

# Research Project One: Fall 2017 – US Government The Soil of Democracy – Part One

## Is There Active Citizen Participation in the United States?

Final Due Date: Friday, October 20, 2017 (late papers will be marked down one letter grade).

Question: Our discussions surrounding the question of what is necessary for a healthy, vibrant democracy began with the assumption that citizen participation in its various forms was important to a functioning system. From becoming educated about the important issues of the day, to voting, and even to other forms of more direct action, it is argued that participation is a crucial factor. But do we have it? Examine the data to answer the following question: are Americans active citizens and if we are not, how might we regain our desire to be players as opposed to spectators?

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

I. Introduction / Thesis Statement – a brief statement outlining your position or something relevant about this issue.

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

- a. Text DPE – what does your textbook have to say about the relationship between democracy and active citizen participation? If it says little or nothing, why do you think the author avoids this question?
- b. Theory – Irvin and Stansberry; Roberts; Schudson; Bellah and Madsen.
- c. Practice – Cornwall and Coelho; Halpern; Piven and Cloward; Street; and Verba.
- d. Film DPE – notes from *ReGeneration*.
- e. Solutions and Suggestions? – primarily work from Bellah and Madsen but also review others from this theoretical position.
- f. Outside DPE – are there other authors that you have examined that have a unique and/or important perspective on this question? They can of course come from any theoretical perspective.

III. Conclusion – Based on the DPE you have gathered, whether you believe that there is sufficient citizen participation in our democracy, and if not, what will need to be done to increase the people's desire to become more active in politics and economics....

Extras:

1. Use the APA form of citation *every time you use a statement or an idea from the readings that I have provided, or that you found in your own independent research*. Using other's work without providing proper citation is plagiarism and grounds for immediate failure on this essay. The bibliographical data can be found at the top of each reading in bold print.

2. Please type all work on a computer.

3. Please turn in TWO copies of the essay. One will be returned, one I will keep.

4. An "A" paper will be: a) *fully* documented and cited; b) a *minimum* of 10 pages (including title, abstract, and reference pages, meaning 7 pages of text analysis; c) research *beyond* authors provided; and d) turned in *on time* (October 20, 2017).