Writing Topic and Discussion Focus Questions: What Role Does Political Culture Play in Democratization, and how is American Support for Democracy Changing?

We are almost to the end of the course, and **this is the last topic on which you can write an essay** if you still need to. Everyone needs to submit three papers in this class—two discussion topic papers, plus the self-assessment.

This week's readings and class meetings focus on the topic of political culture, specifically the sources of our political beliefs and values. The discussion seminar at the end of the week will examine whether there is a set of "cultural" requirements for a country to become and stay a democracy.

Focus questions to prepare for our discussion session: As you prepare for classes, please make sure to review the focus questions in the unit's study guide. Even if you are not writing a paper this particular topic, the discussion day's material is covered on exams, and you are expected to come to our discussion section having completed the block's readings and prepared to fully participate in our discussion.

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This topic's writing prompt is:

> *What factors are essential for a country to have a democratic political culture, and why does having a certain type of political culture matter for democratic consolidation and stability over the long run? What evidence is there that support for democracy may be in decline in the US and elsewhere? What factors seem to be behind lagging support and should we be worried about the long-term prospects for America's democratic political culture?*
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> *Note: Do not answer these questions one after another. Write an analytical essay that has a main argument that responds to the prompt's questions as a whole. Systematically develop and defend that argument using evidence from the week's readings.*

If you write on this topic, your paper needs to be at least 1,500 words in length. Keep in mind as you answer this question that the main purpose of this assignment is for you to make a reasoned, well-defended (by the readings and specific evidence wherever possible) argument that engages class concepts and materials. **For you to do well on the paper, it needs to be clear that you have carefully reviewed the relevant assignment from the full week's reading on this topic** (i.e., not just the readings for the discussion day). Please **do not use any outside readings or other sources unless you specifically have cleared doing so** (i.e., you may not use the internet, unassigned authors, or any other student's work, to help you write the paper).

To be considered as having been submitted on time, do the following:

(1) Email your paper as a PDF or MS Word or RTF attached document (if you send the document as an e-mail message, in pages format, or as a link to a cloud server document or drive—such as Google Docs/Drive—the paper will not be accepted until it submitted in one of the acceptable formats and late penalties will apply).
(2) Send the email and attachment to: msetzler@highpoint.edu. Include a short note explaining what the attachment is.
(3) Make sure the message's subject line is: PSC1010 paper 3.

(4) Submit a hard copy of the paper at the start of class. Ideally, your paper will be stapled, but at a minimum, it should be paperclipped. Use double-spacing, and number your pages.

Before you begin writing, carefully review the grading assessment criteria for this assignment (the grading rubric for essay grading in lower division courses is on the course website, under the "Student Resources" tab).

You also should review carefully the course website handouts addressing citation expectations and the syllabus policies on "Academic dishonesty" and "Using artificial intelligence assistants, including ChatGPT and similar technologies." I have elaborated a separate handout on the legitimate and effective use of AI resources in this class. You need to (re)read this doument prior to starting any paper for this class:
https://marksetzler.org/generalissues/AI.htm

The paper's citations and bibliography must carefully follow one of three formats most used in the social sciences: University of Chicago, the APA, or the APSA. For your convenience, my website provides a handout with many formatting examples using the APSA style. You need to use page-specific citations so that your instructor can quickly verify your interpretation of cited material. Without exception, instances of plagiarism (see the syllabus statement) will be reported and punished according to university policy.

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