

AP US Government

SUMMER READING ASSIGNMENT

In preparation for your upcoming Advanced Placement course in Government and Politics, you will be required to read the following books and respond to essay-type questions (see the directions below).

Irons, Peter	The Courage of Their Convictions Sixteen Americans Who Fought Their Way to the Supreme Court (Penguin books, 1990)
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Thom, Hartmann	The Crash of 2016 The Plot to Destroy America – and What We Can Do to Stop it (Twelve, 2014)
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While there are other current books available that deal with topics pertinent to our course, these two have been selected for you based on their high interest level and breadth of information. You are asked to read them and respond to the questions in order to be better prepared for your Government class. The written assignment will be due the first day of class in August and will count approximately 10% of your first quarter grade.

It is also highly recommended that you follow current events via major papers such as The Christian Science Monitor, The Washington Post, The New York Times, and/or Los Angeles Times as we will often apply current topics to political science concepts.

The assigned books are available on the shelves of universities and public libraries. You may also get them by special order at major book-stores (Amazon, Barnes and Nobles, etc.). You may share copies of the books, although it is suggested that you have your own.

Directions:

Read the two books assigned – The Crash of 2016 by Thom Hartmann and The Courage of Their Convictions by Peter Irons – beginning with the preface. Highlight or take notes as you read. Answer both of the following essay questions.

Be sure to address all parts of the question and use specific information whenever possible. Your work will be evaluated mostly on content, but style is also important, so do pay attention to how you write as well as what you write. Be sure to develop your statements using supportive data from the reading. Connect your thoughts to the question.

Your essays should be approximately five hundred words in length and typed. This assignment is due on the first day of class in August.

1. Looking at American history, Thom Hartmann sees that roughly every four generations catastrophe strikes. How does he explain the current economic situation in America? Why is it that the corporations in America are more profitable today than ever before in the history of the World? What role did the Economic Barons play in destroying the middle class in the United States? How does he suggest participatory democracy as the American way?

2. Read the following case studies from among those presented in Peter Irons' *The Courage of Their Convictions*: #1 Lillian Gobitis v. Minersville School District (1940), #3, J.D. Shelley v. Louis Kraemer (1948), Mary Beth Tinker v. Des Moines (1969), and #16, Michael Hardwick v. Michael Bowers (1986). In addition, read at least four other case studies of your own choosing.

Referring specifically to the reading:

- a. Identify the legal issues in each of the eight case studies and
- b. Using numerous examples from the case studies, explain what you have learned about people, courage and convictions, the U.S. legal system (including the Supreme Court), and the U.S. Constitution.

Follow the News:

This will greatly enhance your understanding of the theoretical concepts of this course. Knowledge of current affairs will enable you to do a better job on the AP test's free response section, where it is assumed that you have such knowledge. In addition, doing a good job of following the news will help you to ace the summer events test that will be given on the first day of class.

Here is how you can follow the news:

1. Read the L.A. Times and another major paper mentioned above. Check out the front section and the editorial section.
2. Watch an evening network news program on CBS, NBC, ABC, or CNN and PBS.
3. Watch other news-oriented shows such as "This Week," "Face the Nation," "Meet the Press," etc.
4. Watch C-SPAN occasionally. Follow the proceedings of the House, congressional committee hearings, press conferences, etc
5. Read any of the weekly news magazines, e.g., Time, Newsweek.
6. Listen to radio talk shows on KABC, KPFK, KFI, and KPCC