

### **Assignments for Government 203**

In this course, you have a choice to make regarding how you will fulfill the requirements of this course. **I need to know which option you wish to take by January 30.** Here are your options:

#### **OPTION #1 Traditional**

You will complete four short (2-3 pages) research and writing assignments, on the topics listed below. The specifics of each assignment will be posted on the Blackboard page. Part of the purpose of the writing assignment is to help you prepare for class discussion on these topics, so you will lose half a grade for each day they are late.

If your last name starts with the letters A-L:

January 30 Constitution

February 20 Congress

March 20 Courts

April 17 Political Parties

If your last name starts with the letters M-Z:

February 6 Federalism

February 27 Presidency

March 27 Public Opinion

April 24 Voting and Elections

#### **OPTION #2 Service-Learning**

One of the big questions in politics, often ignored, is “how do the laws made by Congress work in the real world?” In 1996, President Clinton and Congress made huge changes in the welfare system, with the stated intent of helping people find work, and making them more independent. Critics of the policy change argued that the real purpose was to cut people off welfare, whether they would be better off or not. Five years later, what’s been the real effect on real people?

A local organization, People are Not Satisfied, is working on a Human Rights Welfare Monitoring Project, to monitor whether basic rights are being adequately respected at the local Income Maintenance Center. If you volunteer to serve as a monitor, you will be trained by an attorney, and you will commit to spend at least 10 hours at the Income Maintenance Center, discussing with welfare applicants and recipients how they are treated there. You will also attend at least 3 of the 5 meetings that will be held of all the people working on the project. More detailed information on the project is available on the attached sheet.

The students participating in this option will post comments on their experience, and answers to questions posted by me, on a Blackboard discussion board. Toward the end of the semester, you will write a 3-4 page essay on your experience.