

**AP Core – U.S. Government and Politics
Summer Assignment 2018**

We will be starting the year at full speed so please understand that these assignments are all due on the first day of school.

If you have any questions during the summer about any part of this assignment, you may email me at aleslie@wusd.org

1. *Hardball* by Chris Matthews

In an effort to focus your thinking politically, rather than historically, your first task this summer is a careful reading of the book *Hardball* by Chris Matthews.

*Please purchase this book at **Pages on the Green** on the town green in Windsor. These have been ordered and will be waiting for you at a substantial discount. If finances are an issue, please come see me before summer begins.*

Your assignment is read the book fully, annotate it according to directions below, and to be prepared for a test on the “maxims” on the first days of class

Book Annotations and Maxim Definitions:

The book *Hardball* is broken into the fourteen different Political Maxims – each listed below. In the margins of the book, annotate for the definitions of the political maxims. This means that at the end of each chapter, or in the margins, **write** the full meaning of the maxims in your own words. Also, in EACH chapter, mark a section or story that you found the most entertaining or informative – along with a single annotation stating why. You can use brackets or highlighter, but make sure to choose one passage for each chapter—you don’t need long notes or annotations, just a bracket around the section and short note about why that passage stands out. So, to be clear, there should be two short writings per chapter.

The test on the Maxims may also include some of the bigger stories or examples that Mathew’s uses in his book-- so make sure to read carefully. Lastly, one test question will ask what the difference is between government and politics.

Maxims

- **It’s Not Who You know; it’s Who You Get to Know (define: retail vs. wholesale politics)**
- **All Politics is Local**
- **It’s Better to Receive than to Give**
- **Dance With the One Who Brung Ya**
- **Keep Your Enemies in Front of You**
- **Don’t Get Mad; Don’t Get Even; Get Ahead**
- **Leave No Shot Unanswered**
- **Only Talk When it Improves the Silence**
- **Always Concede on Principle**
- **Hang a Lantern on Your Problem**
- **Spin!**
- **“The Press is the Enemy”**
- **The Reputation of Power**
- **Positioning**

2. Political Paper

You are to write a 3 – 4 page paper (a bit shorter/longer is fine) that discusses your political ideology as it stands at this point in your life. You will need to start by going to www.politicalcompass.org, and take the test on your political ideology (find where it says “show graph on separate page for printing” and print out graph and attach it to your paper). This graph may be confusing to you, but try to make some sense of it – we will discuss them in class.

Your paper should be organized in the following way (i.e., make each bullet a paragraph):

- An introduction and overview as to who you are, how political you are (or are not), and why you think this is. You can discuss your family’s politics, issues that you have been interested in, or simply why politics has never been a part of your life.
- At this point, please explain what label you would put on yourself at this point in your life (the political compass test could be referenced here). You can pick from **conservative, liberal, or libertarian**. I do ask that you pick one and clearly define it as best you can (look them up and read about them if you need to). I understand that most people don’t fit neatly into these categories, but for this paper please explain what the term means to you and why you labeled yourself that ideology. Be general and use an example or two.
- For the next *one to two paragraphs*, please pick two (2) specific issues that you see as important and detail what actions the federal government should take in regards to the two issues (e.g., climate change, military/foreign policy, taxes, social issues, guns, abortion, business, etc.). Explain what you think the role of the government is in regards to the chosen issues (e.g., “the federal government should raise taxes on gas and use the money to fund solar power technology because...”). You may do more, but try to look into at least 2-3 in some depth. If you can avoid using “I think...” every sentence it would be most appreciated.
- For the last paragraph, try to put yourself in a political party (Democrat, Republican, or Libertarian). You may have to go their website to find their positions on certain issues – it is usually on the website under “issues” - but explain your reason.

Good Luck with this, and try to be reflective. You will be writing some letters to your elected representatives this year, so hopefully this will get you thinking about some issues that speak to you.

3. News Test

This one is very simple: on the first day of class you will be given a test on the **major** news events of the summer. Something is news worthy when a citizen in a democracy should know it in order to make an intelligent decision -- and this test will be only on the major ones.

In case you were wondering...ANYTHING dealing with a celebrity, a grisly murder of a government teacher, or some old lady living with a thousand cats is NOT news. Focus on being informed, not entertained (not that I am saying that it has to be boring to be news... okay, it has to be boring to be news). So, watch the news, read a newspaper, listen to news radio, even a comedy show; just stay informed. National and international stories will be the focus with maybe a few state issues as well; and don’t neglect the economics/business stories.

So, grab a book or a newspaper, head to the river - and contemplate how you can let your magnificence illuminate the world.