

**AP UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND  
POLITICS  
SUMMER ASSIGNMENT 2018  
MS. MATTHEW**



Welcome to AP US Government and Politics!

This class will examine the formal and informal structures of the U.S. Government and the processes of the American political system, with an emphasis on policy-making. We will be studying how our government works, why it is set up the way it is, and how public policy is decided and implemented. The goals of the course are to increase your understanding of the American political system, to inspire you to be an effective citizen actively involved in your government and politics, and as a result provide you with the information you can use to prepare for the AP exam on **Monday, May 6, 2019 -- YOU ARE THE FIRST TEST IN THE CYCLE!.**

**Why summer assignments?**

Using your initiative to recall and reflect on your existing knowledge of government and politics before beginning the course makes sense as it helps you anticipate, adjust and focus your thinking to the subject of study at this level. You will be off to a terrific start to the year if you come to class ready with questions. Political science isn't chemistry, geometry nor is it history. The summer assignment helps you get ready to apply your cognitive skills in a new direction, become more attuned to the significance of the news, and more empowered to prepare to participate in the democratic political process that is fundamental to American citizenship.

**SIMPLY:** This is fast paced and while I slow down for other courses this semester long course has little room to ramp up.

**SUMMER ASSIGNMENT: you have four pieces to the summer assignment for AP Government that are due on the first day of class.**

**1. U.S. Constitution familiarization sheet**

- a. Read the U.S. Constitution and complete the attached worksheet.
- b. The U.S. constitution can be found in your AP Book on page 652. There are also pocket constitutions you may have before you leave for the end of the year
- c. Complete the attached reading guide for the Constitution
- d. Your responses **MUST** be typed **AND** in another legible color -- no **BLACK**. I will not grade handwritten work.

**2. Follow the national news through the summer, select the TWO most significant news stories involving the U.S. Government or politics that develop and summarize each one.**

- a. A story is NOT limited to what is reported on just one day. It DOES typically develop over time. Therefore, you are expected to collect news articles/reports throughout the summer, not just at one point in time. For example, a major story from 2013 might include the “Stop and Frisk” law being deemed unconstitutional. Last summer it may be the “Women’s March” and the opposition to how our government was/is running. **Some ideas about this summer?**
  - b. Choose worthy and credible sources of information. *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, *The Denver Post*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, CNN, FOX, NBC, and NPR are examples of good sources of information; The “Colbert Report,” while a great laugh and does contain facts is not where I want you focusing your attention. I would encourage you to look at competing sources as well. Watch CNN and FOX for coverage on the same topic and compare their reporting. Do you see bias reporting? How can you be sure you are getting the facts of the story?
  - c. As you watch, listen, and read the news, focus on current events that involve a direct connection to American (national) government or politics.
  - d. Prepare a titled summary for each story of no more than 2 typed pages.
    - i. Ideal summaries succinctly specify and describe the journalist basics (who, what, where, when) and additionally explain (the how and why).
    - ii. **In every case be sure to make the connection between the news story and the involvement of American government or politics clear.** End your summary with a paragraph of analysis and reflection on how you think the news story may connect with content you predict we will address in the scope of the course. Start to develop opinions (or build on them) about politics and government. What are the problems that the U.S. is facing today? What would you change? Read the editorial page and NOT just the positions you agree with. We will be discussing your ideas as they develop.
    - iii. Use a third page for each story to cite your multiple sources (at least three per story over time) of information collected Wednesday, June 14th (Flag Day) through Sunday August 11th.
- 3. Choose how you want to explore and experience government or politics; to consider multiple perspectives.** Choose from one of the following ideas or pursue an alternative, with teacher approval.
- a. **Conduct an interview:** For 20 - 30 minutes at the local, state or national (yes you can do this) level someone who holds an elected office, works in government, or covers government or politics in the news media

- i. Prepare a written list of 10 - 12 substantive questions reflecting your curiosity about their motivation, qualifications, role, experiences, challenges, and advice for you; dress in business attire; get a picture of yourself with your interview subject; afterwards prepare a 2 - 3 page summary of the interview; and send a thank you note!
    - ii. Consider scheduling an interview as a small group
  - b. **OR Attend a session of court proceedings and record your observations in a 2 - 3 page summary.**
  - c. **OR Visit a state capital and tour state government buildings, perhaps the state legislature and witness its proceedings.** After your visit(s) prepare a detailed, captioned photo scrapbook (6 - 10 pictures) recording your experience and documenting what you observed occurring at these locations. Be mindful of your purpose which is to connect with the workings of government more so than to appreciate the history. Make your scrapbook of a size to fit within your portfolio. Each individual picture needs its own detailed caption, ideally including relevant information you learned during your visit. You must be in each photo you include in your scrapbook!
4. **AP Government Scavenger Hunt**
  - a. Review and become familiar with the AP College Board U.S. Government website:
    - i. <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-united-states-government-and-politics/course>
  - b. The College Board web site is an excellent resource for students to use for information throughout the course. Log on to the College Board and read the introduction to AP US Government then answer the questions on the last page of this packet
  - c. Typed responses are required.

#### **FINAL PRODUCT:**

1. All work is due the first day of class. Timely and successful completion of the summer assignment is an important indicator of the strength of your commitment to course assignment at the AP level. Show your initiative! Plan your summer assignment schedule now.
2. All work is to be of your own creation, enough said? I think so.
3. Contact me via email if you have questions during the summer. ([tina.matthew@ccsdre1.org](mailto:tina.matthew@ccsdre1.org)) Anticipate, however, that I am on vacation too and may have some digital free camping trips. I will get back to you as quickly as possible and work to put an “out of office” alert on if I’m not answering emails.

I look forward to learning more about how our government operates and hearing your views on our political system and the men and women who operate in the political theater. I am looking forward to exploring our government process with you!

Tina M. Barber-Matthew  
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Evaluation: Each section is worth 25 points. 100 Total points possible

Exceptional Work	Satisfactory Work	Below Standard (Expectation)
Student shows significant initiative to skillfully plan, organize, interpret, carry out tasks and record findings in depth in order to meaningfully observe and reflect on ideas about government and politics. .	Student shows adequate initiative in completing the assignments, demonstrating skill and effort in observations and reflections on ideas about government and politics	Lack of student initiative demonstrated through superficial recording of findings, incomplete or poorly expressed work.

**BOOK:** *Government in America People, AP Edition*

by: Edwards, Wattenberg, Lineberry  
 SKU: 95974233

*Politics, and Policy 15th*

