

# Civics/Current U.S. Issues Syllabus

2023-2024

*Karen H. Reeves*

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This course is designed to explore current local, state, and national problems and their impact on modern society. As this course is a companion to the regular Civics class, issues will be studied from the perspective of Constitutional law and Supreme Court rulings. Emphasis will be placed on critical thinking skills, analytical reading and writing, and effective discussion/debate.

**Text:** While there is no text associated with this course, *it will be necessary for students to have access outside of the classroom to some source of news (newspaper covering national/global news, TV or radio).*

## Required materials:

- 1 1/2"-2" notebook (3-ring binder)  
**NO spiral notebooks**
- 1 Black/navy blue pen (**required!**)
- 1 Red pen
- 1 Pencil, 1 Highlighter
- 1 - Personal planner or planning calendar
- 1 - Inexpensive 3 - hole punch
- 1 - Inexpensive (Tiny Tot) stapler
- Flash Drive
- Access to Word/Power Point

## Suggested materials:

Public library card  
Internet access

**Note:** Students who wish to use the Internet at the Burke County Public Library must have a parent complete and sign the designated form at the library.

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## Content Outline (semester)

### First/Third Nine Weeks

- \*History of Law
- \*News Analysis
- \*Local Government
- \*State Government  
(Structure, Current  
Local/State Issues)
- \*Primary Source analysis
- \*Presentation

### Second/Fourth Nine Weeks

- \*Political Cartoon analysis
- \*National (Constitutional  
amendments, Supreme  
Court cases, Current  
National Issues)
- \*Presentation
- \*College/Career Readiness

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**Note:** This syllabus is subject to amendment when necessary in order to achieve the objectives as stated above.

# GRADING POLICY

## **DAILY GRADES = 40% of the Nine Weeks Average**

- 1. Essays:** All essays/writing assignments are graded for grammar/style as well as content. Students will be informed in advance whether an essay will be part of an exam, count as a daily grade, or count as a test grade.
- 2. Classwork/homework:** These assignments will include, but are not limited to vocabulary lists, questions/study guides, graphics analysis, lecture notes, cooperative learning assignments, primary source readings, and research exercises.
- 3. Quizzes:** Students can expect to be tested --- without notice --- on information from the previous day's class, homework assignments, or vocabulary lists.

## **TEST GRADES = 45% of the Nine Weeks Average**

- 1. Unit Tests:** A major objective test will be administered with each unit. Information to be tested may come from any class discussions, notes, wall displays, research, or text information.
- 2. Group Presentations:** A major group presentation will be administered with each unit. Students will be assigned both a group grade (double daily/ test grade) and an individual grade (test/project grade).
- 3. Reading Requirements:** Students will be expected to read and report on selected books, articles, or primary resources related to the text or an assigned research project. Guidelines will be provided in class.
- 4. Notebook:** Each student is required to keep all information pertinent to this class in a notebook. ***(Loose papers or papers folded and kept in the textbook are not acceptable.)*** This will include ALL WORK done in preparation for or in this class.

## **PRESENTATION (Individual Grade)/SUPPLEMENTAL READING = 15% of the Nine Weeks Average:**

Students will complete one research presentation per quarter. While several grades will be associated with this assignment, the individual grade will be the only grade to count 15% of the first quarter average. Most of the work on this project will be completed in class, and guidelines will be provided at that time. In addition, students will be required to read and be tested on one book (student choice) from the instructor's reading list.

## **SEMESTER EXAM = 20% of the Semester Average**

1. Semester exams are administered at the end of the 2nd or 4th nine weeks.
2. Semester exams may include ***any information*** covered during that grading period.

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**NOTE:** *It is critical that students pay absolute attention in class and develop an effective approach to mastery of the material as we move through each unit. Students who wait until the night before a test to study or to prepare an assignment are rarely successful.*

\*\*\*Exams are NOT to be removed from this classroom without the instructor's permission! \*\*\*

## EXPECTATIONS AND POLICIES

1. Students are expected to **obey all school rules** as presented in the EBA handbook. Do NOT ask me to make exceptions. It is my responsibility to enforce the student handbook. [**Please note Cell Phone policy as stated in the EBA Student Handbook.**]
2. Students are expected to be **seated and quiet BEFORE the tardy bell rings**. Trips to the restroom, pencil sharpener, and trash can, **as well as any board instructions**, must be completed before the tardy bell.
3. **Homework** in this class is essential to the following day's lesson and, therefore, **will NOT be accepted late**. Students should be prepared to turn in homework upon entering the classroom.
4. **Cheating** (includes, *but is not limited to*, copying another student's homework) **will not be tolerated**. Work will receive a grade of "o" and parents will be notified. Not only does it violate EBA policy, but it is counterproductive to the objectives of this class.
5. Students must make arrangements on the day of their return from an **EXCUSED** absence to **make up work missed**. ***It is the student's responsibility to ask for missed assignments (before or after class), as well as to get any lecture notes or other information missed.*** ALL make up work, both tests and other assignments, must be completed before or after school hours. **Assignments issued before an anticipated class absence are due upon that student's return to class unless arrangements are made with this instructor before the absence.** [Note attached attendance policy from EBA Handbook.]
6. Students are required to bring **pencil and pen, paper, and notebook** to class EVERY DAY unless otherwise notified. You WILL NOT PASS MY CLASS if you repeatedly attend unprepared.
7. Students are expected to display **courtesy** by raising their hands before speaking or leaving their desks, to respect the person and property of others, and to wait for the instructor, **NOT THE BELL**, to dismiss the class!
8. **PAY ATTENTION and STAY ON TASK!** ***We will not have time to waste nor will this instructor be patient with those who insist upon doing so.***
9. Students are expected to demonstrate **RESPECT** for themselves and others while in this classroom. **Abusive or inappropriate comments, intimidating behavior, general rudeness, and constant complaining directed at other students or the instructor will not be tolerated.** A positive attitude and constructive behavior are expected so that this will be a meaningful learning experience.

Failure to meet these expectations will result in the following consequences (unless otherwise stated):

**1st Offense: Documented Warning/Student Conference**  
**2nd Offense: Parental Conference/Detention**  
**3rd Offense: Office Referral**

**Note:** Your success in this class is *extremely* important to me. Please contact me if you have difficulty meeting the requirements of the class, and together we can develop a plan to help you meet the standards as set forth in the course objectives.

**Contact Information: Karen H. Reeves**

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Instructor: **Karen H. Reeves**

Student Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Signature