Welcome to AP Capstone Seminar!

We are so glad that you have chosen to take this class and are looking forward to working with you in the fall. In preparation for the research you will do throughout the school year, you will be completing a summer assignment that allows you to delve into current events that interest you. Read the instructions carefully, and please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions. This assignment will be collected 3 weeks into the school year. Although it is not required that this assignment is completed during the summer, it is highly suggested that you work on it during the summer in order to inform yourself of ongoing current events and in order to help you develop research topics later in the year.

Sincerely,

Ms. Faircloth & Ms. Scott
AP Capstone Seminar

The instructions are on next page. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Ms. Faircloth at fairclhe@pwcs.edu.
Instructions

Current Events Journal

Throughout the summer you will collect and reflect on information about three current events of your choosing. Each current event should fall under one of the categories listed below (make sure that each of your 3 current events falls under a different category). You will collect 5 different sources for each current event, create an MLA works cited page for the 5 sources (be sure to use MLA 8*), and answer the 3 reflection questions for each current event. Your sources can include newspaper/magazine articles, books, academic journals, videos, etc. Please type your responses.

Categories:

- Culture
- Economics
- Education
- Entertainment
- Global Issues
- Medicine/Health
- Politics
- Sports
- Technology

Reflection Questions:

Read your sources and use them to help you write a paragraph in response to each of the following questions. Be sure to include and cite information from the sources in your paragraphs.

1. Context: Describe what has been happening, who is involved, where it is happening, how long it has been going on for, how it has changed, and any other information you feel is important.

2. Perspectives: Describe the views/opinions that different individuals or groups of people might have on the issue. Who has a stake/interest in the issue? Whose perspectives are represented in your sources? What do they believe about the issue? Are they doing anything about it?

3. Implications/Conclusions: What impacts/effects might this issue have on the country or the world? What are possible solutions in order to resolve or improve the issue?

*You can find information on MLA 8 citations on the website “OWL at Purdue.”
Sample Journal Entry

**Current Event:** Should certain vaccines be required for people?

**Reflection:**

1. **Context**

   The subject of whether or not vaccines should be mandatory in the United States has been a debate for a very long time. Many people say that they should be in order to prevent diseases and to save people’s lives, but others believe that giving healthy people vaccines could be a huge health risk and cause fatal side effects (“Should”). As more vaccines become available, the debate becomes more relevant. Some parents are afraid that vaccinating their children could increase their chances of developing autism or cause them to get life-threatening side effects, but a child is much less likely to develop a side effect than their chances are of surviving if they contract a disease that they were not immunized for. It is all about weighing the pros and cons (Heyworth). People who oppose vaccines may explain that people should not just trust everything that their doctors tell them, because they could be wrong (“Six”), and people who are for vaccines say that they’re safe and could protect a person and their future generations (“Five”). Many U.S. states are debating whether or not they should make vaccines mandatory, but some already have. California has recently made a bill requiring some vaccines in order for parents to send their children to school, otherwise they would have to be home schooled (Carroll). This has caused major debate because some parents feel like their parenting rights are being taken, but others are relieved and feel like their children will be safer. Overall, the ongoing debate continues about whether certain vaccines should be mandatory.

2. **Perspectives**

   The people who would be most interested in this issue would be parents (who most likely have younger children). Many people have different opinions on the issue. Some want it to be a requirement that people get certain vaccines, and some want it to be a choice in whether people need or don’t need them. For example, the article “Should Vaccines be Mandatory?” presents the perspective of a parent who states that “What goes into your child’s body—if you don’t have any other right in the world—you should have the right to determine what is injected into their bodies” (Carroll). The same article also presents the perspective of medical professionals, who are frustrated with anti-vaccination sentiment because it makes children who are
too young or too sick to receive vaccinations susceptible to potentially life threatening illnesses (Carroll). In some states, there are requirements with certain vaccines in order for a child to go to school with other kids. While these laws exist on the state level, there is not federal requirement for vaccination. The article “Five Important Reasons to Vaccinate Your Child” was produced by Vaccines.gov, a “federal government website managed by the U.S. Department of Health.” This article presents the perspective of the government, making it clear that the federal government is in favor of vaccines. This is most likely because they believe that vaccines are an effective way to protect the health of U.S. citizens. In fact, they cite the fact that the smallpox vaccine has “eradicated that disease worldwide” in order to illustrate the effectiveness of vaccines. Overall, the debate between whether certain vaccines should be required or not has been/will be continuing for a while longer. Because of the controversy surrounding this issue, it would be hard for states to make requirements with the topic.

3. Implications/Conclusions

There could be multiple outcomes if a law is made/not made concerning vaccines. If requirements are made, people could be safer and protected from diseases, but there could be more cases of dangerous side effects. The article “Should vaccines be mandatory?” suggests that if states pass laws requiring vaccinations, those who are already opposed to vaccinations will become even more opposed to vaccines and that the law will potentially turn parents who are on the fence about vaccines against them (Carroll). However, if no requirements are made, diseases that are currently eradicated, could potentially grow and spread through the population. According to pediatrician Lance Rodewald, “In order for a community to be fully protected against a disease, 80 to 90 percent of its population needs to have been vaccinated” (Heyworth). If there are certain vaccine requirements in order to go to certain schools/have certain jobs, it would encourage most parents to vaccinate their children, but also allow parents to have the freedom of choice. Another potential solution would be for pro-vaccine advocates to spread information about the benefits of vaccines in order to fight against misconceptions amongst parents. In reality, it is almost impossible for the government to satisfy everyone’s opinions with this debate, so states should look at which option has the most positive impact on their overall population when deciding whether or not to require vaccinations.


