

Assigned: Friday, October 27, 2006
Due: First draft: Monday, November 6, 2006
Final draft: Monday, November 13, 2006
Submission: Pogo's inbox AND hardcopy
Filename: Democracy####.doc
Format: Word document, 10 point times roman font, double spaced.
Length: 6 pages maximum

Topic: In the United States, our government is a limited representative democracy. Not everyone can vote (for example, people under 18 years of age). Additionally, we vote only for representatives rather directly than on issues. When we vote on some representatives (usually in local elections), the decision is based on a simple majority. For others, it is based on a count of "districts". For others, the popular election results merely impel the Electoral College, who really determine the winners.

At the national level, policy in the US is mostly dictated by conflicts between the Democratic Party and the Republican Party, rather than by national interest. Those who run for office pay lip service to what they believe will make them electable rather than effective. A significant portion of the job description of every elected official is to be re-elected. There is considerable ongoing debate about campaign finance reform (and other reforms to the process).

Laws are passed in groups because our representatives vote only for items that directly benefit their personal constituents. In most cases, representatives are not able to only vote for the portions they truly believe in. Constitutional amendments are rare and difficult to enact.

You are to critique, specifically and in detail, any aspects of your choosing that relate to American democracy and government in 2006. Although I have suggested issues related to voting, lawmaking, and the two-party system, you are free to include other issues related to the system we use. Your thesis will be to suggest specific system-wide changes to our democratic processes.

Alternatively, you may contrast the government depicted in Heinlein's *Starship Troopers* with our existing government, indicating which aspects are better and which are worse. However, be warned: this topic is the same as the previous topic, with the extra work of including the comparison!

Bibliography: As needed; on a page at the end of the paper.
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