

AP Government (APGOPO) Summer Reading Assignment
Due: First Day of APGOPO Class-Test Grade

Please Purchase (hard copy or digital) *The Price of Politics* by Bob Woodward

Book Info:

Paperback: 480 pages

Publisher: Simon & Schuster; Reprint edition (September 17, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1451651112

ISBN-13: 978-1451651119

Available on Amazon used for 3.79 (plus shipping) or Kindle for 12.99 as of 5/23/19

Amazon Synopsis:

See how and why Washington is not functioning.

Bob Woodward's freshly reported, thirty-five-page Afterword to his national bestseller, *The Price of Politics*, provides a detailed, often verbatim account of what happened in the dramatic "fiscal cliff" face-off at the end of 2012 between President Obama and the Republicans. *The Price of Politics* chronicles the inside story of how President Obama and the U.S. Congress tried, and failed, to restore the American economy and set it on a course to fiscal stability. Woodward pierces the secretive world of Washington policymaking once again, with a close-up story crafted from meeting notes, documents, working papers, and interviews with key players, including President Obama and House Speaker John Boehner. Woodward lays bare the broken relationship between President Obama and the Congress. Provides a detailed, often verbatim account of what happened in the dramatic "fiscal cliff" face-off at the end of 2012 between President Obama and the Republicans.

Assignment

Note Any citations/quotations that are done should follow the Chicago Manual 16th Edition. You can locate this at: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/717/01/> --This is the format that social sciences require and you should familiarize yourself with it prior to college. It requires footnotes along with a bibliography page. You are indeed expected to use quotations/citations as instructed. All papers should be 12 point font Times New Romans, double spaced with the exception of the Abstract/Reader response explained below. Margins should be 1inch. Yes, I can tell if you mess with margins, or put extra spaces between words, or change the font. Anyone caught doing so will receive a zero.

1. Read attached book review; *The Price of Politics* by Andrew Rosenbaum
2. Read *Price of Politics*
3. Evaluate Rosenbaum's book review. Do you agree with her assessment of Woodward's book? Why or why not? (700 words). Use evidence from her review and the book to support your opinion.
4. Review attached instructions for book Abstract and Reader Response
5. Complete a book abstract and Reader Response of *The Price of Politics* following the format given.
6. Submit a paper copy first day of class and an electronic copy to my e-mail (brittaniemcneil@ccs.k12.nc.us)

In addition review the following documents (all can be found online) and be prepared to discuss.

The Declaration of Independence

The Articles of Confederation

Federalist No. 10

Brutus No. 1

Federalist No. 51

The Constitution of the United States

Federalist No. 70

Federalist No. 78

"Letter from a Birmingham Jail"

The Price of Politics

Reviewed by:
[Andrew Rosenbaum](#)

“ . . . not a single character seems to have the slightest consideration for anything beyond what his or her peers demand.”

“Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power,” said President Abraham Lincoln.

Bob Woodward has set out in this book to show that nearly all the most important members of our government have failed that test. Most of the book portrays the failure of President Barack Obama, and his administration, to have led the country successfully through the debt crisis of 2011.

I cite Mr. Woodward: “It is a fact that President Obama was handed a miserable, faltering economy and faced a recalcitrant Republican opposition. But presidents work their will—or should work their will—on the important matters of national business. There is occasional discussion in this book about Presidents Reagan and Clinton, what they did or would have done. Open as both are to serious criticism, they nonetheless largely worked their will. Obama has not. The mission of stabilizing and improving the economy is incomplete . . . The United States is now facing what is now called the fiscal cliff . . . and the long-term problem of unsustainable entitlement spending on Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security...has been left largely unaddressed.”

Mr. Woodward also chronicles what can only be called the fragmentation of the Republican Party from the time of the election of Obama.

As House Speaker (under the Republican majority) John Boehner tried to work out a deal to end the debt crisis with Obama, he was sandbagged by various factions within his own party—so that the dealmaking process on the administration's side was anything but well-managed, but turned into low-level farce on the Republican side.

The book is a long, detailed recounting of what happened from the election of President Obama, as the administration, both ruling parties, and the Washington bureaucracy tried to manage the enormous debt that had been built up during the previous administration: at that time, about \$12 trillion or 85% of gross domestic product.

Our leaders went from the extremely intelligent and useful solutions proposed quite early in the process by the Bowles-Simpson committee, and which were very rapidly discarded for the crudest political reasons, to a desperate stop-gap solution reached literally hours before the deadline on July 31, 2011, which was barely functional and pleased nobody.

Mr. Woodward takes a “Barbarians at the Gates” approach to the narrative, meaning that he held long interviews with nearly everyone involved (I think the qualifying “nearly” probably isn't necessary as he has plainly spoken to everyone and his brother; at one point Mr. Woodward cites an email from the president's personal assistant to the girlfriend of a Congressional staff member). Using this saturation reporting, he

reconstructs the thought processes and strategies of the characters at times, and his method is perfectly plausible.

What it does show, however, is that our leaders in Washington have little personality, certainly not nearly as much as the business leaders whose characters are anatomized in "Barbarians." One hopes that they have more heart than wit. Here's a telling quote:

"Whoa! What was this new aggressiveness on the part of the Democrats? Where had it come from," Cantor thought.

Let's be bipartisan, and cite President Obama on former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi: "Nancy has always been there for us; she is absolutely nails."

Although the book begins with clever speech that then Senator Obama makes at an elite Washington gathering, you will look vainly through the remaining 480 odd pages for any more memorable remarks. Nor will you find any from the seven Senators, nine Representatives, the Vice President, the Secretary of the Treasury, or from their distinguished staff members, or the former elected officials cited in the book. It is good to know that the politically supreme are also supremely dull.

The one thing they do which is not dull is to make deals, and that is what most of the book is about. No other book takes us inside the machinery of Washington to the extent that this one does.

What emerges, as Mr. Woodward and others note, is that Obama is not particularly good at the deal making process, and that this is a major hindrance to getting a deal of this magnitude pushed through.

One observer said that the White House was "not managed properly, was dysfunctional." At one point, the four major Congressional leaders meet at the White House and actually ask the President to leave the room so that they can try to make a deal.

Meanwhile, each time a major deal gets close to approval from both sides, the warring factions of the Republican Party tear it apart. House Majority Leader Eric Cantor can't agree with Paul Ryan who can't agree with Boehner. No one knows who can get the votes needed for approval.

Yet, Mr. Woodward makes clear that the Republicans had a great deal of trouble establishing a relationship of trust with the administration. They complained regularly that there was no "outreach." Dave Camp, Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee said that "he was the tax man in a time dominated by debates over taxes, and he still felt like a stranger to the White House and the president.

The result was a lack of trust that made even the most bipartisan legislative efforts impossible at worst, and a chore at best."

Bob Woodward concludes: "Americans are now left with a still struggling economy in the midst of a presidential election. It is a world of the status quo, only worse."

In fact, that does seem to be the problem: our leaders can no longer exceed the status quo, the "New Normal," the low expectations that an utter lack of altruism seems to have led them to.

The one thing that sticks out a mile from this book is that not a single character seems to have the slightest consideration for anything beyond what his or her peers demand. Previous leaders could combine practical politics with vision; like Disraeli they could “climb to the top of the greasy pole” but still look to the stars.

The characters in this book have their vision riveted on the main chance. You may have always believed that about the people in Washington. Bob Woodward has simply documented it for us.

Andrew Rosenbaum has been a journalist for 20 years at *Euromoney*, *TIME*, and *MSN Money*, covering politics, business, and finance. He currently resides in France.

How to Write an Abstract (http://myrin.ursinus.edu/help/resrch_guides/annotate.htm)

An abstract is a summary in your own words, of an article, chapter, or book. It is not evaluative and must not include your personal opinions. The purpose of an abstract is to give a reader sufficient information for him or her to decide whether it would be worthwhile reading the entire article or book. An abstract should aim at giving as much information as possible in as few words as possible. For our purposes this should be a minimum of 150 words and max of 200 (allowance of 20 words below, none under). The abstract should include:

1. Complete bibliographic information
2. A clear statement of the scope and purpose of a work
3. A summary of the contents
4. A statement of the conclusion or results

SAMPLE ABSTRACT

This article examines the relationship between athletes and the structure of the athletic personality, and more precisely, the importance of the choice of a sport and athletics in general in the development of the personality. Forty 17-21 year olds (20 football players and 20 basketball players) were studied, and the data were compared with those from 17 technical school students of the same age. Data from the sports group were significantly different from the control group: the sports group showed freer expression, more aggression, a more evident state of anxiety, and relatively more effective control mechanisms (kinetic responses). Data for the basketballers were significantly different from those of the footballers: the basketballers had a higher tendency toward static kinetics, and the footballers had a higher anxiety index. Results are discussed in relation to the athletic capacity specifically called for in particular types of sports: location on the court in basketball, and active and direct struggle in football. (157).

What is a Reader Response?

A reader response is a short review of an article. Once you have completed the abstract, contextualize your article in the context of the readings for the week. This is not your personal opinion of the article (i.e. whether or not you liked it), but it is your scholarly assessment of the strengths and weaknesses in the arguments, a discussion of contributions in ideas, sources, and themes offered by the author, and how perspective presented in the article is similar or different from those presented in articles on the same theme. This should be completed in a short paragraph of 100-150 words (with word count at end).

Document Format:

- Must be typed in Times-Roman, 12-point font with one-inch margins.
- Single-space the entire document
- Name in the first line
- Bibliographic information about the article in the second line, using bibliography format in CMS style. Hint: I did it above for you.
- Skip a line, put *Abstract* in italics in the next line
- Skip line before beginning abstract described above. Word count at the end
- Skip a line, put *Reader Response* in the next line
- Skip a line before beginning your response in paragraph form as outlined above

Style:

- This is formal scholarly summary of the content of the article, not your personal opinion. Use the format "in this book, X argues Y" rather than "I really hated the way X wrote."
- Use your own words throughout your summary, but do not interpret or use "I"
- Avoid presentism. Don't try to make every article and topic about now
- Do not use quotes or merely paraphrase sentences from the document
- Write clearly and concisely. Edit for excess wordiness
- Use correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation