

## AP American Government and Politics / Honors Economics Summer Assignment, Information and Recommendations: 2016-17

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### The Course

This course is about citizenship. It is our goal to have each of you leave this class having the knowledge needed to participate meaningfully in our American political culture. For our society to remain strong and free we must have our citizens constantly participating in a dialogue that improves America. This means that we all take the duties of citizenship seriously by constantly questioning our government institutions and vigilantly protecting our natural rights. The first step in fulfilling these duties is acquiring the conceptual knowledge needed to understand government and critically think about its purpose.

### Summer Notebook Requirement

The most significant problem students have encountered in the past has been a lack of familiarity with, or genuine interest in, politics and economics. **If you intend to take this course you must overcome this.** In order to help you do this you will be required to keep up with political news on national and international issues over the summer. There are a variety of ways to do this. You can read a news magazine<sup>1</sup> or one of the major newspapers<sup>2</sup> on a regular basis. You can watch television, but we ask that, for this assignment, you focus on serious news. PBS has a nightly show: [The News Hour](#). On Friday nights PBS offers a half hour weekly summary of political news: [Washington Week in Review](#). On PBS, also see: [Moyers](#) and [Need to Know](#). [BBC NEWS](#) from the UK is often available on various stations and is excellent: check your cable or online for times. On the radio you could listen to [Left Right & Center on KCRW \(89.9\)](#) every Friday. This 30 minute show features political commentary from intelligent representatives of very different political perspectives. It is available on the web and as a podcast so you can listen whenever and wherever you like. (Check the [LR&C site](#) for podcasting links and streaming audio archives.) You can also catch a lot of [public radio](#) (NPR) programming on [KPCC \(89.3\)](#) throughout the day. Some of it is pretty good. Many of these programs are also available as podcasts. Overall, you should vary your sources: you will not get full credit if you use only one source for all entries. Inappropriate sources will receive no credit.

### Notebook Assignment

Obviously the manner in which you keep up with the news is up to you. The summer is about 9 weeks long. We require that you keep a **NEWS NOTEBOOK** (on American politics and economics) that includes at least 5 entries of about one *handwritten* page each. **Do not record “news” of kidnappings, car chases, robberies, or celebrity deaths.** As sad as these events are bound to be they will have nothing to do with this course and will be treated as if you recorded nothing at all. Here are some examples of interesting headlines from the LA and NY *Times* that would grab your attention: “Court Extends Curbs on the Death Penalty in a Florida Ruling;” “Senate Democrats Turn Focus to Local Issues for Midterms;” “House overwhelmingly approves bill to curb NSA domestic spying.” On the other hand here are some headlines from the same papers that would be safe to ignore: “Focus on Isla Vista killer is criticized;” “Shelly Sterling reportedly trying to sell the Clippers, and quickly;” “Ex-Girl Scouts official gets prison time in embezzlement case.”

In addition to 5 “regular” news articles you will need to include at least 1 *current* political cartoon: include the actual cartoon and provide an overview of the point the cartoonist is making, then add your analysis. You will also need to include at least 1 chart and/or graph that form the basis of a current news story and include your own analysis of what the data might mean for current politics and/or economics. One more requirement is to include at least 1 current public opinion polls/surveys on political issues and provide an analysis of the implications of the survey data on American politics. At the top of each page - date each entry - and fully identify the source or sources of the information: that means title of the story, publication, and author (if available). Only writing out a long web URL, <http://www.latimes.com/world/afghanistan-pakistan/la-fg-obama-troops-afghanistan-20140528-story.html#page=1>: is not a citation. You will need to make appropriate commentary along with your summary of events. You should be analytic in your commentary. What is the story saying about the way American politics and/or economics work? Please write legibly.

Do not procrastinate. **Do not even think of copying another student’s notebook.** If you are caught you will begin your senior year with an unpleasant plagiarism conviction. Each entry must be hand-written and 100% your own work!

### When is this Notebook Due?

The **NEWS NOTEBOOK** will be collected during the first week of the course. This first quiz will cover the major political and economic developments of the summer. The focus will be largely on domestic stories, but some important international events may be included as well. **Failure to turn in your notebook will result in a zero on the assignment. A rubric is provided on the following page. You will need to include this rubric with your work when you turn it in on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of class in August.**

### *But I don’t like the news...*

If you don’t actually enjoy watching, listening or reading any these suggested sources keep in mind that [Last Week Tonight](#), [The Daily Show with Trevor Noah](#) and [The Nightly Show with Larry Wilmore](#) and other satirical TV shows will seem a lot funnier if you understand what they are talking about. And, at the very least, keeping up with the news will make you feel more informed, might

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<sup>1</sup> The choices are varied, but we suggest one of the following: [Time](#), [Newsweek](#), [US News and World Report](#) or [The Economist](#). All of these are more or less objective in their reporting. American based magazines (that are still in print form) are very inexpensive. *The Economist* may be the best, but it is British and expensive (most stories are available online for free though).

<sup>2</sup> Newspapers of record include [The Los Angeles Times](#), [The New York Times](#), [Wall St. Journal](#), and [The Washington Post](#).

impress your friends and family, and will certainly help you contribute to class discussions. AP Gov is not a history class. Thus, current political developments are a regular part of the curriculum, and are reflected on the AP exam. You will not be successful in the class if you only read the textbook.

**Strongly Advised Summer Reading:**

**The AP Exam**

It is expected that those taking this course will take the AP Government and Politics Exam. However, no matter what you are still obliged to take part in exam preparation and to take practice AP exams (both multiple choice and free response) that will count in grades for both semesters.

**AP Gov Review Book**

It is highly recommended that you get a copy of one of the many AP review books available. In our opinion the best are those published by Crash Course (the shortest), The Princeton Review or Barron's. [Buying them through Amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) will be cheaper. Note that if you buy more than \$25 worth of materials at once there is no shipping fee – if you remember to click all of the right buttons. Overall, a review book from the last couple of years is fine.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Per: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Summer News Notebook Assignment – Rubric**

Notebook includes a minimum of 5 entries on <i>relevant</i> topics in US national politics/economics, or key int'l issues; irrelevant entries receive a zero!	30	
Notebook includes at least 1 political cartoons: the actual cartoon, explanation of cartoonist's POV and your analysis/commentary	10	
Notebook includes at least 1 relevant charts/graphs that relate to current political/economic issues; analysis of implications of data is included	10	
Notebook includes reference to at least 1 public opinion polls/surveys on current issues; analysis of implications of survey findings is included	10	
Entries are handwritten and approx. one page each. Notebook is well organized and easy to follow, and entries are spaced out properly throughout the summer.	10	
Appropriate news sources (not some random guy's blog) are <i>used</i> and <i>cited</i> (title, author, source and date, not just a long URL); variety of sources is used	10	
Notebook includes some relevant student commentary, beyond just summary of political/economic issues	10	
<b>TOTAL POSSIBLE</b>	<b>90</b>	

**News Article 1**  
**June 12 – 25**

**AP Government – Summer News Article Journal**

<b>Date:</b>	<b>Source:</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Author:</b>
<b>Summary of Article:</b>	
<b>Commentary / Reaction / How does this article relate to American government and/or economics?</b>	

**News Article 2**  
**June 26 – July 9**

**AP Government – Summer News Article Journal**

<b>Date:</b>	<b>Source:</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Author:</b>
<b>Summary of Article:</b>	
<b>Commentary / Reaction / How does this article relate to American government and/or economics?</b>	

**News Article 3**  
**July 10 – July 23**

**AP Government – Summer News Article Journal**

<b>Date:</b>	<b>Source:</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Author:</b>
<b>Summary of Article:</b>	
<b>Commentary / Reaction / How does this article relate to American government and/or economics?</b>	

**News Article 4**  
**July 24 –August 6**

**AP Government – Summer News Article Journal**

<b>Date:</b>	<b>Source:</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Author:</b>
<b>Summary of Article:</b>	
<b>Commentary / Reaction / How does this article relate to American government and/or economics?</b>	

**News Article 5**  
**August 7 – August 20**

**AP Government – Summer News Article Journal**

<b>Date:</b>	<b>Source:</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Author:</b>
<b>Summary of Article:</b>	
<b>Commentary / Reaction / How does this article relate to American government and/or economics?</b>	

*Political Cartoon 1*

**\*\* Print and attach the cartoon\*\***

<b>Date of Cartoon:</b>	<b>Source/Author:</b>
<b>Describe the political event that is being depicted.</b>	<b>What is the overall message of the cartoon?</b>
<b>Explain how the artist uses each of the five main elements?</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="154 632 354 663">1. Symbolism:</li><li data-bbox="154 783 354 814">2. Captioning:</li><li data-bbox="154 968 318 999">3. Analogy:</li><li data-bbox="154 1119 285 1150">4. Irony:</li><li data-bbox="154 1270 383 1302">5. Exaggeration:</li></ol>	
<b>What conclusions can you draw about the artist's opinion?</b>	
<b>Is the cartoon effective at conveying the intended message? Why or why not?</b>	

## Chart / Graph 1

<b>Date:</b>	<b>Title of the chart or graph:</b>
<b>What is the general topic of the graph or chart?</b>	<b>What is the purpose for compiling the graph or chart?</b>
<b>What labels does the graph or chart contain? What do they tell you?</b>	<b>What key information does the graph or chart provide?</b>
<b>What conclusions can you draw from looking at the chart or graph?</b>	

**\*\* Print and attach the graph/ chart\*\***

## Public Opinion Poll 1

<b>Date that the poll was conducted:</b>	<b>Source or sponsor of the poll:</b>
<b>What question was asked of those who were polled?</b>	<b>Was the sampling method (ie. how they chose respondents) indicated? If so, what was it?</b>
<b>Was a sampling error provided (usually in the form of +/-%)? What was it? Why do you think they provide this?</b>	<b>Do you think the polling question was neutral (unbiased) or could it have led respondents to specific responses? Why?</b>
<b>Do you believe this to be an accurate, scientific poll? Why or why not? We're interested in your logic rather than if you are right or wrong.</b>	
<b>What conclusions can you draw from this poll?</b>	

**\*\* Print and attach a copy of the public opinion poll data\*\***