

## Melrose High School Syllabus

**Department:** Social Studies

**Course Title:** 334 Civics & Legal Issues

**Course Description:** Civics and Legal Issues is an elective Social Studies course which explores the political policies and structures of America both historically and today. Through the study of Civics and Legal Issues, students will acquire skills and knowledge necessary to become responsible and effective citizens in their communities. This course is divided into two distinct sections. In the fall, students will build background knowledge on the founding and civic structures of our nation before participating in a Civic Action project coordinated by the *Generation Citizen* program. In the spring, our focus will shift to the Judicial branch of our government, as students study historic, landmark Supreme Court decisions and participate in Mock Trials as we examine different legal issues and crises our nation faces.

**MHS Learning Expectations:**

- Write effectively using standard written English.
- Demonstrate the ability to read effectively.
- Demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively.
- Demonstrate good citizenship.
- Demonstrate an understanding of tolerance and diversity, and respect for themselves, others and their school.

**Essential Questions:**

- What does it mean to be an active, informed American Citizen?
- How can young people make an impact on their communities?
- What role does the law have in the lives of Americans?
- How has the Judicial Branch shaped the American nation over time?

<p><b><u>Students will know:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● The formation and structure of the American Government.</li><li>● How to be an active participant in their communities.</li><li>● The impact of the Judicial Branch on American society.</li></ul>	<p><b><u>Students will be able to:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Participate as active citizens in their communities</li><li>● Reflect on ongoing political and social issues in an informed manner</li><li>● Properly place today's issues into historical context.</li></ul>
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**Major Topics of Study:**

Introduction to Civics  
*Generation Citizen: Civics in Action*  
The Judicial Branch  
Landmark Supreme Court Cases  
Legal Issues Today

**Primary Course Materials:**

Students in Civics should have a designated Civics folder and notebook. Students may be asked to turn in pages from their notebooks, so spiral bound notebooks or loose leaf paper in binders are preferred. There is no textbook for this class, readings will be provided from *Generation Citizen* in the fall and *Street Law* in the spring. Additional readings may be assigned, which will be distributed in class.

**Major Assignments and Grading:**

Assignments in this class will vary greatly. Students will participate in discussion, reflection, research, and help to implement an action plan they develop as a part of the *Generation Citizen Program*. In the spring, students will also prepare for and participate in mock trials as we explore our nation's judicial system.

**Midyear & Final Exams:** Midyear and Final Exams will be given. These exams count as 10% of the respective semester grade. The average of the first and second quarter grades will count 90% in determining the first semester average. Similarly, the second semester average will include the average of third and fourth quarter grades at 90% and final exam at 10%. The average for the entire year will be the average of both semesters. Senior students will be asked to complete a final assessment at the end of both the third and fourth quarter.

Q1 = 22.5%    Q2 = 22.5%    Midterm = 5%    Q3 = 22.5%    Q4 = 22.5%    Final = 5%