

# **REQUIRED ESSAY ASSIGNMENT**

## ***YOU AND YOUR GOVERNMENT*** **GOVERNMENT 2305** **SUMMER 2016** **Prof. Jaye Ramsey Sutter, J.D.**

### **THE TOPIC AREAS OF YOUR ESSAY:**

Now that you've completed the course material, tell me about yourself and what you've learned. Please write about the following in your personal essay (answering the questions below as you can; be sure you write in essay form):

#### **1. EARLY POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION**

- Where are you from (where you grew up) and did your home town, state, or country influence your political beliefs?
- How did you learn about government growing up?
- How did the area of the country or the world you are from help determine your political socialization? (You will remember that "political socialization" is a term from our first unit referring to how the attitudes, beliefs, and understanding of one's government is transmitted to new generations)
- What influenced (and how) your political socialization—your parents, your religion, your peers, your school, the media?
- Has your understanding of and beliefs about government and politics changed as you have grown older? How and why?
- What did you learn about the U.S. Constitution and our governmental system as a young person in early life and public school as you grew up? What have you learned about them that has impressed you the most?

#### **2. YOUR POLITICAL LIFE TODAY**

- If 18 or older and a citizen, are you registered to vote and have you voted before?

Why or why not?

- Are you or are you not going to vote in the 2016 general election (and why)?
- If you are not a citizen, do you plan to be and will you vote? Regarding voting, why or why not?
- Do you consider yourself a Republican or Democrat? Other? No party? Independent voter? Why for any of those choices.
- Were your parents active in a political party, which one; and are you active or identify with the same party? If different from your parents in this regard, why did you change?
- Are you now following the campaigns for the 2016 general election (which will be held in November after the state primaries select candidates for the general election offices that are up for election)?:
- Who do you want to be the next president of the United States and discuss why, giving at least three reasons why he or she should be president based upon what you know about the candidate right now from what you've heard or read about the candidate from family, friends, the news media, and from social media (such as Facebook, Twitter, blogs, etc.). If your impressions are vague, simply discuss what you know and tell me where you have heard what you know and how you've reached your decision. You do NOT have to do any research. I really want to read about what you know now, where you learned it in general, and why you've made the decision the way you have.
- In that same manner, tell me who you do NOT want to be president and why. What about this person have you heard or read that makes you worried that he or she might become president. Give two or three specific reasons based on your impressions and opinion.

### 3. WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED IN THE COURSE?

- Discuss the five most important things you've learned about government this semester.
- Did you know about these things before or did you learn about them now, this semester?
- Why do you consider them important?
- What issues that have been discussed in your study and reading affect your life in a significant way?
- Are you more or less interested in government and politics now?
- Is government and politics important in your life now based on your studies this semester? Why or why not?
- Do you now support or lead toward a particular candidate running for president? If so, who, and why?
- Is there a person running for president you would not want to ever be president? If so, who, and why?
- Do you know about any of the candidates running for Congress (the House or Senate) or the Texas Legislature (House or Senate)? Are these elections important? Why or why not? Does it matter to your education, to your future, who is elected to these offices? Why or

why not?

#### 4. THE SUPREME COURT, CIVIL LIBERTIES, AND CIVIL RIGHTS

- It is said the one of the most important decisions president makes while in office is who to nominate to serve on the United States Supreme Court? Why is that?
  - What is the important function of the United States Supreme Court serves in our nation?
  - What type of person in terms of his or her beliefs and background do you think Donald Trump would make if elected president? What type of person in terms of his or her beliefs and background do you think Hillary Clinton would make if elected president?
  - What do you think will be one or two of the most important issues facing the US Supreme Court next year?
  - Before this class, did you know anything about the U.S. Supreme Court—what it is, what it does, its importance, its impact on your life? If you did, what did you know?
  - Do you believe the decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court have any impact on your life and your future? Why or why not?
  - If you do believe it does, what issues areas are you most concerned about that the Supreme Court can affect?
  - Of the Bill of Rights protections what do you consider to be the most important liberty interest that is protected in the Bill of Rights and why.
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#### **MECHANICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PAPER:**

- 600 WORDS, MINIMUM (about 150 words for each of the four sections). You can write well beyond 600 words if you wish. However, points will be deducted for papers under 600 words—TEN (10) points off for every 25 words under 600.
- You may either write your essay in the space provided on this “assignments” page to submit, or you may write your paper on your word processor, save it as a file and attach it to the “assignment” page to submit. Either way I *STRONGLY* recommend you type the paper on your word processor, save it, then highlight and copy the content of the file and then PASTE it into the area below. If you then wish to save it as a file to attach to your “assignments” section to submit be certain to save your file as a MICROSOFT WORD DOCUMENT (or a document you are CERTAIN can be read by Microsoft Word; if a file is not in MS WORD format I will not be able to open the file and read your paper, and if that happens you get a zero on your paper grade (and the writing assignment grade is 25% of your final course grade). And if you want to submit the paper in the writing area on the

“assignments page, you should type it out on your computer word processing software first. If you were typing your essay directly into the submission box and you have a computer or Internet glitch as you’re about to finish, you will lose everything you write (sort of like writing a long email and you have computer or Internet problem and your email content vanishes). So, after typing your paper on your word processor, highlight the entire paper (hit “CTRL” and “A” together), then copy the highlighted essay (“CTRL” and “C” together), then go to the submission area on the “assignments” page and paste your paper in that site (“CTRL” and “V”) together. Make sure your ENTIRE paper shows up in that space.

- *Provide a word count at the end of the paper.* When you type a document on Microsoft Word, Word automatically counts the number of pages and words at the bottom left of the workspace in the status bar. If you don’t see the word count in the status bar, right- click the status bar and click “Word Count.” You can also go to “Tools” on a classic Word menu, pull down, and click on “Word Count.” On some versions of Word you can click on “Review” and then on “Word Count.” If your word count is below 600 then you lose points. IF YOU DO NOT PUT THE WORD COUNT AT THE BOTTOM OF YOUR PAPER I WILL DEDUCT FIVE (5) POINT OFF YOUR WRITING ASSIGNMENT GRADE.

- Write this paper in *your* own words. Don’t worry if you’re ESL or if you don’t think you’re a good writer. I want to hear your ideas, your experiences, your impressions, all in your own words. I won’t be grading for grammar (UNLESS egregious grammar errors are consistently made throughout the paper.(I’m grading on content and meeting the requirements set out in the instructions.

- DO NOT PLAGIARIZE! If you use the book or my notes or any source and quote from or paraphrase material from the source or sources, you must tell (within the paper itself) the reader where you got the information. Give the page number if from the book, or the title of the article or source if from the Internet and provide a URL for the location of the source. (You don’t have to tell me where you got the names of the office holders I asked you to look up on Google, however.)

- DO YOUR OWN WORK! Do not work on this with another student. If you copy another student’s paper in part or whole, both you AND the student you copied from will be severely penalized. You will likely receive a grade of F...perhaps even a grade of ZERO. Be aware, I check carefully for plagiarism and sharing of work. And I am quite good at finding cheating and more than willing to flunk a student for plagiarizing and copying another’s work. BUT if you do your own work, document where you got words or information from an outside source, follow these instructions, you’re likely to get a very good grade, a grade which will be 25% of your final course grade!

**(The instructions document here has 1,696 words. *You* only have to write a paper with a**

**minimum of 600 words!)**