

AP Government & Politics Information

Teacher information

Mr. Vockell

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Feel free to contact me at any time over the summer with questions on anything regarding the course.

Summer Assignment – Constitution Breakdown

Why do I give this assignment? Having a basic understanding of the Constitution is essential for doing well in this class. We will constantly refer back to it the entire school year and knowledge of it is essential to doing well on the AP Government and Politics exam. Honestly, every year I have taught this course, I have had students tell me how helpful this summer assignment has been. Yes, you can work on it with a friend, but your knowledge of the content is an important tool for success in this class.

Current Events

We do not have a current event assignment over the summer, but you will have four current event assignments each quarter. We also use current events as examples of the material we discuss, and trust me, in today's political climate, there are plenty of examples to choose from. Especially with the race to be the Democratic nominee for President heating up over the summer and fall, keeping an eye on current events is a good idea over the summer. Follow NPR Politics, AP Politics, Fox News or MSNBC on Twitter, if you want.

Final Exam – Civic Engagement Project

Say what? He's giving us the final exam and the class hasn't even started? Last year was the first year that the College Board required a Civic Engagement Project for AP Government and Politics. I turned this into our Final Exam/Project for the course. Last year's class suggested this would be good knowledge to have over the summer, because you can become engaged at any time. Feel free to take part in something over the summer. Below is the description of the project, so yes, you have the Final Exam in your hands before even starting the course. Below is information for the Civic Engagement Project:

AP College Board Description of the Civic Engagement Project

Students are provided with an opportunity to engage in a political science research or applied civics project tied to the AP U.S. Government and Politics course framework that culminates in a presentation of findings.

The project can involve student participation in nonpartisan service learning opportunities (project can be partisan if chosen by the student, not assigned by the teacher), government-based internship programs, or a choice from a teacher-approved list of research project

ideas. A relevant project applies course concepts to real-world political issues, processes, institutions, and policymaking.

While the project is not part of the AP Exam grade, it does provide students the opportunity to engage in a sustained, real-world activity that will deepen their understanding of course content and help them develop the disciplinary practices that are assessed on the exam.

The project must:

- Require students to connect course concepts to real-world issues
- Require students to demonstrate disciplinary practices
- Require students to share/communicate their findings in an authentic way (e.g., presentation, article, speech, brochure, multimedia, podcast, political science fair)
- Comply with school/district guidelines and policies

The project may:

- Be undertaken either by individuals or small groups of students
- Be completed before or after the AP Exam or integrated throughout or at a specific point in the course
- Be partisan based, if chosen by the student(s)

Evidence Presentation (50%)

At the end of the year, you will be responsible for presenting evidence of your civic engagement activity. You can simply produce a PowerPoint that includes details and images detailing your activity or some other form of visual aid presenting the evidence. You can choose to produce a video from your activity that provides details of your engagement. You can also propose another method of presenting to Mr. Vockell.

Reflection Paper (50%)

After you complete your activity, you will be writing a one- page reflection paper. In this paper, you should provide a description of the activity you participated in, but also focus on what you learned during the activity. Did it meet your expectations? Was there anything that surprised you doing the activity? What was your activity's impact on politics and/or society?

Project Submission

You can submit this project via Canvas at any point during the school year. However, we will be presenting the week of May 20th.

Engagement Options

- 1) Run a school-wide voter registration campaign
- 2) Canvas for a candidate or volunteer for a candidate's campaign in some capacity
- 3) Participate in a political rally
- 4) Volunteer for an interest group or political organization
- 5) Follow an issue - Identify and research an issue of current debate. Attend a school board, city council, or local government meeting related to that issue. Observe and document policy making processes and outcomes.

6) Service learning - Design and participate in a community service project that relates to and builds deeper understanding of a course concept.

7) Citizen Action Campaign - Design a citizen action campaign to increase awareness about a policy issue or to increase civic participation. Investigate the issue and an advocacy group that engages with that issue or action.

8) Meet with a legislator - After thoroughly researching a policy issue, meet with local legislators to discuss the issue.