

ADVANCED PLACEMENT GOVERNMENT & POLITICS – US & COMPARATIVE

MR. O'KEEFE (daniel_okeefe@fa.org) ~ 2019–2020 ACADEMIC YEAR

2019 SUMMER READING & REFLECTION

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your interest in this course! I hope that you share my excitement in working together. You should be prepared for this class to be as demanding as you would expect any semester-long college course to be, culminating in an AP exam for which we will carefully prepare; however, I believe you will find it to be relevant and applicable to your life.

This course is “two in one”: *Comparative* Government & Politics in the first semester, and *US* Government & Politics in the second. To help us get started on more familiar ground, this summer reading focuses exclusively on the US piece.

I was an AP Gov. student myself as a senior in 2004–05. Prior to the course, I recall hoping the summer assignment would be manageable – one that respected my time off from school – but also one that was interesting and worthwhile in preparing me for success on the AP exam and the class itself. I have tried to capture these criteria in what I am asking you to kindly prepare prior to the first day of class. The work is aligned to the core expectations for the May 2020 AP US Government & Politics Exam; but it will also give me an idea of who you are as a learner and how I can best serve you.

In essence, I am asking you to *read less but dig deeper*. There are three parts for our preparation for the first day of class: Reading, responding, and reflecting.

- Part 1 asks you to read about some of the recurring course concepts;
- Part 2 asks you to respond with a (short) open-ended written response (similar to what you'll do on the AP exam);
- Part 3 asks you to take a little questionnaire that will help you reflect on your own political ideology, which colors your understanding of these recurring concepts.

Out of respect for your time and summer, **I do not anticipate the three parts taking more than a few hours in total.** One trait I want to share about me as a teacher (and hopefully the rising sophomores and recent graduates will agree!) is that I try to be as transparent and supportive as possible. Thus, please do not hesitate to email me with questions.

However, to repeat, I do **expect that you will have all the work on the next page completed before our first class.**

On the next page, you will find the instructions for the three parts. Below, I am listing some resources about the class and AP exam that may be useful (do *not* feel you have to look at them at this time):

- [Two-page course and exam overview \(US Gov't & Politics\)](#)
- [Practice Exam \(US Gov't & Politics\)](#)
- [Two-page course and exam overview \(Comparative Government & Politics\)](#)
- [Practice Exam \(Comparative Gov't & Politics\)](#) – starts on page 15 of this PDF

THANK YOU!

- Mr. O'Keefe

PART I – BASIC UNDERSTANDINGS (READING)

(1) *The Supremes' Greatest Hits* (Trachtman)

Please read only the following sections (I invite you to underline key points/note any connections in the margins):

- Introduction (pp. 1–13)
- *Marbury v. Madison* (pp. 21–26)
- *Engel v. Vitale* (pp. 35–39)
- *Gideon v. Wainwright* & *Miranda v. Arizona* (pp. 59–65)
- *Brown v. Board of Education* (pp. 67–70)
- *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* (pp. 79–91)
- *Roe v. Wade* (pp. 99–107)
- *McDonald v. City of Chicago* (pp. 111–119)
- *New York Times v. US* (pp. 175, 190–193)

(2) Below is a list of a few key documents penned during the Constitutional Convention, where fierce debate raged between the Anti-Federalists (against ratification of the Constitution) and Federalists (for ratification). Please read the *introduction* for each in the link provided (except Federalist 70). You do not have to read the actual documents below the introduction, but you may want to jot down the main ideas if helpful.

- The dangers of factions: [Federalist 10](#) (read only the top section unless you wish to read the full-text)
- Problems with the Constitution: [Brutus I](#)
- Checks and balances: [Federalist 51](#)
- The role of the executive: [Federalist 70](#) (read only the top section unless you wish to read the full-text)
- The role of the judiciary: [Federalist 78](#)

PART II – PREP. FOR THE AP EXAM (RESPONDING)

(3) The AP US Government & Politics Exam has two parts, worth 50% each: Multiple Choice, and Free-Response (these are *not* DBQs). I have tried to model the look of a Free-Response question through this prompt.

Please try to connect *any* concept/debate about which you read in either the Trachtman book *or* on the website in number (2) to any current event, debate, court case, etc. that is happening in our government/politics today. You may focus on local, state, federal, or international current events. However, I request that you:

- Use a reputable news source (my personal favorite is the Sunday Review in the Sunday *New York Times*)
- Type it with your name and the source used (copy/pasted URL is fine if applicable) and PRINT it out
- Try to limit yourself to planning/writing for no more than 30 minutes
- Respond in the following way...
 - [A] Identify the main idea from the part of the readings you are using
 - [B] Explain the connection between the idea stated in [A] and the current political event you chose
 - [C] Describe any other knowledge you may have about our government *relevant to this event*

PART III – YOUR “IDEOLOGICAL IDENTITY” (REFLECTING)

(4) Please go to [The Political Compass site](#). Skim the description on the homepage, and then scroll down and click “take the test”. It will ask a series of opinion questions for which you’ll click agree/disagree, etc.

Once you answered the last question, click “Now let’s see where you stand.”

Skim the text that explains the compass tool, but then click where it says “Show chart in separate window for printing”.

Please PRINT that page out and BRING IT IN to our FIRST DAY OF CLASS together.

THANK YOU!