

**The Catholic High School of Baltimore
Summer Reading Assignment**

Teacher's Name: Claire McKenzie

School Year: 2023-2024

Grade Level: 11

Course No.: 230

Course Name: AP US Government and Politics

Academic Level (Honors/AP/CP/CPA): AP

There are two parts to the summer reading – two essays and a series of podcasts. The essays have accompanying questions and the podcast rubric is below. The essay questions can be turned in at any time, but are due on the first day of school in August.

Readings:

Dinner with Democracy by Cynthia Farrar is an essay from The Lanahan Readings in the American Polity, sixth edition, pages 7-13.

The Constitution and America's Destiny by David Brian Robertson is an essay from The Lanahan Readings in the American Polity, sixth edition, pages 90-98.

Scanned copies of the essays are on the new Google Classroom page. Questions to accompany the readings are below and on Google Classroom. The Google Classroom Code is below.

Assignment:

In studying AP Government this year, you will gain an understanding not only of how our government works (or doesn't), but you will also understand the role of political involvement of the citizenry. *Dinner with Democracy* will set the tone for what it means to be a citizen in a democracy. In the second essay, *The Constitution and America's Destiny*, the author explains the political mindset of the framers and the compromises and hurdles they worked through in order to create a government where competing political players deal with vital political interests. After reading the essays, answer the following questions:

Dinner with Democracy questions and reflection (25 points)

1. In the dinners, Dr. Farrar posed the question, "If we are to consider ourselves a democratic entity, what would that mean?" What does it mean to you that you are part of a democratic entity? What expectations do you have of a democratic society? What contribution do you feel you would need to make to a democratic society?
2. What, according to Farrar, are the defining features of 'deliberative democracy'?
3. One finding of the dinners was that we tend to hang out with people like us. While that is not earth-shattering news, how might that affect the success of democracy? How important are discourse and interaction in a democracy?

4. “Citizens are neither members of a tribe nor consumers. What they have in common is citizenship and they engage in constant renegotiation of the inevitable tensions between public goods and private interests.” What do you see as important public goods and private interests in your community? In the USA? What tensions do you see between them?

5. Briefly reflect on other ideas that struck you in the essay.

The Constitution and America’s Destiny Questions and reflection (35 points)

1. According to the author, what kind of men were the framers? What had they already accomplished before taking on the task of changing the structure and purpose of the republic?

2. What are the three reasons the author gives for the success of the framers?

3. While the framers were, for the most part, propertied elites, how did they understand the importance of meeting the needs of those with more moderate backgrounds?

4. James Madison, the key figure in designing the Constitution, was a great political strategist. What, according to the author, were Madison’s strategies in the constitutional process?

5. What were the key elements in the government the framers created?

6. “The Constitution gave American politicians extraordinary responsibilities, while at the same time made it extraordinarily hard for them to fulfill these responsibilities.” (p. 97) What was the framers’ purpose in creating such a government?

7. The author’s last paragraph on p. 98 explains what he sees as the task that lies ahead of all of us who wish to continue the great experiment of the republic created in 1789. What does he suggest Americans must do to assure that?

Podcasts:

We The People

<https://constitutioncenter.org/debate/podcasts>

We The People is a weekly show of constitutional debate hosted by National Constitution Center President and CEO Jeffrey Rosen where listeners can hear the best arguments on all sides of the constitutional issues at the center of American life. You will be responsible for listening to FOUR podcasts and writing reflections on each. The rubric for the reflections follows. I suggest that you stick with topics that are more government related. There are over 350 topics, so scroll through the playlist to find topics that are of the most interest to you.

Podcast Assignment (10 points each)

1. **Bi-Monthly Assignment** – Every two weeks, select a podcast to listen to and review.

2. **Logistics** –

- Summarize each podcast in 5-10 sentences including the topic, names of guests, and key points discussed. (5 points)
- Write a reaction to this podcast either on the issue itself, how the issue was presented, or its implications for the government. (5 points)

3. **Format** –Type your summary and reaction following the appropriate TCHS guidelines for the proper heading and turn your work into Google Classrooms, or email it to me.

4. **Due Dates for the podcasts** –

July 9th; July 23rd; August 6th; and August 20th

If you have any questions as you go, please contact me at
cmckenzie@thecatholichighschool.org