

AP U.S Government & Politics
Mrs. Rokosny
2016-2017

**AP U.S. Government and Politics
Summer Reading Assignment
Due – The first day of class**

Summer Reading Assignment – The Surge: 2014’s Big GOP Win and What It Means for the Next Presidential Election: Edited by Larry Sabato

The 2014 congressional elections were historic in many ways. Elements of that election will provide the basis for much of what we will be discussing this year as far as the role in elections of the media, primaries, parties, and interest groups. To get a start, the summer reading book is The Surge edited by Larry Sabato. (ISBN: 1442246340)

The book contains a series of essays on various aspects of the congressional elections. If you haven’t paid close attention to political news in the past couple of years, this book will provide you with a foundation for understanding electoral politics as well as examples that we will be using all year long in A.P. Government.

Please feel free to contact me, Mrs. Rokosny at Rokosnyd@warrenhills.org, over the summer if you have any questions.

Read the indicated chapters and answer the questions.

*Your question answers/notes should either be neatly written or typed. You will be turning them in on the first day of class. It is perfectly acceptable to write your answers as a series of bullet points. You don’t need fully developed paragraphs for each question. Don’t feel that you need to go overboard in how much you write. Most of these questions can be answered in a few sentences or bullet points. **Do not simply copy from the book. I want to see your own words.***

The first two questions are done for you so you’d get an idea of what you should be doing to answer the questions.

Chapter One: “A Midterm Course Correction” by Larry J. Sabato

1. What are the reasons that Sabato gives for why the sixth-year elections of a president’s two terms are usually bad for the party in the White House?

- It serves as an expression of public opinion of a president
- Fewer people turn out to vote in a midterm year than in a presidential election year
- The people who turn out tend to be party activists
- Americans tend to like to switch back and forth between parties and look for some sort of correction to presidential policies – the “six-year itch.”

2. What conclusions does Sabato reach about turnout in 2014?
 - Republicans were more likely to turn out to vote
 - Independents who are conservative were more likely to turn out to vote.
 - Fewer young, African American, and Hispanic voters turned out than in 2008 or 2012
 - Republicans increased their percentages among white voters, older voters, and women although unmarried women still prefer the Democrats.
3. Look over the Exit poll information on p. 27 – 36. In addition to the answer for question #2, what are five conclusions you can make about how various demographic groups voted in 2014?

Chapter Two: “The Primaries of 2014: More Than Meets the Eye” by Rhodes Cook
You just need to read p. 37-38 and 42-50.

1. On pages 37-38, the author, Cook, explains how the 2014 primary season will be remembered. Explain this.
2. Describe “primaried,” as explained by Cook on page 42.

Chapter Three: “The 2014 Senate Elections – and Beyond” by James Hohmann
You just need to read p. 53 - 57

1. What role did President Obama play in the Senate contests in 2014?

Chapter Four: “The State of the House: The Midterm’s Presidential Penalty Strikes Again” by Kyle Kondik
You just need to read p. 75-76 and 81 – 83

1. What are the structural advantages that Republicans have for the House of Representatives?
2. What does the author project for the 2016 House elections?

Chapter Six: “The Money Game: Emerging Campaign Finance Trends and Their Impact on 2014 and Beyond” by Michael E. Toner and Karen E. Trainer

1. The book discusses the role of outside groups. Don’t worry so much about the 501(c) groups. What are Super PACs and what role did they play in the election? (Hint: GOTV stands for “get out the vote.”)
2. What effect has the increased spending by outside groups have on political parties?

Chapter Seven: “The State of the Polling Industry” by Mark Blumenthal and Ariel Edwards-Levy

1. This chapter discusses the problems facing today’s polling industry in getting accurate poll results. Why is it more difficult now for pollsters to get accurate results than it was 30 years ago? What is the role of new technologies in making their job so much more challenging?
2. What are some of the solutions that pollsters have been using to address their problems? How have those worked out?

Chapter Eight: “Obama’s Last Chance to Come Through in a Crunch” by Jill Lawrence

You just need to read p. 141 - 150

1. The book discusses the problems facing our divided government (with a president of one party and one or more houses of Congress of another party). Summarizes three policy areas the author predicts will be points of contention between the Republicans in Congress and President Obama.
2. The book summarizes several items on President Obama’s agenda that he is planning to accomplish by executive action without the cooperation of Congress. Pick one of those issues and then do research online to see what the President has done on that issue since this book came out. Summarize what you have learned and connect what the President has done to what you learned from the book.

Chapter Nine: “Barack Obama and the Democrats’ 2016 Dilemma” by Jamelle Bouie

You just need to read p. 153 - 157

1. On pages 153 - 157, Bouie explains the advantages and obstacles faced by Democrats, and Hillary Clinton in particular in 2016. List several of them.

Chapter Ten: “A Brief Celebration: The Future of the Republican Party” by Robert Costa

1. Using pages 164 - 167 as a guide, summarize the two “predominant foreign policy roles of the Republican Party” (p. 165).
2. After reading “The Conservatives,” answer this: who is the GOP base?

Chapter Eleven: “Fighting the Last Battle, Fighting the Same Battle: The 2016 Presidential Nomination Process” by Joshua T. Putnam

You just need to read p. 177 - 180 and 186 - 190

1. On p. 177 - 180, Putnam explains the roles of the national political party and state-level parties in determining the nominating process. Explain these roles.

2. Putnam analyzes the 2016 national parties' guidelines and the states' reactions on p. 186 - 190. Summarize his analysis.

Chapter Twelve: "The Path to the Presidency: The Past and Future Look of the Electoral College" by Sean Trende

1. Trende mentions the "realignment theory" on page 197. Explain this theory and list several realigning elections.
2. Skim through the election charts from p. 199 - 201. Then, begin reading on p. 202. Trende opines that "our electoral history is filled with randomness and unpredictable swings. We'd be unwise to rely on it [realignment theory] for making future predictions." How does he more deeply explain this statement on pages 202 - 208?

Chapter Thirteen: "Through a Glass Darkly: The Outlook for the 2016 Presidential Election" by Alan I. Abramowitz

Although we do not yet know officially who will be the Democratic and Republican nominees in the 2016 presidential election, Abramowitz argues that we can already make some predictions about the characteristics of the 2016 election.

A. Briefly summarize the points he makes about the following elements of the 2016 campaign.

1. The differences between the 2016 and 2014 electorates
2. The partisan divide in the electorate
3. Changes in the party coalitions
4. Desire for a change
5. The structure of the Electoral College

B. Pick one of the five topics that Abramowitz discusses and write one-to-two paragraph examining how one of those topics is playing out in this year's election. Give specific evidence to back up your generalizations.

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**AP U.S. Government & Politics
Summer Assignment #2**

To make the class more interesting and relevant to you, we will be discussing current events as they relate to government and politics throughout the year. With that in mind your second summer assignment will be to read articles from credible news sources, and type up a paper answering the prompts for each topic. You will need to include a Works Cited page of your sources in MLA format. The assignment is due the first day of class.

Presidential Candidates:

Find an article or articles on the Democratic and Republican candidates. Compare their policy positions on at least 3 issues. Also, identify, and explain any bias you see in the article (s).

Party Conventions:

The Republican and Democratic Party conventions will be in the latter half of July. If you can, watch at least an hour of TV coverage of each one (preferably when they actually nominate their candidate). Write a reflection of what went on, and your opinion of it. If you can't watch, then find an article that describes the last night of each convention (when they officially prove the party's candidate) summarize the article, and write a reflection (opinion, what you found interesting, etc.) on it.

Supreme Court:

In late June, the Supreme Court, will be announcing their rulings in many of the cases they've heard during their October through June session. Pick one case to summarize (name, what it was about, vote, impact). These two websites will have all the information you need: www.scotusblog.com and www.oyezz.org.

Congressional Action:

Summarize and reflect (opinion, etc.) on an article you found that refers to some sort of policy that either house of Congress reported on. In other words,

something Congress did regarding government (not the presidential campaign) that made the news. This can be straight news or an opinion piece, but you must identify it as such, and its author. Explain any bias.

Fact Checking the Candidates:

Use either www.factcheck.org, or www.politifact.com to report on one thing both major party candidates said (what was it, how was it rated, why).