



Common Sense & Democracy in America Summer Reading Assignment

In order to gain an in-depth understanding of American Government, ALL CCP American Government students, REGARDLESS OF WHICH SEMSTER YOU WILL TAKE THE COURSE, will read the following selections over the summer;

- 1) Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*
- 2) Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*

Paine's *Common Sense* gives a great view of American Government in its most infantile stage. Here we see Paine describing the ideal form of government and the reasons behind the dire need to break away from the Parliamentary system. *Common Sense* can be found on the Project Gutenberg website here: <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/147/147-h/147-h>.

Democracy in America illuminates the political and social structure of the early republic in the 1820's from the perspective of an immigrant traveling through the United States. Alexis de Tocqueville provides important details demonstrating how far the government of the United States had restructured the political system by the 1820's. Volume one of *Democracy in America* can be found on the Project Gutenberg website here: <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/815>.

Your assignment is to read *Common Sense* as well as **part one, volume one** of *Democracy in America*.¹ If you purchase a copy of *Common Sense*, any edition is fine. Barnes and Nobles sell inexpensive copies. In most paperback copies of *Democracy in America*, you will find that the book is simply divided into chapters. ***If that is the case, you will need to read chapters one through eight.*** Avoid reading the "EDITED" versions. These do not contain ALL of Tocqueville's writing. (*Signet Classic's version is edited for example.*) If you choose to read the online version that is perfectly fine. You are not required to purchase a copy.

You will need to prepare hand-written notes on the two works. Focus on the form of government Thomas Paine proposing within the first year of the Revolutionary War (1775), and how far the idea of republicanism had developed in the United States by the time Tocqueville visit in the 1820s. (What is republicanism?) Include in your notes your assessment of the ways that American political ideology of the late 18th century evolves into the form of American Republican-Democracy that we see today.

You will apply these notes to a class assignment when you begin the course – regardless of which semester that may be. The assessment will be different for the fall and spring semesters; however both will involve your notes on the two books.

¹ You will finish reading Part Two, Volume One of *Democracy in America* during the first quarter of the class. Volume Two will be offered for optional extra credit during the second quarter.