

## **Street Law Syllabus**

Ms. Fazel 2017-2018

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**Course Essential Question:** What is justice? What does it take to build a just community?

### **Learning Targets:**

- I can analyze a variety of texts to understand complex ideas.
- I can apply specific rules and concepts to new situations.
- I can analyze an argument and evaluate what makes an argument effective.
- I can develop an argument with a clear claim and support my argument with effective evidence.
- I can communicate effectively through writing and public speaking.
- I can discuss challenging ideas thoughtfully and respectfully with others.

### **Key topics for this course:**

- What is justice? What does a just community look like?
- Why are some things crimes, and others aren't?
- How does a criminal investigation work? What rules do police have to follow?
- How does a trial work? What rules do lawyers, judges, and juries have to follow?
- How does our correctional system work? Why is it set up that way? How could it work better?
- How is our juvenile justice system different from the adult system? Why is it set up that way? How could it work better?
- Other than our criminal justice system, how can our legal system help resolve important conflicts?
- How could we improve our legal system to create a more just society for everyone?

### **Enduring understandings:**

- A core principle in our legal system is expressed as "equal justice under law."
- Our legal system is not the only possible structure for ensuring justice for all.
- There are many contrasting beliefs about the best way to ensure justice for all.
- As a voter, you will be asked to make many complex choices about our justice system and the officials who will lead that system.

### **What to expect:**

Through this class, my hope is that you will understand the American legal system, and develop your own curiosity about how to make our system better. In addition, you will develop stronger critical thinking skills, become more effective writers and public speakers, and learn to read challenging texts well. We will accomplish these goals through a variety of assignments: working with hypotheticals, reading in the Street Law textbook, doing research, reading current articles, holding debates, seminars, and mock trials, writing proposed laws, and working out these ideas through other creative projects. Put in the work (even when it's difficult), ask for help, and keep an open mind, and you *will* meet those goals!