

LIBERTY LIBERALARTS ACADEMY
American Government, the Constitution, and Civics
A Required Class for IL High School Graduation

Ages: 12 & up

Teacher: Ann McNeill

Teacher Compensation: \$225 Yearly, Payable in 9 Monthly Installments of \$25
PLUS a once-Per-Semester fee of \$25 (2 fee payments of \$25)

Book Requirement: U.S. Constitution & Declaration of Independence (Provided by teacher)
Our Constitution Rocks by Juliette Turner (Amazon: \$13.67 new, used: price varies)

Homework Expectation: Weekly homework to satisfy one credit * for History: American government; Civics: American Government; Constitution Test, required: 50 minutes/week of instruction, 1 hour/weekday of reading & writing, & additional time for other class projects & assignments. A 1st Semester Paper on the President's Cabinet will be due, and a 2nd Semester Team Collaborative Congressional Bill Writing & Presentation will be expected. Each student who timely completes all coursework will receive an Official Transcript for Credit & Grade. * Honors level achievement is available with extra assignments & a weighted grading scale.

BOOK AWARD RECOGNITION FOR EXCELLENCE: The student with the highest cumulative grade at the end of the year will receive the American Government Class Book Award - A certificate & book prize, and notation of honor on transcript.

Class Expectations:

1. Reading, Writing, Class Participation, Oral Presentations, Quizzes & Tests.
2. Students will research & write a Research Paper with Citations
3. Students will collaborate in a team as US Representatives, and write a Bill
4. Pass a challenging U.S. Constitution Test.
5. Class is taught using Socratic Method: Students will be expected to think on their feet in every class!
6. Students must keep a hard copy of every assignment, and turn in a **typed** hard copy of every assignment. Teacher will not be responsible for downloading & printing copies of your work.

Class Description: Students will learn more than the typical high school level American Government/Civics class, but in an easy-learning environment. Your students will also learn the "why" behind how our government was formed and "how" it functions now. We are sure to have lively class discussions, guest speakers, a few movies, games and spirited debates! Emphasis on reading & discussing original documents, research, & advanced writing. The following issues will be address in this class:

- Colonial Life: From the Pilgrims to The Tax Acts
- American Revolution: The Struggle for Liberty. A Rev. War Re-Enactor as Guest Speaker
- Founding Fathers & Founding Documents: Magna Carta, Mayflower Compact, Declaration of Independence, Articles of Confederation, Continental Congress, etc.
- The Forming of the U.S. Constitution: Constitutional Convention, Preamble, other documents & speeches
- Federalist vs. Anti-Federalist debates: Strong Central Government or States Rule
- Three Branches of Government/How They Function: Legislative, Executive, & Judicial
- The Bill of Rights: First 10 Amendments
- How Our Constitution is Amended & Selected Amendments for Study
- Debate on uniquely American Concepts such as "What is Liberty?" "What is the Pursuit of Happiness?"
- Politics, Voting Rights, understanding the Electoral College
- Constitutional Hot Topics in America Today
- American Exceptionalism & Government as it operates today
- Illinois Government
- Civics: Answer "What are our rights and responsibilities as citizens of a neighborhood, a city, a state, a country"?

Class Goals: Upon course completion, students should understand or master these concepts:

1. Outline the Constitution & the ability to discuss it with others.
2. Understand & discuss with others the principles behind the formation of American government.
3. Increase knowledge of key American individuals & why they were significant.
4. Strengthen critical thinking, research, and writing skills.