

AP U.S. Government and Politics

Summer Assignment 2015 - Mrs. Hoffman

Welcome to AP U.S. Government! I am very pleased that you are taking the course and look forward to working with you. This assignment will count as a portfolio/project grade (200 points). ***This assignment is due on the FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL. NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED!***

If you have any questions while completing this assignment, please email me at lhoffman@berkscatholic.org. Please note that I do travel a lot during the summer so there may be a delay in my response. I will check email as often as possible; however, at times I will be in remote locations without email access.

Part 1: News Journal – 100 points

Keep a weekly journal over the summer on current events from the weeks beginning June 29 to August 31 (10 weeks). Each week, identify a key political issue facing our country. (You may use the same issue more than once, but not more than twice.)

Find information about the selected issue via television, the Internet, magazines or newspapers. You are encouraged to seek out a wide variety of sources and to expand beyond the offerings of just the local news.

Write a summary of the developments on that issue and address the items listed below. Each entry should be one-page long for a total of a ten- page journal. [Formatting: Typed and double-spaced, Times New Roman font, 12 point, One-inch margins]

- * For each entry cite the sources (at least 2) in MLA format at the end of your entry.
- * Wikipedia, blogs, and other websites that allow the public open access to generate material are NOT acceptable sources.

Your analysis should include:

1. An explanation of what is going on or being said in the article. What point is the author trying to make?
2. The detection of any bias of the author toward the subject presented in the article.
3. A statement on whether you agree or disagree with the author's point and why.

Part 2: Book Review – 100 points

Select a book from the list and tell Mrs. Hoffman; only 2 students may review each title. Compose a book review and be sure to include:

1. An introduction to the topic of the book and relates the thesis, or what the author is trying to prove. This is usually found in the introduction of the book.
2. The body is a summary of the contents of the book. Avoid a clumsy chapter-by-chapter approach, instead focus on the key themes of the book.
3. The conclusion is an evaluation of the author's argument.

This is a formal essay, **DO NOT** use first or second person and avoid contractions and slang.

Length: minimum three pages, maximum four pages. [Formatting: Typed and double-spaced, Times New Roman font, 12 point, One-inch margins]

2015 Book List

Marcia Coyle, *The Roberts Court: The Struggle For the Constitution*

Lawrence Tribe and Joshua Matz, *Uncertain Justice: The Roberts Court and the Constitution*

Erwin Chemerinsky, *The Case Against the Supreme Court*

Damon Root, *Overruled: The Long War for Control of the U.S. Supreme Court*

Mark Tushnet, *In the Balance: Law and Politics on the Roberts Court*

Nathaniel Persily, Gillian Metzger and Trevor Morrison, *The Health Care Case: The Supreme Court's Decision and Its Implications*

Antonin Scalia and Kevin Ring, *Scalia Dissents: Writings of the Supreme Court's Wittiest, Most Outspoken Justice*

David M. O'Brien, *Storm Center: The Supreme Court in American Politics* (10th edition)

Dion Farganis and Justin Wedeking, *Supreme Court Confirmation Hearings in the U.S. Senate: Reconsidering the Charade*

Part 3: Movie Review – 100 points

The purpose is to help students understand the organization of the government as shown in movies throughout United States History. You will watch 3 of the following movies, and complete a film analysis worksheet for each movie. Many of these movies are available from the public library, or from Netflix, as well as many other places. To give yourself a breadth of exposure, choose films from as many different categories as possible. The film analysis worksheets for all 3 movies will be due on the **FIRST DAY** of class. Some of the movies are rated R, so please be warned that some content can be intense.

2015 Movie List

Unit One: (Constitutional Underpinnings) John Adams (HBO Series)

Unit Two: (Civil Rights and Civil Liberties) Great Debaters, Erin Brockovich, Iron Jawed Angels, Last Ounce of Courage, Shouting Fire: Stories from the Edge of Free Speech, Bowling for Columbine, Hoxie: The First Stand, When the Levies Broke, Selma, Mississippi Burning

Unit Three: (Political Beliefs and Behaviors) Magic Town, Blue Collar, Lions for Lambs, Wag the Dog, Thank You For Smoking

Unit Four: (Political Parties and Elections) Primary Colors, The Candidate

Unit Five: (Media) Good Night and Good Luck, Citizen Kane, Shattered Glass, All the President's Men, Live From Baghdad

Unit Six: (The Congress) Mr. Smith Goes to Washington, The Ugly American, The Congress

Unit Seven: (The Executive) JFK, The American President, Recount

Unit Eight: (The Judicial Branch) A Few Good Men, 12 Angry Men, The Runaway Jury, A Civil Action, Gideon's Trumpet

Unit Nine: (Bureaucracy) Bureaucracy, Pentagon Papers

Unit Ten: (State and Local Government) City Hall, The Town That Was, All the King's Men

Unit Eleven: (Public Policy) Waiting for Superman, Argo, The Messenger, United 93, The Killing Fields

Film Analysis Worksheet

Pre-Viewing: (Feel free to look up a brief bio of the movie to complete this section BEFORE viewing)

Title of Film: _____ Year the Film was Made: _____

Government Concepts/Ideas portrayed in the movie:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Government People/Officials Portrayed in the movie:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Post Viewing:

1. What is the central message of this film?

2. Consider the effectiveness of the film in communicating its message. As a tool of communication, what are its strengths and weaknesses?

STRENGTHS:

WEAKNESSES:

3. What information do you gain about this event that would not be conveyed by a written source?

4. Are there any major historical/factual inaccuracies that you noticed in the film? Do they detract from the film?

5. Do you think this film should stay on my movie list for future students to view? Why or why not?