PART I: Watch the movie “Mr. Smith Goes to Washington” and answer the following questions.

Characters:

Jefferson Smith- Newly appointed senator. A simple, honest, patriotic man, who works with children and helps people in needs; leader and organizer of the Boy Rangers (like the Boy Scouts).

Senator Joseph Paine- The senior senator from the state. He is very powerful and respected in the Senate. He knew, and was close friends with, Jefferson Smith’s father when he was younger. He is in conflict about trying to do the right thing and being influenced to do the wrong thing by Jim Taylor.

Jim Taylor- A businessman and political party boss from the state. He has a lot of power and influence in the state; kind of runs things from behind the scenes.

Miss Saunders- Senator Paine’s secretary. She is assigned to help Mr. Smith. She is jaded and disillusioned by what she has seen working in Washington DC.

Governor Huber “Happy” Hopper- Governor of the state in the movie. Does whatever Jim Taylor tells him to do.

Chick McGann- Jim Taylor’s helper.

Diz Moore- Newspaper reporter who covers the Senate for his newspaper. A friend of Miss Saunders.

Susan Paine- Senator Paine’s daughter.

About the Movie:

This movie takes place in a fictional U.S. state and in our nation’s capital of Washington DC. When one of the senators from the fictional state dies, the Governor has to select a replacement. Jim Taylor, the political party boss in the state, and the other senator from the state, Joe Paine, want the new senator the governor picks to be weak-minded and easy to control. Jim Taylor and Senator Paine have a secret, illegal land-buying deal (Willet Creek) going on, and they want to make sure the new senator does not interfere with their plans.
Movie Questions:

1. What reasons do the Governor’s children give as to why they want their father to pick Mr. Smith as the new senator?

2. What does Mr. Smith say he would like to do on the morning before he goes to the Senate for the first time?

3. When the newspaper reporters interview Mr. Smith, what does he tell them he would like to do for the country?

4. Why is Mr. Smith angry and punching all of the newspaper reporters?

5. Why is Willet Creek important to Mr. Smith? Why is it important to Jim Taylor and Senator Paine?

6. Why does Susan Paine keep Mr. Smith away from the Senate?

7. What does Senator Paine accuse Mr. Smith of doing?

8. After the Senate committee hearing, where does Mr. Smith go? Who finds him? What do they decide to do?

9. When Mr. Smith returns to the Senate and takes the floor to speak, what does he do to prove that he is innocent?

10. How do the children help Mr. Smith?

11. In the end, what happens to Senator Paine?

12. What qualities of good citizenship does Mr. Smith demonstrate?

13. What did you learn about the legislative process and how a bill becomes a law from watching the movie?
PART II: 2016 Presidential Election Diary

It is an exciting year to be taking an American Government course! This election cycle has been quite interesting up to this point and will likely get even more interesting as we approach November. With both parties holding their nominating conventions this summer there will be lots to follow in the news – especially with the DNC being held here in Philadelphia!

For this part of your summer assignment I want you to keep a weekly diary of events associated with the election. The requirement is that you have one entry per week. You can choose to focus on a particular event/person/story or you can comment on the election as a whole for that week. I am looking for you to pay attention to the events of the election and to be sure you are paying attention to both sides (or a third side if that situation should arise!). There are so many resources out there so you need to pick wisely. I ask that you stay away from news channels that are particularly partisan (like FOX news or MSNBC). PBS is a great resource and has several wonderful news programs. As far as print media, you will never be able to escape bias completely but I ask you to stick to the major print sources such as The New York Times and Wall Street Journal. If you follow a story that you notice is covered one way in one source, but differently in another, that would be a great thing to write about.

Things to consider as you write your weekly entry: How is each candidate being covered in the media? Is there a common lead story being covered on all media outlets? Are there topics being ignored? Is the media reporting on issues or on controversies? How are the candidates being treated fairly? Unfairly? What predictions can you make about this election at this point? What questions do you have about this election? Compare/Contrast tone and content of the two convention.

This is one of the few times I will allow you to use first person for an assignment. I really will look at it as a diary, not an essay or other formal writing assignment. You must write in full sentences but observations can vary quite a bit.

One entry per week for the weeks listed below. It doesn’t matter whether you choose to make your observations at the beginning, middle, or end of the week. Ten entries total.

Week of June 19th
Week of June 26th
Week of July 3rd Happy 4th of July
Week of July 10th
Week of July 17th This is the week of the Republican National Convention
Week of July 24th This is the week of the Democratic National Convention
Week of July 31st
Week of August 7th
Week of August 14th
Week of August 21st

The assignment must be typed in proper MLA format (12 pt font, 1 inch margins, Times New Roman font, double spaced). You will hand this in on turnitin.com in the first days of school. I will reach out to you that first week with information for joining my class on turnitin and instructions on how to hand it in.