

AP Gov/Econ Summer Assignment 2017

Part 1- Current Events

AP Government is unique in many ways from other AP classes in that it requires that you stay up to date with recent and continuously changing current events. It also covers a year's worth of content in a little over a semester, so it moves very quickly. By staying up to date on your current events you will be more familiar with our system of government before even entering the class.

Try to read at least one news article (that relates to American Government) each day. Look for news stories that portray our national government in action and highlight the issues/crises it must deal. Especially focus on stories that discuss Congress, the Presidency, Federal agencies, the Supreme Court, national elections, politics, and politicians. Being able to discuss "real world" current events will greatly develop your understanding of the major concepts in this course. In addition, current events knowledge is assumed on the AP exam free response section.

One the first day of school bring in three (3) news articles that you have read and that you think are important and related in American Government. We will discuss these articles on the first day of school

Part 2 - *The Thirteen American Arguments*

Please read *The Thirteen American Arguments* by Howard Fineman (ISBN #978-0-8129-7635-9), you can find it at the public library, buy it used online, borrow it from a former student.

As you read the book think about the following:

- a. Discussions about the Constitution. What arguments took place among those who drafted the Constitution and how those issues continue to be contentious today.
- b. Note the political figures discussed (primarily, our presidents). How do public figures and leaders such as Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, the Roosevelts, Kennedy, Johnson, Reagan, G.W. Bush, and others fit into the 13 arguments?
- c. Know what the chapter titles mean. What are the basic issues raised? Be able to discuss at least one important issue that is mentioned in each chapter. What are the arguments on both sides of the issue?
- d. Can you apply any of the arguments to today's political arena? Consider this at not only the national level, but also as the arguments might arise on the state and local government levels.

Answer the following questions about *The Thirteen American Arguments*, you need to submit your answer through www.turnitin.com. The CLASS ID is 15435188, the PASSWORD is SMHS.

1. Chapter 1 - Who is a Person?

In his book *The Thirteen American Arguments*, Howard Fineman discusses several different groups that have struggled to achieve acceptance and equality in American history. With that in mind, answer the following:

- (a) List three groups that have struggled for acceptance as equals in American history.
- (b) Choose two of the groups that you listed in part (a) and describe what legal protections were put in place to help those groups achieve equality.
- (c) Fineman spends a good portion of the chapter discussing the issue of abortion. Briefly explain the arguments for each side of that debate, focusing on the personhood issue.

Chapter 2 - Who is an American?

"We were, and are, different. We are founded on ideas, not genetics; on aspirations, not the accidents of geography. We do not trace our nationhood to a tribal history, but to a concept of liberty and constitutional order that was unique in the world when it was first officially proclaimed in 1776. In theory, anybody could become an American - and most of the world has tried." Fineman details several policies in U.S. history related to immigration. With that in mind, answer the following:

- (a) Identify three laws and/or policies adopted by either the Federal government or state governments that dealt with immigration.
- (b) For each item listed in party (a), describe the reasons for and impact of that policy.
- (c) Describe your solution to dealing with immigration, both legal and illegal - What should the policy be in the United States?

3. Chapter 3 - The Role of Faith

In Chapter 3, Fineman delves into the role of faith in American political life. In this chapter, he speaks of the confusing role that faith often plays in our political system. With that in mind, answer the following:

- (a) Briefly describe each of the following:
 - Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom
 - First Amendment Establishment Clause
 - First Amendment Free Exercise Clause
 - Religious Test Clause of the U.S. Constitution
- (b) Given the items you described in part (a), as well as the information in the chapter, choose two incidents in American history that exemplify the difficulty in navigating the role of faith in public life.
- (c) In 2007, Senator John McCain stated that, "The Constitution established the United States as a Christian nation." Was he right? Explain your answer.

Chapter 4 - What Can We Know And Say?

In Chapter 4 of *Thirteen American Arguments*, Fineman discusses the struggle in balancing our freedom of speech with public safety and national security. More specifically, he argues that the essence of speech is not just in the actions involved but also in the access to information.

- (a) Fineman specifically writes about three areas of information in which government has tried to limit or suppress. List these three areas.
- (b) For each of the three areas in (a), list at least two examples that Fineman mentions of how these areas are protected by the U.S. Constitution.
- (c) For each of the three areas in (a), describe one instance that Fineman mentions in which the federal government has limited or suppressed it.
- (d) The government often uses "war" to justify their limitation and/or suppression of the three areas listed in (a). Do you agree or disagree? Include only two of the three areas in (a) and provide at least one example that Fineman mentions for each area to back up your opinion. Your example cannot be one used to answer (c).

Chapter 5 - The Limits of Individualism

In Chapter 5 of *Thirteen American Arguments*, Fineman debates the merit of "community" versus "individualism."

- (a) Define the idea of "community." Fineman makes an argument that this nation was founded on the idea of "community." Discuss three.
- (b) Define the idea of "individualism." Fineman makes an argument that this nation was founded on the idea of "individualism." Discuss three.
- (c) Fineman discusses both the compatibility and incompatibility of "community" and "individualism." Make a coherent argument for both.

Chapter 6 - Who Judges the Law?

In Chapter 6 of *Thirteen American Arguments*, Fineman describes the court as being both above politics and entrenched in politics.

- (a) List and explain one way in which the federal courts are structured that placed them above politics.
- (b) List and explain one way in which the federal courts are structured that entrenches them in politics.
- (c) Explain how your answers for both (a) and (b) affected each of the two cases below.
 - *Dred Scott v. Sanford*
 - *Brown v. Board of Education*

Chapter 7 - Debt and the Dollar

In Chapter 7 of *Thirteen American Arguments*, Fineman discusses the question on who should control the value of our money. In other words, whose interests should be considered when determining the value of our money.

- (a) Discuss one debate in our history in which two different groups argued over money. How did it end?
- (b) Discuss another debate in our history in which two different groups argued over money. How did it end?
- (c) Some say that the people should control the flow of money. Discuss the argument for AND against this notion.
- (d) What role do you think government should play in the value of our money? Defend your position.

Chapter 8 - Local vs. National Authority

In Chapter 8 of *Thirteen American Arguments*, Fineman discusses the tensions between local and national authority.

- (a) List five issues that Fineman deals with directly in the book and briefly describe how each of those issues create tension between local and national authority.
- (b) Choose two of the issues you listed in (a) and describe a reasonable solution that honors the principle of federalism while providing equal justice to all Americans under the law.

Chapter 9 - Presidential Power

In Chapter 9, Fineman presents the argument concerning the fluctuating powers of the president. He questions the amount of power held by the president as well as the president's role in either preserving or destroying our democracy.

- (a) The U.S. Constitution establishes an Executive Branch with limited power. List one of these limits and explain how this limits the power of the president.
- (b) Discuss two historic examples (from two different presidents) of past presidents who diminished the power of the presidency.
- (c) The U.S. Constitution also grants to the Executive Branch enormous powers that, if unchecked, can turn our democracy into a tyranny. List one of these powers and explain its danger.
- (d) Discuss two historic examples (from two different presidents) of past presidents who increased the power of the presidency.

Chapter 10 - The Terms of Trade

In Chapter 10, Fineman writes about the economic arguments that have occurred throughout this country's history. With that in mind, answer the following:

- (a) Define protectionism.
- (b) Define free trade.
- (c) Identify NAFTA and the WTO and describe their relationship with the United States.
- (d) Explain the problems with both the protectionist view and the free trade view.

Chapter 11 - War and Diplomacy

In Chapter 11, Fineman discusses the nuances of war and peace, and describes several different positions that have been taken in arguments about them. With that in mind, answer the following:

- (a) Describe the different roles of the President and the Congress with respect to war and diplomacy.
- (b) Fineman quotes Walter Russel Mead as dividing Americans into four categories regarding foreign policy. Identify and describe those four categories.
- (c) Fineman lists five “elemental forces” that also vie for control of American foreign policy. List them here.
- (d) One of the five you listed in (c), choose two that you think have the most impact and describe why you think that.

Chapter 12 - The Environment

In Chapter 12, Fineman deals with the difficult issue of environmental protection vs. economic growth. With that in mind, answer the following:

- (a) Define conservation.
- (b) List three actions taken by the U.S. Government as an attempt to protect the environment.
- (c) Describe the differing positions of environmental protection versus advancing economic interests.
- (d) Given your answer in (c), explain which side you think American policymakers should side with and why.

Chapter 13 - A More Perfect Union

In Chapter 13 of *The Thirteen American Arguments*, Howard Fineman discusses some of the imbalances in the American political system. With that in mind, answer the following:

- (a) How did money affect the race between John McCain and George W. Bush for the Republican nomination in 2000?
- (b) What campaign finance laws are in place to deal with this issue?
- (c) Have these campaign finance laws been effective in dealing with the problem? Why or why not?