

AP Seminar/Government Summer Assignment

There are 3 parts to your summer assignment for AP Seminar. All three must be completed by the start of class by **AUGUST 12th, 2020! Failure to complete the assignment will result in a parent conference/teleconference where your future in the course will be discussed.** You may submit by emailing a google doc link to jonathan.egert@knoxschools.org at any point prior to August 12th, 2020. Label your responses 1 and 2. You may also submit responses in writing August 10th-12th, 2020. This assignment will be your first grade and will have a huge impact on your grade in the first 9 weeks. It is worth 100 points.

Parents, guardians and students please join the class Remind program. This will allow me to send you updates and answer questions via that platform. There are two ways to join:

1. Click and join at this link <https://www.remind.com/join/k26a2>
2. Text the phone number 81010 and put @k26a2 in the body of the message

1. Reading and Writing

Read the passage below on Social Contract and Political Philosophers. Then write a 3 paragraph statement explaining which philosopher you agree with the most and which philosopher you disagree with most. Justify your response and clearly explain your philosophers position in your own words.

Social Contract and Political Philosophers:

What, if anything, justifies the authority of the government? What are the proper limits of state power? Under what circumstances, if any, is it morally right to overthrow a government? Within Western political philosophy, one of the most influential approaches to such questions asserts that the state exists by, and its powers are generally defined or circumscribed by, the rational agreement of its citizens, as represented in an actual or a hypothetical social contract among themselves or between themselves and a ruler. The classic social-contract theorists of the 17th and 18th centuries—Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679), John Locke (1632–1704), and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–78)—held that the social contract is the means by which civilized society, including government, arises from a historically or logically preexisting condition of stateless anarchy, or a “state of nature.” Because the state of nature is in certain respects unhappy or unsatisfactory or undesirable, or because increasingly complex social relations eventually require it, each person agrees to surrender some (or all) of his or her originally expansive rights and freedoms to a central authority on the condition that every other person does the same. In exchange, each person receives the benefits that supposedly only such a central authority can provide, notably including domestic peace.

According to Hobbes, for example, in the state of nature, everyone has a right to everything, and there is no impartial power to prevent violent persons from taking what others may need to survive. The result is a “a war of all against all,” in which human life is “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.” The only salvation is a compact in which each person relinquishes his or her right to everything and submits to a central authority, or sovereign, with absolute power—the Leviathan—which in turn guarantees the safety and security of all. Individuals must obey the sovereign in all matters and may revolt against it only if it fails to ensure their safety.

In Locke's version of the state of nature, persons have natural pre-social rights to life, liberty, and property, but a central authority, brought about through a social contract, is eventually necessary to better protect those rights. The power of the authority is limited to that which is necessary to guarantee the equal fundamental rights of all, and revolt against it is justified if it fails in that basic purpose. Locke's political philosophy directly influenced the American Declaration of Independence.

For Rousseau, the state of nature is relatively peaceful, but a social contract becomes necessary to overcome conflicts that inevitably arise as society grows and individuals become dependent on others to meet their needs. However, uniquely in Rousseau's account, the authority of the state is not inherently in conflict with the free will of individuals, because it represents the collective will (the "general will"), of which the individual will is a part, provided that the individual is moral.

In the 20th century the notion of the social contract was the basis of two influential theories of justice, those of John Rawls (1921–2002) and Robert Nozick (1938–2002). Rawls argued for a set of basic principles of distributive justice (justice in the distribution of goods and benefits) as those that would be endorsed in a hypothetical agreement among rational individuals who have been made ignorant of their social and economic circumstances and their personal characteristics (the "veil of ignorance"). Rawls's approach was generally interpreted as a justification of the capitalist welfare state. Nozick, in contrast, argued that any distribution of goods and benefits—even a highly unequal one—is just if it could have come about from a just distribution through transactions that did not violate anyone's natural rights to life, liberty, and property. Because such transactions in a state of nature would have given rise to a "minimal state" (whose powers are limited to those necessary to prevent violence, theft, and fraud), only the minimal state is justified, according to Nozick.

The notion of a social contract also plays a more or less direct role in various approaches to ethical theory developed in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Some philosophers have held, for example, that conventional moral principles are justified by the fact that rational, self-interested persons would agree to observe them (because each such person would gain more for himself or herself in a situation of general cooperation than in a situation of general noncooperation). Others have argued that correct moral principles are those that no one could reasonably reject as a basis for justifying his or her actions to others.

- ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA- "The Social Contract and Philosophy"

2. Video and Response

Watch the video below. Respond to the prompt in at least 2 paragraphs. Each paragraph should be at least 5 sentences. You are welcome to take as much space as you would like to answer the prompts but two paragraphs is the minimum required.

Inside the mind of a master procrastinator - Tim Urban

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=arj7oStGLkU>

Prompt: How can you be more aware of the instant gratification monkey and avoid the panic monster? How can this help you better fill those boxes?

Failure to complete and turn in the summer assignment by August 12th, 2020 may result in your removal from AP Seminar and AP Government!

Supply List for 2020-2021 AP Seminar/Government

1. 2 inch binder
2. 6 binder dividers
3. 100 pages of notebook paper
4. 250 notecards (one side lined, one side blank)
5. Pens
6. Pencil

Parent/Guardian Summer Assignment

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Bad news: your student is not the only one who is getting a summer assignment. You know your student better than anyone. This summer, I would like you to write a letter to me introducing your student and telling me about him/her. Then I would also like you to write a letter to your student as a form of motivation. I will give these letters to your student in the spring when we hit crunch time for AP exams. Please place these letters into envelopes. After writing the two letters please place them in the sealed envelope and send them to me with your student on August 14th, 2020.

Please do not hesitate to contact me via email at jonathan.egert@knoxschools.org. I really value communication so please let me know of any questions or concerns right away.

Congratulations to you and your student for being selected for this prestigious program. I look forward to speaking with you all in the future!

Summer action steps for parents contained in this letter to be completed by August 14th, 2020.

- 1. Write a letter to Mr. Egert introducing your student**
- 2. Write a motivational letter to your student**

Sincerely,
Jonathan Egert