

**AP U.S. GOVERNMENT & POLITICS
MR. WAGENBERG**

**AP U.S. Government and Politics Summer Assignment 2019
Part 2 - Book Review**

Due Date: August 30, 2019

A five to seven page paper on the summer reading book will be due the first week of class in September. Your essay is a scholarly reaction paper as outlined below. Bring a hard copy to the first day of class. ***You will be required to submit this paper to Turnitin.com*** - enrollment information is included in the Overview and it will be posted on the Summer Assignment page at www.mrwagenberg.net.

The book review is your scholarly reaction to the book. You should read through the work critically at least once before you try to write; reading it more than once is worth considering. As you write it, remain focused on the fact that it is your reaction as a serious student. ***IT IS NOT A BOOK REPORT, AND IT IS NOT A LIST TOPICS TO BE ANSWERED AS SEPARATE PARAGRAPHS.*** You might want to use outside sources (commentary, reviews, etc.). If you do, you must include a works cited and use all the appropriate citations.

Make sure that your review includes all of the following, but do not use the list to structure your review -

- Introduction (which should include a brief discussion of the author's thesis).
- Historical background of the book's topic area.
- Discussion of the main idea of the book.
- Relevance of the book (its importance, then and now).
- What did you, as the reader, get from reading the book?
- Conclusion

Be sure to use lots of relevant quotes to support your points.

No handwritten work will be accepted. In addition, you should have a cover page with you name, works cited and title of the work. No late work will be accepted.

The book you will review is The Broken Branch: How Congress Is Failing America and How to Get It Back on Track by Thomas E. Mann, Norman J. Ornstein, Oxford University Press

The description of a book review that follows may help you in better understand the task.

BOOK REVIEWS *(This section is to help you understand the assignment – the assignment must be completed as described above)*

Reading is absolutely essential in order for you to be successful in college and in your career. It is also necessary for you to be a generally well-informed person. History is made up of literally millions of fascinating, funny and exciting stories. I believe it is important to your experience of history for you to do some in-depth reading in United States government and politics. Therefore, you will be required to do a first semester book review.

Your book review will be made up of three parts. The first part will be a brief summary of the content of the book. It will be necessary for you to write in broad generalizations. Your paragraph should give the reader a good idea of what the book is about and what the author believes about the subject (his thesis). For instance the book might be about the American presidency, and the author's thesis is that the power of the office depends on the timeframe and circumstances. Another example would be that the book was about Kennedy's foreign policy, and the author's thesis is that it was unsuccessful because Kennedy was so busy trying to appear tough, that he was unwilling to seek compromise.

The second part of the review will be a critical analysis of the book as a resource for understanding the American Government. In this section you will discuss things like the author's objectivity, extensiveness of the citations, usefulness of the bibliography, assumptions made by the author, and any other factors that determine the quality of the book as a resource. In other words explain if the book is informative, reliable and helpful for someone who desires to begin an in depth study of the topic.

The third part of the review will be your own subjective comments about the book. One thing you should include in this section is what you **specifically** liked or didn't like about it. For example, don't say, "It was confusing." Say, "The author went into so much detail about the military background of all the officers in the battle, that the events of the current battle were unclear." Another thing you might include in this part of the review is what you learned from the book that was important. You could point out areas in which you disagreed with the author, or things that you think the author should have added to make the book more complete.

The review should be typed and double-spaced. You must include the author, title and publishing information at the end of the review. You will be graded on clear, error-free writing and the quality of your evaluation.

Adapted from: Karen Fairbank, Thomas Jefferson School, St. Louis, MO 63127