

Advanced Placement Government and Politics

Summer Reading 2018

Welcome to AP Government and Politics! This summer assignment will familiarize you with the dynamics of the judicial branch, specifically the Supreme Court. We will be reading Jeffrey Toobin's *The Oath* (ISBN: 978-0-307-39071-4).

First, you will be responsible for annotating your copy of *The Oath*. Rather than having you type up your analysis, we are looking forward to reading your conversation with the text. We are expecting to see annotations on pretty much every page; this is your chance to think deeply and to make your thinking visible to us. See the reverse side of this handout for sample annotations. **You will be handing in your book on the first day of school.**

Specifically, we are asking you to annotate for the following:

- Concrete, factual understanding
 - Key vocabulary
 - Facts about the cases (important background, legal questions, holding, and rationale)
- Your analysis
 - Actively annotate your impressions of and reactions to the text. What is unclear? What is surprising? What is interesting? What would you like to know more about? Please explain your thoughts in your annotations--we are looking for significantly more than "wow!"
- Thematic questions
 - How democratic is the United States and how democratic should it be? Note places where democracy is potentially being compromised.
 - Look out for judicial philosophy: original intent v. "living" constitution. In what ways do different justices embody different philosophies? Why does this matter?
 - In what ways does politics influence the Supreme Court?
 - Note the tension between elected officials and the Court. How does this shape our political dialogue?

Finally, please prepare eight thoughtful, highly developed discussion questions for the book discussions we will be having at the beginning of the school year. **(These should be typed and printed, and you will hand them in on the first day of school.)**

- The questions must be open-ended and likely to spark discussion/debate. Four of the eight must specifically connect content from the book to a current issue or conflict in American politics. Please reference page numbers in your questions when appropriate.

As you are all coming from different junior year courses, there is a wide variety of familiarity with the US Constitution. We strongly suggest becoming familiar with this essential document by reading it over the summer. If you feel your understanding of the context is a bit shaky, you should read chapter 2 of our textbook (*Government in America: People, Politics, and Policy*, 17th edition; ISBN#10: 0-13-458657-3 / ISBN#13: 978-0-13-458657-1). We will not be explicitly covering this in class, but you will be responsible for knowing and understanding the ideas from this chapter.

Please bring your typed work to class **on the first day of school**, along with your copy of *The Oath*. Be prepared to share your findings with the class. Late assignments will not be accepted, except under extraordinary circumstances. You should complete this assignment even if you are on a waiting list for another course and may drop AP Government and Politics.

not explicitly, but yes
Jeffrey Toobin implicitly thru other policies

By the 1970s, no serious politician advocated segregated schools; by 2008, no serious presidential candidate—at least one who hoped to win—advocated the traditional conception of the Second Amendment.

So, after Obama launched his presidential campaign in 2007, he began speaking out in support of an individual right under the Second Amendment. The mode of Obama's expression, which he repeated throughout the campaign, revealed the nature of the conservative ideological victory on this issue. As Obama put it in a debate with Hillary Clinton before the Pennsylvania primary, "As a general principle, I believe that the Constitution confers an individual right to bear arms. But just because you have an individual right does not mean that the state or local government can't constrain the exercise of that right, in the same way that we have a right to private property but local governments can establish zoning ordinances that determine how you can use it." It was, characteristically for Obama, a cautious position, but still an unmistakable endorsement of the individual rights theory. The future president picked his fights—and chose to avoid this one over the Constitution. It wouldn't be the last time, either.

This is probably the position of most Americans.

Few data:

Even those who support universal background check don't always support the necessary legislation - they worry that it will go too far or that it's a slippery slope.

Approx. 70% of US households have a gun - average gun owner owns 8 guns.

"ON BEHALF OF THE STRONG IN OPPOSITION TO THE WEAK"

"Cortez" is the term when the Senate is advised and consent

Obama played to his instinct for compromise and conciliation. Politics often lends itself to these sorts of solutions. But sometimes a senator, like a justice, simply has to make a decision. On one of these occasions, during his brief career in the United States Senate, Obama had a real struggle: the nomination of John Roberts to be chief justice of the United States.

Obama and Roberts had met only once, in the fall of 2005. Roberts had already called on most of the senators when he finally made it to Suite 713 in the Hart Building, the remote lodging to which junior senators like Obama were assigned. Roberts was exceptionally good at these courtesy calls: knowledgeable but not arrogant, open but non-committal. As far as Obama was concerned, the judge had a lot going for him. Obama valued credentials, and Roberts had the best of their shared generation, not least a Harvard Law degree. For his part, Roberts had the same instincts about Obama. Judicial candidates making the rounds of senators quickly suss out the gasbags from the players, and there was no doubt in Roberts's mind of the future president's intelligence.

In the end, Obama's vote on Roberts had little to do with the nominee's qualifications, or even Obama's feelings about him. The senator consulted some of his law professor friends, like Laurence Tribe, at Harvard, and they told him that Roberts was about as good as anyone could expect from the Bush administration. The judge was conservative, Tribe said, but perhaps he'd keep an open mind. But the advice that mattered most to Obama came from his own chief of staff, Pete Rouse, a Washington veteran. Rouse told Obama, in effect: Cut the

How does a politician compromise and keep the base happy?

Institutional forbearance -

How has this changed with a deeper divide