

AP GOVERNMENT / MACROECONOMICS – DR. ASTUTO

Welcome to the class! For many of you, this will be your first taste of what a college course is going to be like. That means you have the advantage of challenging yourself academically without the stress of being in a strange new place, being homesick, dealing with the strange bathing/sleeping/study habits of Roommates From The Unknown, etc.

Before we get to the assignment part, I want to give you a little preview of some of the other activities we have in store for the coming year. Yes, our main jobs this year will be 1) to pass the AP tests in these subjects, and 2) to get you your five points in each course so you can graduate in June. However, there are other things going on which will give you the opportunity to: learn by doing, engage in some worthwhile academic activities outside the traditional classroom setup, and maybe even earn some scholarship money/prizes/extra credit [I wonder which one of those three you will come to think is the most valuable?]. Here are some of the things you can look forward to in my class for the coming school year:

FIU/Gordon Institute for Public Policy and Citizenship Studies – Intelligence/Security Simulation: Once each semester FIU puts on an elaborate role-playing simulation. Past subjects have included the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Haitian food shortage, peace talks in the Horn of Africa, and the attack on Pearl Harbor. I work closely with FIU; as my students you have an excellent chance to be chosen to participate in these simulations.

FIU/Gordon Institute for Public Policy and Citizenship Studies – Summer Institute on National Security Studies: This week-long institute held in June after school ends features a more in-depth experience than the one-day simulation workshops can provide, and can be a great addition to your student résumé.

Stock Market Challenge: Your team will be given the computer password to a (simulated) \$100,000 investment account and turned loose on the world of stocks, bonds and mutual funds. Winning teams are eligible for prizes in both local and state-wide competition.

InvestWrite: This essay competition challenges you to analyze and resolve an investment issue. In addition to class credit, winners at the state and national level can qualify for trips, computers, and other prizes.

Florida Economics Challenge: Held in the spring, 2008 was the first year this national competition was open to Florida students, and one of South Miami's teams finished in the Top Ten statewide. The program was on hiatus last year but I'm looking forward to its return, offering more fabulous prizes and an opportunity for the Cobras to post an even better performance this time around.

Keep in mind these are all subject to change/cancellation due to time constraints, the budget ax, and so forth. The summer assignment includes a variety of reading, research and analysis tasks. These will not only give you a chance to build up your GPA before you even enter my classroom, but will help prepare you for the coursework this year. You should make note of the website I plan to use for the summer assignments [www.schoolnotes.com/33155/astutodr.html]. You should be able to find a version of this announcement (updated if necessary) as well as additional information. If you are receiving this as a hard copy rather than an electronic document, it means there has been some problem connecting with your e-mail address, so you will need to pay particular attention to the web page. NOTE: Schoolnotes is planning on making some changes this summer, which may cause the e-mail address to change. I will e-mail information to the class mailing list during the summer; if you have an alternate e-mail you can use you should let me know right away. My e-mail is kastuto@dadeschools.net and I plan to check it throughout the summer.

Remember, the assignment is due the first day of school so be sure to have it ready, and be ready to discuss the reading you did.

SUMMER READING AND ASSIGNMENTS

Websites – visit the following websites:

GOVERNMENT

New York Times	www.nytimes.com
White House	www.whitehouse.gov
U.S. Senate	www.senate.gov
U.S. House of Representatives	www.house.gov
C-Span	www.cspan.org
Open Secrets	www.opensecrets.org

ECONOMICS

Bureau of Labor Statistics	www.bls.gov
Bureau of Economic Analysis	www.bea.gov
Congressional Budget Office	www.cbo.gov
Federal Reserve	www.federalreserve.gov
Dismal Scientist	www.dismal.com
The Economist	www.economist.com

Give a one-paragraph description of the offerings of *each* website and explain how it will benefit you in the course. **DUE DATE:** first day of class. You will have *two separate pages* – one for AP Government and one for AP Macroeconomics.

Media Over the summer read and view the following:

A nightly newscast (e.g., “The Jim Lehrer Newshour”), “Nightly Business Report” (PBS), a Sunday morning newsmaker program (such as “Face the Nation,” “Meet the Press,” or “This Week”), your daily newspaper AND a national-scope newspaper such as The New York Times or The Washington Post (NOT ‘USA Today’), a business publication such as The Wall Street Journal, Business Week or Fortune. NOTE: a) print resources can be accessed on line or at your local public library; b) “The Daily Show” and “The Colbert Report” **ARE NOT** news programs and do not count toward this requirement. While you might not do each of these every day, you should do at least one every day.

Keep a reading/viewing log (day/date/source) with notes. Pay special attention to stories/events regarding Congress, the sitting President, the Supreme Court, the Federal Reserve, economic indicators and foreign trade. You will be tested on this information during the first week of school (I will be watching/reading them too). I expect you to have entries during every week of the summer (unless you are spending a week on a family vacation or some such) so don’t let this slide until the last week before school; do it a little at a time and it will be much easier! **DUE DATE:** first day of class.

Books – read at least one book from each category on the next page, more if you can (not just the shortest from each category!). There are two parts to this assignment: a) Create a poster about one of the books. The poster must include title & author, a summary of the book, a one-paragraph description of one of the main characters from the book (for non-fiction, the paragraph should be about the author’s point of view & any biases you detect), a one-paragraph explanation of what you believe you learned from the book, and some form of artwork; b) you will have to participate in a group discussion in class of each book, contributing your observations & interpretations. These books are also fair game for the first test we have in class after the start of the school year. REMEMBER: The more outside reading you do this summer, the better prepared you’ll be for the courses, class discussions, and tests. **DUE DATE:** first week of class.

GOVERNMENT

All the King's Men; Inherit the Wind; To Kill a Mockingbird; The Prince/Utopia (yes, both); 1984; Gideon's Trumpet; Wealth and Democracy – A Political History of the American Rich

ECONOMICS

New Ideas from Dead Economists: an Introduction to Modern Economic Thought; The Jungle; The Worldly Philosophers; The Grapes of Wrath; Maestro – Greenspan's Fed and the American Boom; The Choice: A Fable of Free Trade and Protectionism

Top Ten List

Since you will monitor the news over the summer and keep track of the stories involving either government and/or economics I want you to make a list where you rank the top ten developments/stories in importance. This is separate from the media viewing log although keeping that log should help you with this part of the assignment. Each item on the list should be accompanied by an explanatory paragraph justifying the ranking you assign to the story. **DUE DATE:** first day of class.

Basic Preparation Materials

There are a few things I can tell you now that you should be sure you have for class:

Loose-leaf binder with tabs/dividers – this will be a place to file your class notes, project materials, homework, etc. It should either be big enough to accommodate both Government/Politics and Macroeconomic materials, or you may want separate binders for each subject. **REMEMBER:** whichever subject you are taking first semester, you need to hold onto the notes to help you prepare for the AP tests in May.

Ruled loose-leaf paper – *pages yanked out of ring binders or torn out of composition/spiral bound books are not acceptable for turning in assignments.*

3" x 5" OR 4" x 6" ruled index cards – some of these will be for notes, some will be for you to create your own flashcards/information cards. Take two of those cards and, using a thick-point marker mark, each side with either a large A, B, C or D. This will be useful for some of our flash drills; you will need them throughout the year.

3" x 3" Post-it notes (or similar – brand is not important)

Pens and pencils.

A way to conveniently bring your text and workbook(s)/reader(s) to class each day.

A great reading spot – you will be expected to complete the reading BEFORE you come to class each day. Remember, the tests will include things we do not go over in class. My experience tells me that if you depend on class discussions to guide your reading, instead of vice versa, you will reduce your chances for success.

Remember to keep an eye on the website and your e-mail for updates/changes.

Have a safe & happy summer; I look forward to seeing you in August!