

**AP U.S. GOVERNMENT & POLITICS  
MR. WAGENBERG**

**AP U.S. Government and Politics Summer Assignment 2012**

This is a challenging course that is meant to be the equivalent of a freshman college course. Solid reading and writing skills, along with a willingness to devote time to homework and study, are necessary to succeed. Emphasis will be placed on critical and evaluative thinking skills, and oral and written expression. You are required to complete the three summer assignments to help prepare you for the class. These assignments will enhance your knowledge of American Government and will enable us to begin the course as soon as school begins. Part 1 is below, Part 2 and Part 3 are attached. You must obtain and read The Thirteen American Arguments, by Howard Fineman (Random House Publishing Group: New York 2008). Remember, you chose to be in this class and your success will depend upon your willingness to prepare for it.

If you have questions, the best way to contact me over the summer is by emailing me at [mrwagenberg@aim.com](mailto:mrwagenberg@aim.com). I will be online for most of the summer. The complete course description will be posted on the class website at [www.mrwagenberg.net](http://www.mrwagenberg.net) by September.

**PART 1 – Current Events**

**Task**

1. Locate four current event articles which are published from July 1, 2012 – August 24, 2012. You should NOT have two articles from the same week.
2. Choose one current event from each of the following topics:
  - Executive Branch
  - Legislative Branch
  - Judicial Branch (Supreme Court, court decisions, etc.)
  - Bureaucracy (executive departments and agencies such as Dept. of State, Defense, NASA, FBI, FEMA, EPA, etc.)
3. For each article, include the following as a heading:
  - a. Topic you are addressing
  - b. Title of article
  - c. Author of article
  - d. Date of article
  - e. Source (specific web address) – Source not needed if you attach article
4. Following your heading, answer the following questions for each article:
  - a. What specific evidence has the author provided for the information presented?
  - b. What conclusions/generalizations do you draw from this article?
  - c. What do you think about this issue/info? Explain and justify your position.
  - d. Do you think it has a conservative or liberal bias? Why or why not?

**Be prepared to discuss your FAVORITE article during the first week of the course!**

**PART 2 – Constitution Study Guide (attached)**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**AP Government**  
**THE US CONSTITUTION STUDY GUIDE**

Directions: Read the US Constitution and complete the following questions directly on this handout.

**PART I: THE OVERALL STRUCTURE OF THE CONSTITUTION**

1. Read each article of the Constitution. Summarize the general purpose or subject of each article in one sentence in the chart below.

Article I	
Article II	
Article III	
Article IV	
-Article V	
Article VI	
Article VII	

2. Compare Article I with Article II. Which article is longer and more detailed?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Identify two powers denied from Congress in the Constitution.  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. How does the House of Representatives determine the rules of proceedings (the ability to have debates, riders, etc) \_\_\_\_\_
5. Identify two powers the Constitution prohibits from the States.  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. What eligibility requirements does the Constitution establish for members of the House?  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. What eligibility requirements does the Constitution establish for members of the Senate?  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. What eligibility requirements does the Constitution establish for the President?  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. The powers of the Constitution that are specifically granted to the branches of government or to office holders are called *express* powers.
- Identify two express powers of the president.  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - What are the express powers of the vice president?  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - Identify two express powers of Congress.  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. According to the principle of checks and balances, each branch of the government must have control over the other branches. Look at the first three articles of the Constitution and identify one of each type of checks and balances. Indicate where each power is listed in the Constitution.
- A power that the executive branch has over the legislative branch: \_\_\_\_\_  
This can be found in what article/section of the Constitution \_\_\_\_\_
  - A power that the executive branch holds over the judicial branch. \_\_\_\_\_ This can be found in what article/section of the Constitution \_\_\_\_\_
  - A power that the legislative branch holds over the executive branch. \_\_\_\_\_  
This can be found in what article/section of the Constitution \_\_\_\_\_
  - A power that the legislative branch holds over the judicial branch. \_\_\_\_\_  
This can be found in what article/section of the Constitution \_\_\_\_\_
  - A power that the judicial branch holds over the executive branch. \_\_\_\_\_  
This can be found in what article/section of the Constitution \_\_\_\_\_
  - A power that the judicial branch holds over the legislative branch. \_\_\_\_\_  
This can be found in what article/section of the Constitution \_\_\_\_\_
11. The *court of original jurisdiction* is the first court that hears a case. *Appellate courts* hear cases on appeal from lower courts. Although the Supreme Court functions primarily as an appellate court, it is the courts of original jurisdiction in certain kinds of cases. What are those?  
\_\_\_\_\_
12. According to Article I of the Constitution, who has the power to declare war?  
\_\_\_\_\_
13. What power does the Constitution give the President in the area of war?  
\_\_\_\_\_

## PART II IMPORTANT CLAUSES

- Where is the “Commerce Clause” and what does it say? \_\_\_\_\_
- Where is the “Necessary and Proper Clause” and what does it say? \_\_\_\_\_
- Where is the “Supremacy Clause” and what does it say? \_\_\_\_\_
- How might these clauses above have impacted the power of the federal government? \_\_\_\_

5. Where is the habeas corpus clause and what does it say? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What is habeas corpus? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Where are bills of attainders discussed and what does it say? \_\_\_\_\_
8. What is a bill of attainder? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Where are ex post facto laws discussed and what does it say? \_\_\_\_\_
10. What is an ex post facto law? \_\_\_\_\_
11. Where is the full faith and credit clause and what does it say? \_\_\_\_\_
12. There are two “due process” clauses. Where are they? What does “due process” of law imply?  
\_\_\_\_\_
13. Where is the “equal protection clause”? What does this imply? \_\_\_\_\_
14. Find the “takings clause” of the 5<sup>th</sup> Amendment. What does this mean? \_\_\_\_\_

### PART III MAJORITY AND SUPERMAJORITY

The Constitution requires a simple majority for some actions and a supermajority for others. A simple majority means more than half, while supermajority requirements can involve a 2/3 majority or a 3/4 majority. Most elections in the United States require a plurality, or the most votes, but not necessarily a majority.

1.
  - a. What bodies have the power to override a presidential veto? \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. What margin is required to override a presidential veto? \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Where in the Constitution is the veto power described? \_\_\_\_\_
2.
  - a. What body has the power to ratify treaties? \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. What margin is required to ratify treaties? \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Where in the Constitution is the ratification power described? \_\_\_\_\_
3. *To impeach* means “to bring charges against” or “to indict”.
  - a. What body has the power to impeach the president? \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. What vote is required to impeach? \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. What is the standard for impeachment? \_\_\_\_\_
4.
  - a. What body has the power to convict the president of charges brought against him in the impeachment process and thereby remove him from the presidency? \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. What vote is required to convict and remove a president? \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Where in the Constitution is the impeachment power described? \_\_\_\_\_
5.
  - a. What body has the power to accept or reject a president’s nominations to the Supreme Court?  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - b. What margins is required to elevate a president’s nominee to a seat on the Court? \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Where in the Constitution are judicial nominations described? \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. What language is used to describe the roll of the Senate in Supreme Court nominations?  
\_\_\_\_\_
6.
  - a. If no candidate for the presidency wins a simple majority of the total number of electoral votes, what body has the power to choose the president? \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. What margin is required to choose the president? \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Where in the Constitution is the Electoral College described? (Hint: there are two parts)
7. The Constitution specifies a three-fourths majority for just one process. What?  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. The Constitution has comparatively little to say about the structure and composition of the Supreme Court. Identify two aspects of the Court’s structure and composition that the Constitution does not specify. (The Constitution does specify these two basic aspects of structure and composition for the other two branches).  
\_\_\_\_\_

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9. List all parts of the Constitution that require a supermajority. For each, explain why you believe there is a supermajority requirement. \_\_\_\_\_

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10. What are two ways that amendments to the Constitution can be proposed? \_\_\_\_\_

11. What are two ways that amendments to the Constitution can be ratified? \_\_\_\_\_

**Part IV. THE AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION**

Some parts of the Constitution require a simple majority, others a supermajority, while still others protect citizens from the will of the majority. The first ten amendments to the Constitution, the Bill of Rights protect citizens from the will of the majority. In other words, no majority could vote to take these rights away. Read each amendment to the Constitution and answer the questions below.

1. Outline the general purpose of all 27 Amendments.

Amendment 1	
Amendment 2	
Amendment 3	
Amendment 4	
Amendment 5	
Amendment 6	
Amendment 7	
Amendment 8	
Amendment 9	
Amendment 10	
Amendment 11	
Amendment 12	
Amendment 13	
Amendment 14	
Amendment 15	
Amendment 16	

Amendment 17	
Amendment 18	
Amendment 19	
Amendment 20	
Amendment 21	
Amendment 22	
Amendment 23	
Amendment 24	
Amendment 25	
Amendment 26	
Amendment 27	

2. Which amendment(s) of the Constitution protect the rights of women? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Summarize what this amendment(s) of the Constitution says \_\_\_\_\_
4. Which amendment (s) of the Constitution protect the rights of African Americans? \_\_\_\_\_
5. How were US Senators chosen before the Seventeenth Amendment? \_\_\_\_\_
- 6.. The Twenty-Fifth Amendment describes the sequence of events that would install the vice president as acting president against the will of the president. Outline that sequence of events.
7. How many times is the word *privacy* mentioned in the Constitution (articles and amendments) \_\_\_\_\_?

## PART 3

**Read and complete the following assignment for Howard Fineman's The Thirteen American Arguments: Enduring Debates That Define and Inspire Our Country.** Copies of the book may be purchased online (used or new) As of 5/30/12 books were available used from Amazon for \$1.25 and new for \$5.44 (plus shipping) - order early!

- As you are reading the Fineman book, complete the attached assignment; your responses must thoroughly answer each question. For each chapter, you have response questions that are attached at the end of this assignment. In addition to responding to these questions, you should take notes as you read- specifically you should write down any words or phrases that you do not know, or that you think are crucial to the point being made. Then, look up and provide a brief description of the word or reference. You should progress through the book one chapter at a time.
- All work should be original and in complete sentences. Any evidence of copying (from peers or other resources) will result in an automatic zero – no questions asked!
- All responses MUST BE HAND-WRITTEN.

### **The Thirteen American Arguments: Enduring Debates That Define and Inspire Our Country (Howard Fineman)**

As you read Howard Fineman's *The Thirteen American Arguments*, answer the following questions on additional paper. Consider offering a thoughtful analysis to each question. The best way to do this is by using specific evidence and examples when responding.

1. What is an argument? How and why is Howard Fineman qualified to make the various arguments? How might one challenge his qualifications? What role does Fineman play in his argument? Explain, in your own words, the six goals of the author?
2. How has our definition of a "person" changed over time? Consider the following items in your response: historical context, race, gender, age, the Supreme Court, the Civil Rights Movement, September 11th, legal precedent and present day.
3. What was the "macaca" incident? What two "land mines" had the speaker stepped on by making that remark? What does the incident reveal about the larger issue of politics and the politics of immigration? What factors added to the urgency of the immigration debate? How has current events been a part of this most recent debate? Cite specific examples.
4. "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." What does Fineman say about this? What do you think of this statement?
5. How does Fineman use Senator Bill Frist as an example? What does this say about the role of faith and its traditions in society today? How historically has it been "our destiny to argue about faith in public life"? What examples exist of how faith and politics are intertwined? Cite specific examples from the text.
6. How did 9/11 change journalism and the protection that journalists' writings had? What is the difference between "personal privacy" and "government secrecy"? How is/was that changed by other media, war, and history? Consider the Espionage and Sedition Acts in your answer.
7. "Health care was never considered something we owed each other. The system, if it could be called that, consisted primarily of individuals and families seeking care, and individual doctors and hospitals

dispensing it.” How did this change with Harry Truman, Lyndon Johnson, Bill Clinton, and Barack Obama?

8. A country founded on the principle of individual freedom – “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” – has both a gift and a problem. Considering the role of government, explain this idea by addressing past and present events – including, but not limited to, taxes and regulation.
9. Considering the work of Hamilton and Madison, how can words be given such power (as in our United States Constitution)? How and why are judges trusted to interpret those words? How did *Marbury v. Madison* establish all future interpretations?
10. How are courts, laws, and politics intertwined when it comes to the Supreme Court, judicial decisions, and geography? Explain how the 2000 Election, and resulting *Bush v. Gore* case, can be used as evidence to this question.
11. What was the first currency? How does that change over time? How did Jacksonian democracy change the argument over the economy?
12. How has the US “balanced growth and order, to make sure that Americans had enough credit to build for their future while ensuring that money – that is, credit – was not so easy to obtain as to lead to ruinous inflation”? What argument was made by Keynes? Friedman? How have Republicans and Democrats responded to the growing debt?
13. How can Hurricane Katrina be used as evidence in the debate between local versus national authority? What does this say about the strengths and weaknesses of federalism? How do the three colonial subcultures contribute to the issue of sovereignty and power?
14. “In 2001, Osama bin Laden did more to centralize government power in America than anyone since FDR.” Still, “states’ rights isn’t just a Southern idea; it is an American one.” How does the author resolve both ideas? Explain citing specific evidence from the book.
15. Why has presidential leadership (or the lack thereof) come to dominate the discourse of American public life? Consider the founding fathers, events like the Civil War and the Great Depression, controversies like Watergate and Vietnam, and elections in your response.
16. Explain the argument between “free trade” and “protection”. How do the characters of Gephardt and Gore help to explain the politics behind trade. How has commerce led to conflict? How did NAFTA fit into the larger argument?
17. What is the argument over foreign policy about and not about? How did it begin and where have we, as a nation, gone from there? (Suggestion: Consider only hitting the high points as mentioned by the author.) How has politics and the economy shaped our decisions about diplomacy?
18. How are the roots of “environmentalism” found in the American soil? What role has expansion played on our environment? Explain how it became a political issue between Bush and Dukakis. How is it really an argument about the uses and abuses of carbon and the carbon-based fuels?
19. “We need elites, even admire them. We even designed a meritocracy to produce them in what we regard as a democratic way. But we never fully trust them.” While considering the “American character”, explain this idea from both a political and economic viewpoint.
20. How did the 2008 campaign reflect the architecture of American argument? Respond considering two of the following: (A) The Limits of Individualism, (B) A Fair, “More Perfect” Union, (C) Who is a Person?, (D) War and Diplomacy.