

**Research Project One: Fall 2019 – US Government / AP
The Soil of Democracy**

Democracy and the Middle Class

Final Due Date: Friday, October 11, 2019 (late papers marked down one letter grade).

Question: Our earlier discussion describing the 5 basic components on which the concept of a “healthy and vibrant” democracy rested included a large middle class. Curiously, both textbooks for this class leave that concept out of the analysis. Nevertheless, political theorists as far back as Aristotle understood the importance of a strong, vibrant economy with a large middle class, which he described as “the most perfect political community” where “the middle class is in control, and outnumbers both of the other classes.” Through your own analysis and evaluation, please respond to these two questions: 1) How important is a strong middle class to the health of a democracy, and 2) what is the condition of the middle class in America today?

**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 the middle class? If it says little or nothing, why do you think the author avoids this question?
- b. A Necessary Condition? – examine data from Aristotle, Parenti, and Gates.
- c. America’s Middle Class? – examine data from Cox and Alm, and Krugman.
- d. Solutions and Suggestions? – primarily work from Alperovitz but also review others from this theoretical position.
- e. Film DPE – notes from *Requiem for the American Dream*.
- e. 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 a middle class is a necessary precondition for a health democracy, whether we have a favorable middle class, and what, if anything, will need to be done if we do not.....

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 Print out only ONE copy.

4. An “A” paper will be: a) *fully* documented and cited; b) a *minimum* of 13 pages (including the title, abstract and reference pages, meaning 10 *full* pages of text analysis; c) research *beyond* authors provided; and d) turned in *on time* (October 11, 2019).