

To: A.P. U.S. Government and Politics students
Re: Summer Assignments
Date: June 2021

The following are your assignments for the summer.

Part I Daily Source of News

We study U.S. government and politics in "real time," so you will be expected to follow the news on a daily basis.

Find an Internet news source to which you can subscribe or otherwise use to check for news concerning U.S. government and politics. See if you can set up apps on your favorite devices or receive news alerts. If your family has a subscription to a newspaper that carries national news, become familiar with it if you are not already.

NOTE: For the past several years the New York Times has provided a free electronic subscription for the members of this class. I hope to renew it next year. This past year's subscription may be available to you now until sometime later in the summer, when they generally shut it down until the start of classes. Look for it as follows:

<http://edition.nytimes.com>

Username: 800221400

Password: 800221400

Part II Chapter Outlines

During the school year you will be responsible for outlining each chapter assigned in the Wilson textbook. This outline will be available for your use on tests and quizzes. It also will become part of a manual you will create for use as a study tool for the AP test. Outlines will not be collected as graded assignments.

Note: Expect that you will have to print your notes and outlines in hard copy. In other words, you will not have computer access to your textbook or the Internet when taking a test or quiz.

The purpose of this part of the summer assignment is to:

1. Practice outlining as one of the crucial skills in this course and in preparation for college; and
2. Finish outlining several chapters this summer that are parts of units which include content from multiple chapters for purposes of lightening the work load in those units.

The textbook is written for college-level students. It will be important for your success that you outline it effectively by reading, identifying, and summarizing important information. Time in class will be spent on some of the more difficult concepts and practical application, so you will be expected to get details from the textbook not otherwise covered in class.

1. The following are general instructions and best practices for how to outline effectively for this course:

- Write or type/print each outline in a notebook or on paper that can later be organized in a three-ring binder.
- Begin every chapter on a new page.
- Space the items in your outline so that there is room to add additional information.
- Pre-read each chapter assigned by: reading first the title of the chapter; reviewing the "Enduring Questions" listed in the beginning of the chapter; skimming the subheadings; and reading the Summary at the end of the chapter.
- Use the book's organization for headings and subheadings as your outline, then summarize key information under the appropriate heading or subheading.
- After you have completed the outline of the chapter, use the "Key Terms" section at the end of every chapter as a checklist to make sure you summarized all of the important information. If any of the key terms are missing from your outline, go back and fill them in at the proper place of the outline.

In the interests of full disclosure – Students in the past have found online chapter outlines posted by the textbook publisher and have used them in class in lieu of making their own outlines. However, the outlines are from the 9th Edition of the textbook, and we currently are using a later edition. Also, it was discovered in the past that some important information in the chapter was not included in the posted outlines. It is permissible to use these posted outlines as a basis for your outlines in this course, but not advisable to rely upon them for completeness. You may find them helpful as a template to edit and build upon as you read the assigned chapter in the current version of the textbook, but you should understand that quizzes and tests will be based upon the current edition of the textbook. The following is a link to the posted outlines.

https://college.cengage.com/polisci/wilson/am_gov/9e/students/studyoutline/

Assignment:

- Read Chapter 1 "The Study of American Government." To assist you in understanding the level of detail that should be in your outline, I have given you below a sample outline for Chapter 1 from the link above. As you read Chapter 1, simultaneously review the outline, and highlight/mark up the outline as you do, and adding information you consider important.
- Read and outline Chapter 7 "Public Opinion" and Chapter 12 "The Media."

Scanned copies of the chapters are provided with the Summer Reading Assignments at the website.

Chapter 1: The Study of American Government

I. What is political power?

A. Two great questions about politics

1. Who governs: the people who govern affect us
2. To which ends: in which ways government affects our lives
3. And then how the government makes decisions on a variety of issues

B. Power

1. Definition: the ability of one person to cause another person to act in accordance with the first person's intentions
2. Text's concern: power as it is used to affect who will hold government office and how government will behave
3. Authority: the right to use power; not all who exercise political power have it
4. Legitimacy: what makes a law or constitution a source of right
5. Struggles over what makes authority legitimate
6. Necessity to be in some sense democratic in the United States today

II. What is democracy?

A. Aristotelian "rule of the many" (participatory democracy)

1. Fifth-century B.C. Greek city-state
2. New England town meeting
3. Community control in self-governing neighborhood
4. Citizen participation in formulating programs

B. Acquisition of power by leaders via competitive elections (representative democracy)

1. Sometimes disapprovingly referred to as the *elitist theory*
2. Justifications of representative democracy
 - a. Direct democracy is impractical.
 - b. The people make unwise decisions based on fleeting emotions.

III. Direct versus representative democracy

- A. Text uses the term *democracy* to refer to *representative democracy*.
 - 1. The Constitution does not contain the word *democracy* but the phrase "republican form of government."
 - 2. Representative democracy requires leadership competition if the system is to work.
 - a. Individuals and parties must be able to run for office.
 - b. Communication must be free.
 - c. Voters perceive that a meaningful choice exists.
 - 3. Many elective national offices
 - 4. Most money for elections comes from special interests
- B. Virtues of direct democracy should be reclaimed through
 - 1. Community control
 - 2. Citizen participation
- C. Framers: "will of people" not synonymous with the "common interest" or the "public good"
 - 1. They strongly favored representative over direct democracy.
 - 2. Direct democracy minimized chances of abuse of power by tyrannical popular majority or self-serving office holders.

IV. How is power distributed in a democracy?

- A. Majoritarian politics
 - 1. Leaders constrained to follow wishes of the people very closely
 - 2. Applies when issues are simple, clear, and feasible
- B. Elitism
 - 1. Rule by identifiable group of persons who possess a disproportionate share of political power
 - 2. Four theories of Elite Influence
 - a. Marxism: government merely a reflection of underlying economic forces
 - b. C. Wright Mills: power elite composed of corporate leaders, generals, and politicians

- c. Max Weber: bureaucracies based on expertise, specialized competence
- d. Pluralist view: no single elite has a monopoly on power; hence must bargain and compromise

C. Cynical view that politics is self-seeking

- 1. Good policies may result from bad motives
- 2. Self-interest is an incomplete guide to actions (Alexis de Tocqueville on America)
 - a. September 11 and self interest
 - b. AFL-CIO and civil rights
- 3. Some act against long odds and without the certainty of benefit

V. Political change

- A. Necessary to refer frequently to history because no single theory is adequate
 - 1. Government today influenced by yesterday
 - 2. Government today still evolving and responds to changing beliefs
- B. Politics about the public interest, not just who gets what

VI. Finding out who governs

- A. We often give partial or contingent answers.
- B. Preferences vary, and so does politics.
- C. Politics cannot be equated with laws on the books.
- D. Sweeping claims are to be avoided.
- E. Judgments about institutions and interests should be tempered by how they behave on different issues.
- F. The policy process can be an excellent barometer of change in who governs.