

Diablo Valley College – San Ramon Valley Campus
POLSC 121-9084 Spring 2026 Research Project

“The 2024 Elections and the Status Quo”

Question: Trump 2.0 has arrived. Dems say democracy is dead. Repubs say the second time’s a charm. As usual, both sides are convinced that their candidate will or would have changed America’s direction. But aren’t these elections always presented as two distinct visions for America’s future? Yet if you examine the platforms and policies that are put forward by the two major parties, you could reasonably ask this question: How different does our political and economic status quo change, regardless of who wins? Given the outcome, are there things that could change, for better or worse, after this election? Using the Political Compass to get a more critical perspective, examine the various positions taken by third party candidates and alternative theories.

Sample Outline

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

I. Introduction / Thesis Statement – a brief statement outlining your position or something that you consider relevant about this issue. **Very important: What is the status quo politically and economically? (1 page).**

II. Body – the bulk of the paper is here, in data taken from your readings and other evidence you have found to support your position (10 pages).

- a. Textbook DPE on American elections (Heineman).
- b. The Political Compass, its meaning and applicability to contemporary politics
- c. Traditional interpretations
 1. Democrat / liberal
 2. Republican / conservative
- d. Third party perspectives and candidates
 1. Sifry on third party politics
- e. Critical interpretations (multiple authors)

III. Conclusion – ...If Biden can only get one term in office (and the Republicans manage to remove him), Americans can expect America to be “great again” or will it be, in both cases, “business as usual”? (1 page).

Extras:

1. The paper will be done in APA format. Make sure to include citations *every time you use a statement or an idea from the readings that I have provided, or that you have found in your own independent research*. Using other’s work (including A.I.) 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 15 pages (to include a title page, abstract, and reference page, **meaning 12 full pages of text analysis**)
- c) research *beyond* the authors I provided
- d) turned in *on time* (April 28, 2026).