

SUMMER ASSIGNMENT AND COURSE DESCRIPTION

Summer Assignment: You are to rewrite the United States Constitution (including the amendments). You can condense, list, bullet-points the **most important** parts. You can modernize it. You can use modern language. It can be rewritten in a prose style (like the original). Remember it still has to be a working, effective document. I would prefer that it was typed and double spaced. **DUE:** the first day of class.

As individuals and as citizens, we all confront the consequences of government actions and decisions. A federal or state regulation, a law, and executive decision or order or a court ruling can determine how we will live our lives in some significant way. For example, whether we will have artificial sweeteners in our soft drinks, whether we will be able to receive federal loans to attend college or whether we will have the power to choose to give birth to unborn children are all subject to and, often determined by, government power.

In short, the American government commands and exercises enormous power. This course is designed to help you understand not only the nature and function of this power but also your relationship to it. In gaining this understanding, you will also be preparing for an examination, which you will need to pass to receive college credit. In doing so, you will have the use of a basic textbook, supplemental reading and various other materials furnished by yourself and your instructor.

By using these materials and through class discussions and preparing for projects, simulations and papers, you will become more knowledgeable about why our system works as it does and how you can help to make it work even better. Some say that democracy is a dream, an unattainable goal. Others believe it is a gigantic con job. Others believe that while democracy might work, the basic selfish nature of individual humans will make it impossible. Are these arguments valid? Does an elite group or 100 special interest groups actually run the country? Who's really in charge? Do we really have a government of, by, and for the people?

A political science course such as this one cannot provide easy, simple answers to these questions. However, it can help you understand, evaluate and analyze the basic structural components of our governmental system.

In order to gain this understanding you will wish to fulfill the following course requirements:

1. **Readings:** Textbook: *American Government*, Wilson, James Q. and Dilulio, Jr., John J.
2. **Supplemental Sources:** Instructor Handouts, Newspapers, Reference works, News magazines, Internet sources
3. **Projects and Presentations:** Papers and /or presentations will be required. Details about how to prepare this material will be provided later.
4. **Class discussions:** Members of the class are expected to participate in class discussions.
5. **Evaluations:** Evaluations will be based on periodic examinations, projects, presentations, and class discussions