



Civics & Economics

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contact: mcaggia@wcpss.net

What is Civics & Economics?

C&E is *probably* the **most** useful of your required Social Studies courses because it deals with topics that effect you everyday. It is a conceptual course as well as a historical course. That is, it deals with many concepts about government and economics that relate in many ways to many different historic events (not to mention events yet to come in your lifetime).

This course is divided into two parts that are both distinct and intertwined. First, this course examines Government of the United States, its origins, how it works, how it has changed, and an individual's role in government. Everyday we are impacted by our government, in more ways than we realize (the fact that you are here at school today is evidence of that). But beyond that, it is important to know how YOU impact government as well – in more ways than you realize. We will pull information from your prior knowledge of US Government, US History, North Carolina Government and History and World History in order to get a more complete picture of the government of the United States. We will be able to clarify rumors and possible misconceptions about how government operates and works.

Second, this course will also examine how and why people make decisions, the function and operation of the United States' economic system, and how individual's work within the economics system. Just as with government, we are impacted by economics daily. Economics not only involves money, it is basically a study of decision-making. Each of us is confronted with decisions we must make everyday. Although they may not be *major* decisions, they are decisions nonetheless. By examining the decision-making process we will be better able to understand the economic system of the United States, and then how that system affects the way we make decisions.

In this course, I expect each of you to be responsible for your education and learning. In order to best prepare you for all the possible topics on which you will be tested, this course will be taught strictly according to the North Carolina Essential Standards for Social Studies. You must think broadly about subjects we discuss and be able to apply what you know and learn to different situations because the final exam will be about the application of the broad ideas, not necessarily about the specific examples we will use in the class to explain them.

Remember, this is **NOT** the class for the passive or lazy, you get out what you put in. This is **your** education; take an **ACTIVE** part in it. I hope that this semester will make the world around you become more relevant to you instead of simply a series of abstract ideas and concepts.

Common Core & Literacy

North Carolina is on board with the nationwide push to increase literacy in public schools. Where typically, literacy is simply thought of as "reading" and "writing," it encompasses far more. Common Core has become North Carolina's standard for literacy goals for all K-12 classes and schools. These standards, broken down by grade level, are found on the [Common Core](#) website. While these have just been adapted beginning this year, it is the hope that students will build through the grades from kindergarten through senior year, and beyond, to improve their ability to not only read and understand the words on the page, but to also interpret, analyze, synthesize, and apply what they read to become more meaningful, more creative, and more personal. I will attempt to use many sources of reading to improve your literacy but also attempt to give you opportunity to demonstrate that literacy by using what you have read and learned together. It is my goal to not only increase your proficiency in Common Core standards of literacy, but to improve your civic and economic literacy simultaneously. As we look toward the future, one of the most important components of your education is literacy. Regardless of how much actual core content from a course you use in your daily life, your ability to understand, comprehend, analyze, and synthesize will **ALWAYS** be necessary.

Mission, Vision, and Core Beliefs

It is important for everyone involved to accept the basic underlying principles that govern my classroom. While not specifically stated below, the most important thread is mutual respect. My goal is to create a safe, and inviting environment based on mutual trust that will nurture each student's curiosity in the course and courage to explore the subjects beyond what is required in the curriculum.

Mission: To increase the achievement of all students by providing content and standards based learning that will also translate to real-world application and productive citizenship for the common good.

Vision: That all students will have a better understanding of the broader world around them than when they began their studies. The knowledge students learn in this class will make them more productive citizens and they will use this knowledge to make their environment a better place for themselves, their families, and all people they meet.

Core Beliefs:

- 1) All students who come to my class will learn.
- 2) Education is two parts: teaching and learning.
- 3) Learning takes place at ALL times – inside school, at home, at work, and everywhere in between. A person must simply be ready to see and hear the lessons.
- 4) It takes cooperation between school and home to achieve the greatest academic success.

Please obtain the following materials, as soon as possible, for this course:

- 1) Loose Leaf Binder and paper
- 2) A highlighter
- 3) A pencil and pen, black or blue ONLY. (not iridescent blue, or with sparkles, etc.)
- 4) Pocket Dictionary

My philosophy on education is simple – to learn. It is important to remember education is not a destination it is a journey. We never stop learning. Likewise, we all can learn from each other. There is more to learn than what is stated in the curriculum and between the covers of the textbook. As a result, there are some basic rules that will go a long way to making everyone comfortable in class and make this a positive learning environment, and while every teacher has slightly different procedures or expectations, all will agree that the following rules apply in all classes.

Rule #1: Read the Directions	Rule #3: Positive Attitudes ONLY
Rule #2: Be responsible for:	Rule #4: Treat others as you would like to be treated
2(a): YOUR Grade;	Rule #5: Respect other people's property and person
2(b): YOUR Learning;	Rule #6: Laugh WITH anyone but laugh AT no one
2(c): YOUR Work;	Rule #7: Come to class and hand in work ON TIME
2(d): YOUR Actions	Rule #8: Do not disturb people who are working

In addition, there are a couple of other ideas with which you should become familiar. These ideas are important for success in all your classes and beyond the classroom.

1. There is no excuse for lazy!

2. We make our own luck

("Luck favors the prepared!" – Edna Mode)

Hall Passes & Time on Task: I have seen through my own experience that all students show improved grades with increased "time on task"; the more time a student spends in the classroom during instruction time and the less time they spend wandering the halls or in the restroom, the higher their grade. However, as it becomes necessary from time to time for students to need to leave the classroom I will allow it, up to a maximum of 5. Beyond that, students will need to repay the time. On the other hand, any student who needs to leave the room less than 5 times will earn 2 bonus points equal to the number of times less than 5 that the student has remaining. A student who arrives to class late should NOT ask to use their hall pass later in the period. As far as I am concerned, you have already used your time out of the class for the period. *I reserve the right to deny or delay a student's use of their hall pass at any time.*

Start on Time: As you are aware, LRHS has implemented this program that has reduced the number of students wandering the halls and arriving late to class. The "Start on Time" program is essentially a zero tolerance program for tardiness. Without exception, teachers are **required** by administration to shut and lock their doors when the bell rings to begin class. Any student not in the classroom at that time is late (regardless of how close or far they are from the room, or if their materials are already inside or not). Students locked out of class are rounded up by faculty and administration and assigned lunch detention the next school day.

ALL students, regardless of where they are coming from, must be in class when the bell rings (on the stairs does not count!)

Absences: I follow the school policy for absences that is found in your student handbook (pp. 14-16).

Bullying/Intimidation: The classroom is designed to be a safe environment. Students and teachers should not only be safe from physical harm, but also psychological harm. Anytime a student is uncomfortable participating in class due to the actions of other students it is considered a form of bullying or intimidation. My goal is to create an environment where students make smart decisions, think before they speak or act, and behave intelligently. When this happens we have a productive learning environment where we all can learn from each other.

Eating and Drinking in Class: A limited variety of foods are permitted in class. However, overtime insect related problems can sometimes arise due to the lack of responsibility of the students. Food will be permitted as long as the students are responsible to clean up after themselves and not leave crumbs, wrappers, or other such food items in the desks. I will not wait until bugs become a problem to prohibit food in class.

Electronic Devices and Nuisance Items Policy: LRHS has created a uniform policy for electronic devices or other items disruptive to class/learning environment (see page 19 of the LRHS student handbook). If I see a nuisance item (including but not limited to, iPod, mp3 player, walkman, cell phone, gaming device (such as PSP), laser pointer) I will call home and am required to take the following steps:

- 1) **First Incident:** Confiscation with parent notification and return of device at the end of the period.
- 2) **Second Incident:** 1 day ISS and the parent is required to pick up the device/item.
- 3) **Third Incident:** 2 days ISS and is required to pick up the device/item.

Grading: Assignments will be graded using the following scale based on the type of assignment.

Major Assessments	50%	Test, Projects, Reports	
Minor Assessments	50%	Quizzes (30%)	Periodic evaluation of learning throughout the unit
		Homework (10%)	Assignments given that are to be completed AT HOME. If there is a question if an assignment will be counted as "homework", please ask.
		Classwork / Daily Work (10%)	Assignment given in class. I will specify if it is homework or Classwork. Often times you will not finish Classwork in class, YOU ARE EXPECTED TO FINISH IT AT HOME.

The quarter and semester grades will be recorded as per the school's grading policy (presently this policy is determined by the State Department of Public Education). I will not round grades that are further than .5 away from the next letter grade. (i.e. 92.5 = A, 92.4 ≠ A)

A = 93 - 100
B = 85 - 92
C = 77 - 84
D = 70 - 76
F = less than 70

Make-up Work:

Homework/Classwork:

Absences:	An absent student may make-up missed homework and classwork at home and is expected to turn it in as soon as possible according to the Wake County make-up policy.
"Late work"	This includes any homework/classwork assignment that the student is in class to receive and is present on the day it is due but fails to submit it. These assignments can be turned in late for reduced credit.

Tests & Quizzes:

Absences:	Students are expected to make up tests and quizzes that are missed due to absence in a timely manner. This should be done after school.
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IT IS THE STUDENT'S RESPONSIBILITY TO FIND OUT THE WORK THAT WAS MISSED DURING A PARTICULAR ABSENCE. THE TEACHER WILL NOT REMIND THE STUDENT TO SUBMIT THIS ABSENT WORK (as per Wake County Schools make-up policy and can be found on pages 17-18 in the LRHS Student Handbook). The primary way to learn what work was missed during a student absence is from the online resources provided for you on the class website and homework feed (via twitter). **I expect any student who is absent from class, for whatever reason, to access the missed information and handouts online.**

Mid-term & Final Exam: According to current information, the state has reinstated a state-wide final exam – "Measures of Student Learning" (MSL). The format, weight, grading rubric, and date of the exam are not yet known. I will furnish you with this information once it is made available. Another change is that there will not be a Mid-Term exam. The biggest thing to know here is that there will be a state administered final exam for which I do not have the details but will let you know more as I learn more.

A word about Homework and Classwork: Many students believe that teachers assign homework just to make them do more work and cut into their social life. Well that is entirely untrue. We give you homework to give you another opportunity to think about what we have done in class. It also gives you a chance to talk with your parents about what you are learning and allows them to give some input. I find this very important, especially when it comes to current events.

Homework is very important in your preparation for the day's discussion and activities. That is to say, the more time I have to spend giving notes on information that was already assigned in the reading, the less time we will have to do interesting activities in the classroom. Being prepared is directly related to success. The better prepared a student is, the more they will understand the discussion, the more they will be able to participate, the better the questions that student will ask, and the deeper the understanding of the subject. All this will translate into a better understanding of the material which will be demonstrated on tests and quizzes – the bulk of your grade for this course. As a result, I strongly emphasize your preparation for class each day.

In an effort to keep up on homework assignments, in addition to writing it on the board in class, I will be posting the day's homework on Twitter at the address on the front of this handout. If you are already familiar with Twitter and have an account, I suggest you follow this course on your account. If you do not have a Twitter account and do not wish to have one, you can still keep tabs on the homework by visiting the same web address. You may also keep up with the course and get copies of handouts, view related videos and other content for enrichment by visiting my Civics & Economics website, also found on the front of this website (or use the QR Code from your mobile device).

I can tell, just by grading your homework if you did it while watching television or in front of some other distraction or quickly in an earlier class. Usually when a person does their homework while watching TV they don't read the question correctly or their answers do not make sense. So, for all intents and purposes, doing your homework in front of the TV is pointless because you will not remember what it is that you have read or written. Take the time to put in a good effort. It will pay off in the long run.

Also remember, everything that you do is a reflection of you. If you turn in a sloppy, folded/creased, half completed assignment, it tells people something different than if you turned in a neat complete assignment. So before you turn something in, look at it and say to yourself, "what does this paper / assignment say about me?"

Dress Code: Student attire has become a concern for administration, faculty, and staff at Leesville, as well as for the Wake County School Board. I expect that all students will adhere to the dress code instituted by the Wake County School Board as described in the student handbook on pages 22-23.

Amendments: I reserve the right to amend these policies, as the situation makes necessary. A handout explaining any changes will accompany any amendments to the above policies.

I expect that we will have a GREAT term. We will all be successful by trying to do our best, and hopefully we will all look back on this term as one of the most positively memorable.

Sincerely,
Matthew Caggia

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CIVICS & ECONOMICS Period 3

Please read the course expectations and return this signed portion of the paper by _____ it will be your first homework assignment of the term. (date due)

Student's Name: (please print) _____

Student's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent / Guardian's Name: (please print) _____

Parent / Guardian's Signature: _____ Date: _____