

College Park High School – U.S. Government  
Final Thesis Project – Spring 2026

“The Four Theories of American Government”

**Final Due Date: Monday, May 18, 2026** (this is a “drop-dead” date. No papers accepted after this date).

**Question:** Explain the four competing theories of American government. By examining various historical and contemporary aspects of our government (i.e. the tension between analyzing politics institutionally or structurally and the necessity and/or possibility for deep change in the status quo in presidential elections), create an overall thesis suggesting which of the four appears to be the more descriptive with regard to what textbooks describe as the “necessary and ordinary operations of the American government.”

**I. Title Page** (page number 1)

**II. Abstract Page** (page number 2)

**III. Main Body** (beginning with page number 3)

a. Introduction / Thesis Statement – a brief description of the four theories followed by a brief statement of your thesis outlining the details of how you will explore this overall question [*what kind of government do we have?*] (approximately 1 – 2 pages).

b. Why do most government textbooks insist on an institutional approach? Does ignoring the economy (capitalism) make it more difficult to explore other theories of American government? (first research project – approximately 6 pages of text analysis).

c. If both major parties inhabit the first quadrant on the political compass, does that mean we are condemned to live under an authoritarian capitalist structure indefinitely? Are there other ways of politico-economic organization that would be viable and more in line with our interests? (second research project – approximately 6 pages of text analysis).

d. Conclusion – a wrap-up of your thesis and the conclusions that you have come to based on the evidence you have uncovered [*what kind of government do we want?*] (approximately 1 – 2 pages).

**IV. Reference Pages** – please complete in APA style (continue page numbering through last reference page).

1. Make sure to 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 another author’s work without providing proper citation is plagiarism and grounds for immediate failure on this essay.

2. The paper will be typed. **You will upload this final paper to Turnitin.** Information on uploading your paper will be available on the class website.

3. An “A” paper will be:

a) *fully documented and cited* using the APA format

b) a **minimum of 18 - 22 pages** in length

c) research *beyond* authors provided

d) turned in *on time* (**May 18, 2026**).