

American Government (POLS 100, 3 credits) Spring 2009

INDIVIDUAL ASSIGNMENTS

These individual assignments are two quests which result in brief papers submitted by each student. In the past, I have noticed that several students do not take these assignments seriously, which have harmed their grade. In these cases, students rushed through the project without taking sufficient time to read this assignment and have provided too little information in explaining their understanding.

QUESTS

Students must complete the first quest (“The Purpose of a University”) and will choose a second quest (from the choices below). These applied learning activities direct student’s learning and understanding to relevant and important concepts. These individual quests assist students in developing the skills and expertise discussed at the beginning of this syllabus.

These assignments must be submitted via the Dropbox feature of d2l as an MS Word document attached. Restated, to earn credit the document must be properly submitted as a d2l Dropbox attachment with your full name **on the document**. Students are encouraged to submit this document in sufficient time prior to the deadline to resolve technology difficulties that may arise.

One common problem is that students send document files that cannot be opened in MS Word 2002 (or later software). On rare occasions, MS Word running on older MACs does not allow one to save in PC format. More frequently, students have experienced difficulty in saving Microsoft Works (an inexpensive suite of office software) in a compatible format. This software normally saves files with a “.wps” extension. Other versions of Word are unable to open this type of file. Students who use MS Works as their word processor must save their files in a format compatible with Word 2002. Please use the “save as” feature (under Files) and save your document as “plain text,” “rich text file,” or “ASCII” format for me to open the file. Once again, if the document cannot be opened as a Word 2002 document, you will not earn the credit.

To repeat and emphasize, technology problems must be addressed prior to the deadline. I urge students who have older PCs, MACs, or less experience in technology to complete the first assignment immediately. Do not wait until just before the deadline to see if you can get the technology to cooperate. Technology difficulties are NOT a legitimate excuse for completing these assignments late. After the deadline expires, I will NOT be awarding credit to those individual quests unless there is some legitimate non-technology excuse. These quests, which are described in more detail below, are due at 3:00 p.m. on these days.

Description	Due Date
Quest 1	January 30
Quest 2	March 16

Quest One: The Purpose of a University

Instructions: Prepare a paper that answers the questions below. Do NOT include the questions in your paper. In a paragraph or two using your own words, prepare a response to each question. Put your full name at the top of the document.

1. Explain the Morrill Act of 1862. (Hint: Search the Web and identify your source with a full citation. Please note although you may use Google to direct you to a Website, Google is not your source.)
2. Explain the mission of SDSU as a Land Grant college. (Hint: Visit SDSU's Website and search for "ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE IN FACULTY ROLES.") Please detail and explain each of the three missions as they relate to the university's efforts (and NOT exclusively in terms of students).
3. According to the American Association of University Professors, what role should students play in the governance of universities? (HINT: Visit their Website and search for "Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities." Please review the entire document.)

Quest Two: Choose one (1) of the following: Rural Politics or Political Culture.

A. Rural Politics

Instructions: Visit a historical museum in your community to better understand rural politics. In Brookings, the South Dakota Agricultural Heritage Museum has many displays and exhibits that work well for this assignment. Outside of the Brookings area, visit your county's historical museum or another government building where historical artifacts might be displayed (e.g., the county courthouse, city hall, the school building, etc.) Prepare a paper that answers the questions below. Do NOT include the questions in your paper. In a paragraph or two of your own words, prepare a response to each item. Put your full name at the top of the document.

1. Identify and describe an historic artifact that represents some aspect of rural politics. By artifact, I mean to select a single item displayed in the museum. By identify, I mean provide its name (e.g., from a placard) and detail the item's appearance and uses.
2. Justify how the artifact represents rural politics (i.e., explain why it is related to both rural and to politics).
3. Explain the significance of this artifact to your understanding of rural politics as described in the Countryside text in Chapters 1 or 2. What particular principle, concept, or idea is discussed in these readings that are exemplified by your selected artifact? Apply the idea to the artifact.

B. Political Culture

Instructions: Visit an art museum (or public building) to better understand American political culture. In Brookings, the South Dakota Art Museum has many pieces of art that would work for this assignment. Outside of Brookings, any of the government buildings mentioned above (in

Rural Politics) usually has some art displayed. Visit any public location that might display art, including a mural, painting, or ceramic sculpture; these may be in the building, on a wall, or on the grounds. Prepare a paper that answers the questions below. Do NOT include the questions in your paper. In a paragraph or two of your own words, prepare a response to each item. Put your full name at the top of the document.

1. Identify and describe a piece of art that represents a political value held by Americans. By piece of art, I mean select a single item displayed in the museum (i.e., a painting, sculpture, etc). By identify, I mean provide its name (e.g., from a placard) and detail the item's appearance and uses.

2. Explain how the political value is represented in the piece of art you selected. First, review the list of core and secondary values discussed and described by Patterson in Chapter 1. Select one (1) of these values and relate how this art work exemplifies this value.

3. Explain the significance of this political value in the American polity (i.e., political system). How and why is this particular value an important part of American political culture?