

**BUFFALO PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**STUDENT SECONDARY COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Course Title: Participation in Government Grade Level(s): 12  
Prerequisite(s): Successful Completion of U. S. Hist. & Govt. Unit of Credit: .5  
3 Units of Credit in Social Studies

**INTRODUCTION**

This course description will provide you with the specific requirements associated with the successful completion of this course, the content to be learned, the expected level of achievement and the materials that will be used in this course.

**STUDENT REQUIREMENTS**

As a student in this course, you will be expected to:

- Participate in group activities
- Do a research project connected to significant course content/concepts
- Speak in front of the class and express your views
- Put your views on issues in writing
- Meet deadlines, develop analytical, research and reasoning skills
- Keep an organized notebook of materials and information derived from class discussions, readings, assignments, presentations and activities
- Maintain a regular pattern of school and classroom attendance
- Register to Vote
- Complete 20 hours of community service at a non-for-profit organization:  
This includes service at places such as the City Mission, Cornerstone Manor, the Salvation Army or Friends of the Night People. The holidays are an excellent time to volunteer

**CONTENT STANDARDS**

(What you should know and be able to do)

- Understand how citizenship includes the exercise of certain personal responsibilities, including voting, considering the rights/interests of others by behaving in a civil manner, and accepting responsibility for the consequences of one actions
- Demonstrate an ability to analyze issues at the local, state, and national levels and prescribe responses that promote the public interest or general welfare
- Explore and analyze how citizens influence public policy in a representative democracy

## **CONTENT STANDARDS (continued)**

- Research, evaluate, take, and defend positions about attitudes that facilitate thoughtful and effective participation in public affairs
- Participate in school/classroom/community activities that focus on an issue or problem
- Prepare a plan of action that defines an issue or problem, suggests alternative solutions or courses of action, evaluates the consequences for each alternative solution or course of action, prioritize the solutions based on established criteria, and proposes an action plan to address the issue or to resolve the problem/issue

## **PERFORMANCE STANDARDS (Expected Levels of Achievement)**

To receive credit for Participation in Government, the student must maintain a satisfactory rating for the four marking periods, complete the prescribed project, and complete 20 hours of community service.

## **DELIVERY STANDARDS (Research-based practices that will be incorporated into the course)**

Students will be exposed to a number of research-based practices. Students will be encouraged to assume the role of researchers as they become engaged with the course content. Classroom instruction will be student centered, with teachers assuming the role of facilitators or guides in the learning process. Instruction will be approached from an interdisciplinary and multicultural perspective. Teachers will devote significant time and attention to creating a learning environment that is geared towards multiple intelligences, varied learning styles and assessments. As previously outlined, students will access and manipulate data from a variety of sources.

## **COURSE MATERIALS**

Participation in Government Project

## **ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES**

Students will be assessed via:

- independent/group research projects (oral, written, visual)
- major class project

## CONCEPTS/KEY TERMS STUDENTS SHOULD KNOW AND BE ABLE TO EXPLAIN IN CONTENT

Rights	Office of Citizen
Responsibilities	Common Good
Government	Civic Values
Services	Majority/Minority Opinions
Protections	Private Self Interest
Levels of Government	Special Interests
Elections (Primary/General)	Affirmative Action
Electoral Process	Apathy
Electoral College	Balancing Test
Infrastructure	Civic Virtue
Amendments (various)	Civil Liberties
Amendment Process	Constituent
Supreme Court Decisions	Criminal Justice
Bill of Rights	Democracy (Representative)
Deficit Spending	Due Process
Public Policy (Issues)	Electorate
Public Policy Ladder	Incumbent
F. D. A.	Lobbyist
N. R. A.	Probable Cause
PACS	Search and Seizure
Public Policy Issues	

## CAREER COMPETENCIES

Career possibilities include: politician, public policy analysts, and lobbyists

### UNIT 1 - Understanding the Office of Citizen

- Defining what it means to be a citizen (democracy)
- Characteristics of “Office of Citizen”
- Define the concept of “public in a democratic society”
- Differentiate between private self interest and common good

### UNIT 2 - The Constitution, the Supreme Court and you

- Identify the impact of constitutional issues on the Office of Citizen
- Analyze the reasoning when individual rights conflict with the requirements of society
- Various conceptions of public/common good

- Determining and defending informed decisions on issues

### **UNIT 3 - You as a Policy Maker**

- Identify the range of policy alternatives related to a specific public issue
- Selecting and supporting a solution to an issue
- Describing the various effects of a chosen solution
- Explaining the rationale for rejecting different alternative solutions

### **UNIT 4 - Applying the Process**

- Selection of a current issue of public interest
- Research and analyze the issue in-depth
- Prescribe a course of action to resolve the problem
- Prepare a position paper/presentation
- Present and defend the proposed resolution orally

### **UNIT 5 - Participating in Governing: Making a Difference**

- Identify the factors that contribute to or limit the involvement of citizens
- Describe the role of the media in formulating public opinion
- Articulate and define the role of political parties in American government
- State the impact of special interests groups
- Identify the specific ways in which citizen's impact and participate in American democratic government.