

**Political Science 10100-01: American Politics
Spring 2002**

Professor Mark Cassell

Discussion Paper Assignment

This assignment is also located at the course website:

<http://personal.kent.edu/~mcassell/america.html>

The purpose of this assignment is to (1) think outside the classroom, to apply concepts from the readings to current policies and issues, (2) practice synthesizing in your own words ideas and concepts from the class, and (3) practice research and writing. To complete the discussion paper assignment you will need to do the following:

1. Select a discussion topic. Sometimes the topic will be a specific policy such as granting preferences to student athletes. In other cases it will be more broad such as answering whether or not devolution contributes to inequality. You must choose a topic during the first week of class by writing in your name and student ID number on a handout that will be passed out in class.
2. Research the question by visiting the library and locate five different articles from scholarly or periodic sources that address the discussion question. The sources can include articles in magazines, newspapers, or scholarly journals. Websites by themselves can be included but will not count as one of the five sources.
3. Read each of the articles. Take notes on what the articles argue and what type of evidence they present to make their case.
4. Next draw upon the articles to write a three to five page, double-spaced paper that takes a position on the discussion question posed in the syllabus for that week. For example, if you choose Week 8 your paper should take a position on whether we need more or less regulations of campaigns. The position should be justified using your knowledge of the topic and evidence gathered from the references. You may draw upon the work or ideas of others to support your own argument so long as their work is properly cited. At the end of your paper you should include a bibliography. FYI: the bibliography is not counted as part of the page count nor is a cover sheet.
5. The paper should be submitted electronically AND as a hard copy. The electronic version should be emailed to me as an attachment on the day the assignment is due. The hard copy should be submitted in class and include in an appendix full copies of the five articles used in the paper.
6. The paper should use the American Psychological Association citation style. You can find how to cite something using the APA style by simply going to the following website: <http://www.library.kent.edu/readyref/style.html>.
7. Your grade will be based on the clarity of the argument and stylistic issues such as spelling, grammar, and correct citation usage.
8. If you have any questions or would like to talk about the assignment, please do not hesitate to contact me or stop by office.

9. Finally, I take plagiarism seriously. According to university policy, students guilty of plagiarism may face disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the university. "Plagiarize" means to take and present as one's own a material portion of the ideas or words of another or to present as one's own an idea or work derived from an existing source without full and proper credit to the source of the ideas, words, or works. As defined, plagiarize includes, but is not limited to:

- The copying of words, sentences and paragraphs directly from the work of another without proper credit;
- The copying of illustrations, figures, photographs, drawings, models, or other visual and nonverbal materials, including recordings, of another without proper credit; and;
- The presentation of work prepared by another in final or draft form as one's own without citing the source, such as the use of purchased research papers.