

Dual Credit Government and Politics: Summer Assignment

Answer Part I and Part II on a separate Google Doc and be prepared to discuss your answers on the first day of class.

PART I: Ch.1 Reading Analysis.

Read through Ch.1 of our textbook and complete the following questions. Use the rubric for a guide:

<https://openstax.org/details/books/american-government-3e?Book%20details>

1. Is citizen engagement necessary for a democracy to function? Explain.
2. Which is the more important reason for being engaged: to gain power or improve the quality of life? Why?
3. Are all Americans equally able to become engaged in government? What factors make it more possible for some people to become engaged than others? What could be done to change this?
4. Which pathways of engagement in the U.S. government do you plan to follow? Why do you prefer these approaches?
5. Are there any redeeming qualities to elitism and any downsides to pluralism? Are there benefits to having elites rule? Are there problems with allowing interest groups to exercise influence over government? Explain.

Grading Rubric: (10 points each question)

- Comprehension of text with appropriate answer (5 points)
- Use of textual evidence (5 points)

PART II: Declaration of Independence Analysis

Read each section of the Declaration and answer the questions that follow each section. Be sure to answer the final analysis question as well.

Second Continental Congress, July 4, 1776

In Congress, July 4, 1776.

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America,

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

1. What is Jefferson's purpose in using the language "...which the Laws of Nature and Nature's God entitle them?"
2. Based on this introduction, why is Jefferson writing this document?

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.

3. Describe one way in which Jefferson's description of rights relates to your understanding of the American governmental system.

—That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, —That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed.

4. Identify and explain one claim Jefferson makes here regarding the purpose of government.

But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security. —Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government.

The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.

5. Identify and explain a portion of this excerpt that captures Jefferson's perspective on government.

He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them....

...

In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A Prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people....

We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the World for the Rectitude of our Intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly Publish and Declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political Connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved . . .

6. Here, Jefferson names a series of grievances or complaints against the King. How does this list relate to Jefferson's earlier assertions about the nature and purpose of government?

7. How does Jefferson use these grievances as evidence to support his claim?

FINAL RESPONSE: Read through the 'Bill of Rights' (U.S. Constitutional Amendments 1 - 10) and decide how *FOUR* different Amendments are within the same spirit as the Declaration of Independence. Cite specific evidence in the amendment for your assessment.