

**Diablo Valley College – San Ramon Valley Campus  
POLSC 120 – 9068: Fall 2017 Research Project**

**The Soil of Democracy**

**Question:** Political scientists have suggested that one reason so few nations have historically practiced democracy is because real democracy seems to require a special environment. Among the things required for democracy to succeed (the “soil”), is active citizen participation, a favorable economy (strong, vibrant middle class) and widespread education. Review some of the “critical” data below and evaluate whether or not the soil here in the U.S. is sufficiently fertile for democracy to succeed.

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

**I. Intro / 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 this position.

- A. Active citizen participation** – do citizens participate in this democracy? Examine the readings from Roeb, Mueller and others.
- B. A favorable economy** – does the United States have a strong and vibrant middle class? How does a stagnating middle class impact democracy? Readings from Cox, Krugman, Lind, and United for a Fair Economy.
- C. Widespread education** – are citizens of the US sufficiently educated on issues of political importance? How does a lack of education affect our ability to make the right choices? Readings from Boyer, Gatto, Kozol, Marciano, and Starr.
- D. Outside DPE** – are there other authors that you have examined that have a unique and/or important position on this question? They can come from any theoretical perspective.

**III. Conclusion** – based on the critical data you have researched, how fertile is the soil (i.e. the amount of active citizen participation, a thriving middle class, and an educated public) for democracy to grow in the U.S.? Your final thoughts and conclusions.

**Extras:**

**1.** The paper will be done in APA format. Make sure to include a citation *every time you use a statement or idea from the readings that I have provided, or that you have found in your own independent research.* Using other’s ideas or 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 13 pages in length (to include the title, abstract and reference page, meaning 10 *full* pages of text analysis);
- c) research *beyond* the authors provided;
- d) turned in *on time* (October 16, 2017).