

College Park High School– U.S. Government / Advanced Placement  
Spring 2021 Research Project

“The 2020 Presidential Election: Continuity or Change?”

Question: Well, the “most important election of all time” is finally done. To the relief of many liberals, Biden won. These elections are always presented as two distinct visions for America’s future. But when you examine the platforms and policies that are put forward by the two major parties, you could reasonably ask this question: How different is our political and economic *status quo* now that Biden and the Democrats have won the executive branch? How different would it have been if Trump had won another 4 years? Using the Political Compass to get a more critical perspective, examine the various positions taken by third party candidates and alternative theories.

Sample Outline

(But feel free to set up this essay as you wish)

I. Introduction / Thesis Statement – a brief statement outlining your position or something that you consider relevant about this issue. Very important: *What is the status quo politically and economically?* (approximately 1 page).

II. Body – the bulk of the paper is here, in data taken from your readings and other evidence you have found to support your position (approximately 18 pages).

- a. Textbook DPE on American elections (Heineman).
- b. The Political Compass, its meaning and applicability to contemporary politics
- c. Traditional interpretations
  1. Democrat / liberal
  2. Republican / conservative
- d. Third party perspectives and candidates
  1. Sifry on third party politics
- e. Critical interpretations (multiple authors)

III. Conclusion – ...If Biden can only get one term in office (and the Republicans manage to remove him), Americans can expect America to be “great again” or will it be in both cases, “business as usual”? (approximately 1 page).

Extras:

1. The paper will be done in APA format. Make sure to include citations *every time you use a statement or an idea from the readings that I have provided, or that you have found in your own independent research*. Using other’s work without providing proper citation is plagiarism and grounds for immediate failure on this essay.

2. An “A” paper will be:

- a) *fully* documented and cited with at least 2 – 3 books;
- b) a *minimum* of 23 pages total (to include a title page, abstract, and reference page, meaning 20 full pages of text analysis);
- c) research *beyond* the authors I provided; and
- d) turned in *on time* (Friday April 30, 2021).