard@scholeacademy.com

SCHEDULE FOR AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

CLASS SESSIONS DATES:

Classes will take place on Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:30- 1:45 p.m. (EST) for 32 weeks and 64 classes on the following dates

August: 28 (mandatory orientation)

September: (8) 4, 6, 11, 13, 18, 20, 25, 27,

October: (9) 2, 4, 9, 11, 16, 18, 23, 25, 30

November: (7) 1, 6, 8, 13, 15, (Thanksgiving Break), 27, 29

December: (4) 4, 6, 11, 13, (Christmas Break)

January: (8) 8, 10, 15, 17, 22, 24, 29, 31

February: (6) 5, 7, 12, 14, (Winter Break), 26, 28

March: (8) 5, 7, 12, 14, 19, 21, 26, 28,

April: (7) 2, 4, 9, 11, (Easter Break), 23, 25, 30

May: (7) 3, 7, 10, 14, 16, 21, 23

**Please note the above dates and times are the anticipated class sessions for this course. However, all dates are subject to change as the instructor's circumstances might dictate (e.g. illness, family emergency). Any classes canceled by the instructor will be made up at an alternate time designated by the instructor.*

AMERICAN GOVERNMENT COURSE MAP:

QUARTER 1: Forms of Government

1. What is government? What should the central aim of a government be?
2. The ideal form of government, as derived from the purpose of government
3. Democracy vs other forms of government
4. Debate #1

QUARTER 2: The Emergence of American Democracy

1. The events leading up to and inspiring the American Revolution
2. The formation of the Constitution
3. Words of our Fathers: The ideals of the Founding fathers and their vision for the United States
4. Term Paper #1

QUARTER 3: The Evolution of the American System

1. Explore how the American experiment unfolded.
2. The Civil War and how this shaped (or perhaps re-shaped) American democracy
3. How did the United States government develop?
4. Debate #2

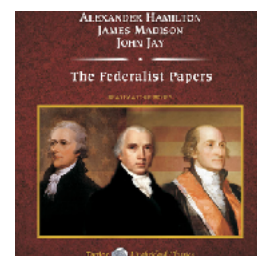
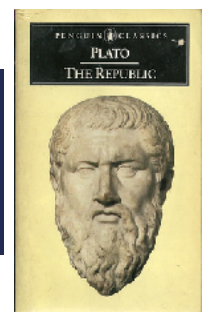
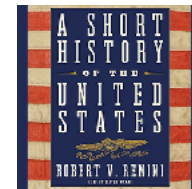
QUARTER 4: The American System Today

1. What does the American system look like today?
2. Examine select Supreme Court Decisions, regarding the role of each branch of government, and compare with with the ideals espoused by the Founding Fathers.
3. Engage in debate on the current role of each branch of government.
4. Term Paper #2

OFFICE HOURS: In addition to scheduled class times, teachers will generally designate an optional weekly session as needed. During “Office Hours” students may raise questions, seek assistance, or review class material.

REQUIRED COURSE TEXTS:

- Plato’s *Republic*
- John Locke’s *Second Treatise on Civil Government*
- *A Short History of the United States* (excerpts), Remini
- *Common Sense*, Paine
- *The Declaration of Independence*
- *Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*, Franklin
- *The U.S. Constitution*
- Alexis D’Tocqueville’s *Democracy in America*
- *The Federalist and Anti-Federalist Papers*
- *Gettysburg Address*, Lincoln
- *Select U.S. Supreme Court decisions*



RECOMMENDED COURSE TEXTS:

This course will require students to read and understand the content of advanced texts, which requires the ability not only to simply read the words on the page, but to comprehend and engage with the author. For this reason, I recommend that students read *How to Read a Book* by Mortimer J. Adler. While its title and concept might sound elementary, I assure you, it is not. Learning to truly read a text, especially an ancient text like Plato's *Republic*, is an art form. This book provides a helpful, practical guide for students.

AMERICAN GOVERNMENT COURSE DESCRIPTION:

In this course, students will develop a rich understanding of American democracy by reading and discussing philosophical writings that influenced America's Founding Fathers, the foundational documents of the United States, essays from prominent American thinkers, and Supreme Court decisions. Students will learn about the "nuts and bolts" of how our government works (e.g., the three branches of government and how a bill becomes a law).

However, this course will additionally expect students to dig deeper and interact with the philosophical ideals that inspired our Founding Fathers. Students will also grapple with the different political ideologies that have shaped and changed the American political system throughout our history. By the end of the course, students can expect to know how our government works, articulate the major camps in American political thought, and understand the crucial role that they, as citizens, play in the democratic system.

IMPORTANT SKILLS AND BEHAVIORS NEEDED TO ACHIEVE MASTERY

- Even the most avid readers will find some of the texts read in this course challenging. To achieve mastery, students must be willing to grapple with these texts, and come to class prepared with questions about sections they do not understand.
- Debate is a central part of this course - students should be capable of preparing and articulating an argument, avoiding basic fallacies. The instructor will also help students develop these skills throughout the course.
- Students must be able to type and understand basic English grammar rules and punctuation (ex: recognize a noun, verb, adjective, subject etc.).
- Students must be familiar with MLA writing conventions and familiar with the basics of formatting a paper and citing texts. The instructor will help students develop these skills throughout the course.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS: EXECUTIVE FUNCTION SKILLS

Students enrolling in Scholé Academy's American Government course will be expected to show development of Executive Function Skills throughout the year. Executive Function Skills speaks to a set of qualities and skill sets students can develop and hone to better approach the courses, lectures, readings and teachers they will face in their future academic coursework.

1. An Engaged Student: One who is willing to step into the arena of class discussion, ask questions, supply answers, generate the internal dialogue necessary to determine if what's being discussed is important and necessary to himself. Students should be active listeners during class time. They should be thoughtfully engaged with both each other and the teacher. All children should be viewing the class via Zoom on their computers and should not be browsing the internet. Young scholars should approach class time as an opportunity to grow in fellowship as the class journeys together to obtain knowledge.

2. Attention to Detail & Preparedness: These students are ones who consistently adhere to deadlines, submission requirements, adhering to style guides and codes, confirm technology is working prior to the start of class, be responsible to determine how to proceed after an absence, be responsible for consulting his course syllabus and adjusting as the class proceeds, etc. Students should come to class prepared—having done any necessary reading or writing ahead of time. They should also come mentally prepared—ready to focus on the material being presented. In this course, it is critical that students come to class with the material read and discussion questions answered.

Students should arrive to the Zoom meeting on time and if they are late should respectfully listen to try to understand where the class is in relation to the text and should wait patiently for the teacher and classmates to finish their current task, which is when the teacher will catch the student up. Students should come prepared with the necessary technology, as well as their American Government texts. Homework should be uploaded to Schoology before class begins. Students should try to develop the virtue of constancy by remaining focused and diligent and pushing away even “good” distractions that would inhibit learning and mastery.

3. Self-Monitoring: Students should continually develop self-monitoring skills. Students who successfully self-monitor can evaluate their own performance. They are able to see both their own strengths and their own weaknesses. Self-monitoring students are the ones who determine which problems they can work through on their own and where they need peer, teacher, or parent support.

4. Task Initiation: One who is able to recognize when it is time to begin working and is able to do so without procrastination. A student who can initiate tasks easily adjusts from the whole-class Zoom to a breakout room while still maintaining a scholarly attitude.

5. Problem Solving: A student with well-developed problem solving skills is ready and willing

to press through, even when he is unable to successfully solve the problem on the first try. Good writing involves problem-solving skills. It involves perseverance and looking at a story from a new perspective.

6. Humility in Learning: Throughout this course, students will receive constructive feedback from both their instructor and their peers. It is essential that students have humility in receiving these critiques, and employ the lessons learned through them. Furthermore, students will engage in both formal and informal debate with one another. Humility is crucial in these circumstances. Students should be happy for the successes of their peers, even if the gifts and capacities of their classmates surpass their own

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS IN ACTION

The ultimate goal for American Government is to form well-educated citizens who have a thorough understanding of the ideals that inspired the Founding Fathers to create the American system, and to understand how the government functions today. To achieve this goal students will need to read fluently, listen carefully, and take progressive steps toward their goals. Students will read the assigned text, answer weekly discussion questions, prepare for and participate in debates, and complete frequent writing assignments.

During class discussion, students will review answers to discussion questions, pose their own questions, explain and justify their responses. Class discussions are designed to help the students explore the philosophical underpinnings of American Government,

In this class, students will be expected to listen attentively, participate actively in class discussions and practices. Students are expected to arrive to class on time and with all assigned material completed. The instructor will facilitate learning for the student, but the responsibility for staying up-to-date with classwork and assignments ultimately falls to the student.

All assignments will be due into the appropriate Schoology Assignment folder prior to the start of class each day. Students turning in late work will earn a 10% penalty for each day the assignment is late. Students will submit their work by scanning their homework pages and uploading it into the Schoology assignment window. **Photographs of completed assignments will not be accepted as they are incredibly difficult to read.**

STUDENT EVALUATION: GRADING

While pursuing the *Writing & Rhetoric Year 1* through Scholé Academy will be “restful,” we also recognize the need to provide grades to students. Earning a specific grade should not overshadow achievement goals for mastery of this discipline. Writing and Rhetoric are important disciplines in Classical Education and learning to own the concepts introduced in this

class will be a necessary and significant component of future success in higher-level Classical Education. In that sense then, attaining a mastery of Writing & Rhetoric is its own reward.

As the teacher I can assign the following grades to each student's level of achievement: *magna cum laude* (with great praise); *cum laude* (with praise); *satis* (sufficient, satisfactory) and *non satis* (not sufficient). Ideally, every average student working diligently should do praiseworthy work (*cum laude*). Those who excel beyond this expectation will be the *magna cum laude* students. Students who do adequate but not praiseworthy work be designated *satis*. *Non satis* means lacking sufficiency or adequacy. The hope is that this system of grading will aid both the student and the instructor in assessing an individual pupil's journey toward mastery.

STUDENT EVALUATION: MASTERY PORTRAIT

Upon completing this course, students will not only have learned about the philosophy undergirding the American system, but they will also have a basic understanding of how the American democratic system works today.

- A *cum laude* student will, at the end of this course, be capable of articulating the difference between forms of government (democracy, oligarchy, tyranny, etc.) and be capable of articulating the benefits and advantages of each of these forms of government.
- Students will further be capable of articulating the values that inspired the American Founding Fathers to write the Constitution.
- A *cum laude* student will be able to name and explain the function of the three branches of American government, as well as articulate the Founding Fathers' vision for these three branches as outlined in the Constitution. In addition, students will also be able to outline current debates about the scope and breadth of each of these branches (i.e. judicial activism, executive overreach, etc.)

STUDENT EVALUATION: ASSIGNMENTS, TYPES & WEIGHTS

Mrs. Gerard will communicate with students regarding assignment feedback and grading through the free online grading system, Schoology. The teacher will provide students with more detailed information and access to the Writing & Rhetoric course page.

Student's grades will be comprised of:

1. Class Participation (20%)
 1. Discussions
 2. Preparation
 3. Debates
2. Homework (30%)
 1. Weekly discussion questions
 2. Text outlines

3. Written Assignments (including drafts) (30%)
 1. Short essays (1 - 2 pages)
 2. Term Papers (4-5 pages)
4. Exams (20%)

Note: All assignments will be weighted according to the time and energy needed to complete the task. For example, shorter smaller assignments will be worth less than longer, more difficult work. Students will be held accountable for both observed (active listening, participation in discussions) and written work. The overall grade will be determined by weighing student assignments and participation.

STUDENT EVALUATION: ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Students will often take assessments or complete writing assignments at home. Students are on their honor to abide by [Scholé Academy's Learning Philosophy](#) which assumes the personal cultivation of Student-Virtues described in the Student-Parent Handbook.

Additionally, plagiarism is a serious and punishable offense. A plagiarized assignment will result in a failing grade.

THE VIRTUAL CLASSROOM:

We will be using the free online “virtual classroom” software provided by Zoom, one of the leading companies that provides such software. The virtual classroom will provide students with interactive audio, text chat and an interactive whiteboard in which texts, diagrams, video and other media can be displayed and analyzed. We will provide students with a link (via email) that will enable students to join the virtual classroom.

Specific information regarding the technology used by Scholé Academy (including required technology) can be found by visiting the [Technology in the Classroom](#) section of the Student Parent Handbook.

Students will submit documents by scanning and uploading them to their personal computer, then attaching those files as .pdfs. They will submit their work to the *Writing & Rhetoric Year 1* Schoology assignment page (access granted after enrollment is secured).

ABOUT THE INSTRUCTOR:

Emily Gerard was first immersed in the world of classical education as a young student, and this early exposure sparked a passion for the classics and for classical learning that has carried

her through her undergraduate education, graduate education, and through her teaching career. She holds a BA in Political Science and Philosophy from Gordon College and an MA in Government from The Johns Hopkins University. Both of these degrees were attained summa cum laude. She has taught Philosophy, Rhetoric, and Latin for the past five years, most recently at Logos Academy, a classical school in downtown York, Pennsylvania. Mrs. Gerard currently lives in York with her husband, their young daughter, and a border collie.