

AP Seminar  
Summer Assignment 2023-2024  
Bellmore-Merrick Central High School District - Calhoun High School

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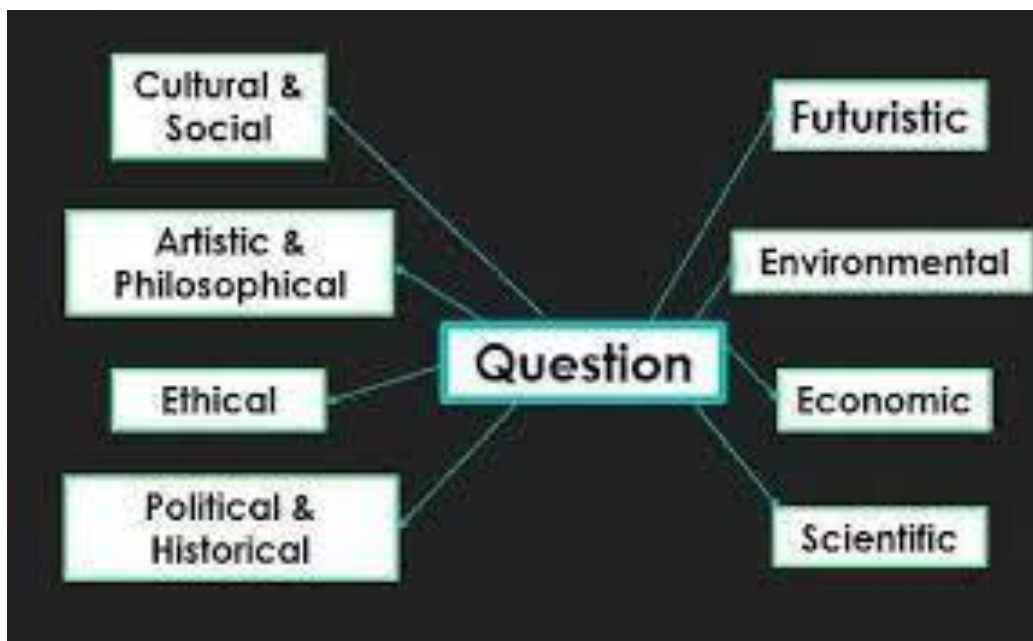
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AP Seminar is a course unlike any other that you have taken before. While we'll spend the first half of the year learning new skills and building each other up, you'll spend the second half of the year applying those skills when choosing what you wish to explore. During your exploration, you will read and write more than you ever have before, you will learn about and research topics of interest, and you will encounter voices and perspectives that reshape your understanding of these topics, their problems, and their solutions.

In the spirit of this course, we would like to invite you to join the AP Seminar Google Classroom page. Class code: [xrbjixu](#)

This page will be your “go to” when contacting us, staying up to date on all assignments, and for submitting your work.

During the school year, the majority of our reading will be rooted in non-fiction texts. The summer, then, is the perfect time to explore different forms of media that will positively influence and impact your own knowledge, and therefore your ability to analyze and interpret the views of others. Topics and issues that relate to politics & history, society & culture, science, economics, art & philosophy, ethics, the environment, and/or the future will be at the core of this course.



The question at the center of this graphic is determined by the readers of articles in an effort to reveal the purpose behind an argument, idea, or societal concept. We will explore all sorts of questions during this course as well as develop our own.

In an effort to prepare for this course, we ask that you complete the assignments below. All work should be typed, double-spaced, in Times New Roman size 12 font, and have an appropriate heading (your name, our names, the date, and the title of the assignment in the top left corner).

### **ASSIGNMENT 1:**

*Due July 30th* - submit your assignment to Google Classroom.

**Step 1.** Go to the website: <https://www.nytimes.com/section/opinion>

**NOTE: You can only access 3 articles per month for free, so be careful in selecting an article; it is advised that if you don't plan to sit and read it all at once, you should copy and paste the content or download it because you will not be able to access it repeatedly.**

**Step 2.** This website has various current event topics, each with varying perspectives. Scroll down to the tab labeled "Latest." Select an article that you are interested in reading.

**Step 3.** Create a Google doc with a heading and then read the article and identify the following:

- a. In one sentence, write the author's thesis.
- b. To what extent is the author's evidence/reasoning valid? Explain.
- c. What is one weakness in the author's reasoning?
- d. Copy and paste 2 direct quotes that best represent this article.
- e. Evaluate the article's effectiveness. Is it convincing? Why or why not?
- f. Do you agree with the author? Why or why not?
- g. Now, locate one additional article/video on this topic that either agrees or disagrees with this article's reasoning. Provide the link to the article.

**Step 4.** Submit this assignment

- a. Be sure to include your name on the assignment and clearly label your sections, following the same scheme used above (a, b, c).
- b. Write formally with regard for the Standard Conventions of English and keep this to no more than two pages. We know we are asking you to do some work, but it isn't meant to overwhelm you.

## ASSIGNMENT 2:

Due September 4th - submit your assignment to Google Classroom.

**Step 1.** Go to the website: [https://www.ted.com/playlists/487/for\\_the\\_love\\_of\\_facts](https://www.ted.com/playlists/487/for_the_love_of_facts)

**Note:** It's a good idea to download the TED app on your phone because then you can watch these videos anywhere you go.

**Step 2.** This site will provide you with the opportunity to view 8 different videos. You are to watch any 4 of the TED Talks that interest you and while doing so make notes on each of the TED Talks in the space provided. This document is already linked and labeled on our Google Classroom page, so you can access it there as well.

Be sure to follow along with each TED Talk carefully. If there is something/someone mentioned that you have no reference for, pause, look it up, and then continue so you can fully contextualize the information being covered. This is a habit you will want to develop now as it will become an essential part of our learning experience next year. While you take notes on the content of each presentation, you should also pay close attention to how well each of the speakers presents. (For example—notice their vocal variety, body language/hand gestures, eye contact, casual/conversational tone, and presentation slides. These are all presentation techniques you will have to master to be successful in the AP Capstone Program.)

TED Talk	Notes
<p><b>“Watson, Jeopardy and me, the obsolete know-it-all”</b> by Ken Jennings (17:52)</p> <p><i>Trivia whiz Ken Jennings has made a career as a keeper of facts; he holds the longest winning streak in history on the US quiz show Jeopardy. But in 2011, he played a challenge match against IBM's supercomputer Watson — and lost. With humor and humility, Jennings tells us how it felt to have a computer literally beat him at his own game, and makes the case for good old fashioned human knowledge.</i></p>	<p>What is the speaker truly trying to address?</p> <p>What evidence do they provide?</p> <p>Is this a topic you believe to be researchable? Explain</p> <p>List 2 questions that this talk makes you want to ask or find the answer to.</p>

<p><b>“Why people believe weird things”</b> by Michael Shermer (13:25)</p> <p><i>Why do people see the Virgin Mary on a cheese sandwich or hear demonic lyrics in “Stairway to Heaven?” Using video and music, skeptic Michael Shermer shows how we convince ourselves to believe —and overlook the facts.</i></p>	<p>What is the speaker truly trying to address?</p> <p>What evidence do they provide?</p> <p>Is this a topic you believe to be researchable? Explain</p> <p>List 2 questions that this talk makes you want to ask or find the answer to.</p>
<p><b>“Why we should trust scientists”</b> by Naomi Oreskes (19:14)</p> <p><i>Many of the world's biggest problems require asking questions of scientists —but why should we believe what they say? Historian of science Naomi Oreskes thinks deeply about our relationship to belief and draws out three problems with common attitudes toward scientific inquiry — and gives her own reasoning for why we ought to trust science.</i></p>	<p>What is the speaker truly trying to address?</p> <p>What evidence do they provide?</p> <p>Is this a topic you believe to be researchable? Explain</p> <p>List 2 questions that this talk makes you want to ask or find the answer to.</p>
<p><b>“How to separate fact and fiction online”</b></p>	<p>What is the speaker truly trying to address?</p>

<p>by Markham Nolan (13:29)</p> <p><i>By the end of this talk, there will be 864 more hours of video on YouTube and 2.5 million more photos on Facebook and Instagram. So how do we sort through the deluge? At the TEDSalon in London, Markham Nolan shares the investigative techniques he and his team use to verify information in real-time, to let you know if that Statue of Liberty image has been doctored or if that video leaked from Syria is legitimate.</i></p>	<p>What evidence do they provide?</p> <p>Is this a topic you believe to be researchable? Explain</p> <p>List 2 questions that this talk makes you want to ask or find the answer to.</p>
<p><b>“The danger of science denial”</b> by Michael Specter (19:01)</p> <p><i>Vaccine-autism claims, “Frankenfood” bans, the herbal cure craze: All point to the public's growing fear (and, often, outright denial) of science and reason, says Michael Specter. He warns the trend spells disaster for human progress.</i></p>	<p>What is the speaker truly trying to address?</p> <p>What evidence do they provide?</p> <p>Is this a topic you believe to be researchable? Explain</p> <p>List 2 questions that this talk makes you want to ask or find the answer to.</p>
<p><b>“Why you think you’re right—even if you’re wrong”</b></p>	<p>What is the speaker truly trying to address?</p>

<p>by Julia Galef (11:37)</p> <p><i>Perspective is everything, especially when it comes to examining your beliefs. Are you a soldier, prone to defending your viewpoint at all costs —or a scout, spurred by curiosity? Julia Galef examines the motivations behind these two mindsets and how they shape the way we interpret information, interweaved with a compelling history lesson from 19th-century France. When your steadfast opinions are tested, Galef asks: “What do you most yearn for? Do you yearn to defend your own beliefs or do you yearn to see the world as clearly as you possibly can?”</i></p>	<p>What evidence do they provide?</p> <p>Is this a topic you believe to be researchable? Explain</p> <p>List 2 questions that this talk makes you want to ask or find the answer to.</p>
<p><b>“Battling bad science”</b> by Ben Goldacre (14:19)</p> <p><i>Every day there are news reports of new health advice, but how can you know if they’re right? Doctor and epidemiologist Ben Goldacre shows us, at high speed, the ways evidence can be distorted, from the blindingly obvious nutrition claims to the very subtle tricks of the pharmaceutical industry.</i></p>	<p>What is the speaker truly trying to address?</p> <p>What evidence do they provide?</p> <p>Is this a topic you believe to be researchable? Explain</p> <p>List 2 questions that this talk makes you want to ask or find the answer to.</p>
<p><b>“On being wrong”</b></p>	<p>What is the speaker truly trying to address?</p>

by Kathryn Schulz  
(17:51)

*Most of us will do anything to avoid being wrong. But what if we're wrong about that?*

*"Wrongologist" Kathryn Schulz makes a compelling case for not just admitting but embracing our fallibility.*

What evidence do they provide?

Is this a topic you believe to be researchable? Explain

List 2 questions that this talk makes you want to ask or find the answer to.

**Step 3:** Be sure that you have answered all questions and be sure to submit your work to the Google Classroom assignment.