

Name _____

Teacher: Hubacher

2016-17 AP U.S. Government & Politics Prior Knowledge Assignment

Welcome to APGOPO. You're about to be part of a class that is both fun and rigorous. Here's your first mission: The following assignments will help you to be ready for this college-level course.

Please Note: The prior knowledge assignment (ALL FOUR PARTS) is due on **YOUR FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL**. Credit for completion and assessment of what you learned will take place during the first two weeks of the year. Combined they will greatly impact your first quarter grade.

Contact me at matt.hubacher@pinelakeprep.org with any questions. I look forward to a great year!

Part 1: Human Nature Assignment: *Are We Good or Evil?* As individuals we have choices about what direction our life may take us. Ultimately what we choose is our decision. However, are our decisions based upon what we are deep inside? Is there a common human nature in all of us and, if so, is that nature good or evil? How does this tension shape the governments men form?

1. READ the Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau Excerpts: <https://goo.gl/wCzxh8>
2. COMPLETE the Socratic Seminar sheet to prepare for a class discussion the first week of school.: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1zf1K0De_zwGm3bGlXgV12vClh2O5O5OEJaJv-_Tnhl/edit?usp=sharing

Part 2: Current Events: You will need to get in the habit of reading the news and current political happenings events every day. Try to pick at least three reputable sources of news (if you have questions about what these are please let me know, but a variety is the key). Whether it's newspapers, magazines, or the Internet, it is important to diversify your intake of information. I read and view a steady stream from CNN, the New York Times, The Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal, Fox News, and I listen to NPR regularly when I am in the car. I peruse channels like MSNBC, CNBC, and Headline News, along with local news channels as well as to gather other information and gain new perspectives. Online news sites are fine, in fact preferable at times, but if something seems weird to you about a story, try to find other sources covering the same thing. Beware of "fake news"! Read news that enlightens you about the topics in our curriculum, such as:

- Significant Supreme Court Decisions (or 4-4 ties) announced in June
 - Religious Liberty
 - Challenges to the President's immigration actions
 - Many more
- The ongoing legislative process in Congress on topics such as health care, tax reform, trade, immigration, education and any other subject that interests you
- Any news on the budget deficit and national debt
- The 2018 midterm elections

- The president in his various roles: commander-in-chief, head of the executive branch, diplomat, party leader
- American military deployment in Afghanistan, Libya, Iraq, Syria, Yemen and elsewhere
- Rising tensions with North Korea
- Conservative or liberal criticism of President Trump's decisions
- How the federal government deals with state governments
 - (i.e. Federal enforcement of drug laws in states that allow recreational marijuana)
- The media's role in government
- Complaints about civil rights or civil liberties violations that come up

Please note: there is no specific assignment with these current events readings. I will warn you however that **I will be quizzing you on this at the start of the school year** by selecting some of the largest news stories that the sources above most certainly will deal with and have you either write about them or take some other form of assessment. You can also follow me on Twitter to see what kind of stories/sources I follow:

[@plpapgopo](https://twitter.com/plpapgopo)

Part 3: The United States Constitution. The essential guide to our government's structure and core philosophy. Want to be ready for anything? Keep a copy in your pocket.

FIND. Search for it, buy a pocket copy or this website has a nicely searchable version:
 · <http://www.usconstitution.net/const.html>

READ. We'll be using the Constitution all year long. Read every word thoroughly – from the beginning of the Preamble to the end of the 27th Amendment. Look up what you don't understand.

WRITE. Complete [this assignment](#). You'll use it all year as your personal guide to the Constitution.

SUBMIT. Via Canvas on time.

Part 4: *The West Wing: Season One.* The West Wing is an American political drama television series originally broadcast from September 22, 1999, to May 14, 2006. The series is set primarily in the West Wing of the White House, where the Oval Office and offices of presidential senior staff are located, during the fictitious Democratic administration of Josiah Bartlet.

The West Wing received acclaim from critics, as well as praise from political science professors and former White House staffers. In total, The West Wing won the Emmy Award for Outstanding Drama Series four consecutive times from 2000 through 2003. Source: Wikipedia

Simply put, despite its age, it provides a snapshot of many of the issues and interactions that make American Government work (and not work).

It is available for viewing on Netflix (sign up for a free 1 month trial [here](#)), for purchase on Amazon (used DVD's from around \$5 including shipping) and elsewhere.

Your assignment is watch SEASON ONE and answer the [questions found here](#). You can watch more, but Season One is a good intro and will give us common ground for many classroom discussions.