**AP US Government**
**Summer Reading Assignment 2019**
**Required reading: Issenberg, Sasha. The Victory Lab: The Secret Science of Winning**
**Campaigns. Broadway Books, 2012.**
**ISBN:9780307954794**.

In order to acclimate students to the thought process used by political scientists as they seek to understand political goings on via a more scientific perspective, those entering AP US Government will be required to read the book *The Victory Lab: The Secret Science of Winning Campaigns* by Sasha Issenberg.

In addition to reading *The Victory Lab*, students are required to either answer the questions below or to provide a paragraph of at least 150 words finding examples of the behaviors documented in a given chapter in a political campaign from the past 12 months of the assignment, depending on what is asked for in each section. Answers to questions should be provided in complete sentences. All parts of this assignment are to be typed. Answers will be graded on correctness. Direct quotations can be used from the book to provide evidence to support answers but must be cited using MLA format. Responses for each question will vary in length but should be no longer than two to three sentences each. An example for a paragraph response is below.

**All answers are to be submitted in Times New Roman, 12 pt font the Wednesday after school starts.**

If at any time there are any questions on the assignment, students can email **c.point@runnels.org** for clarification or explanations as needed.

**Example paragraph talking about the fallibility of public opinion polling:**
During the 2016 Presidential election, we saw a very problematic use of public opinion polls. Consistently, most polls done by traditional campaign or political polling outfits showed Hillary Clinton winning a general election against Donald Trump. However, the actual results of the election did not match with the hundreds of polls that had been released through the course of the general campaign. Why was this? One reason is because of exactly who was being polled. By not using completely representative sample of the American population and polling only "likely" voters, pollsters created a narrative that was different than the one that we saw play out on Election Night 2016. By not including or seeking responses from those that were considered "unlikely to vote", pollsters failed to capture the way that Donald Trump motivated those that had previously been apathetic or dissatisfied by the traditional political process. These voters would be key in Trump's victory in major swing states such as Michigan and Pennsylvania.

# Reading Questions and Paragraph Response Topics:

### Prologue:
1. What are the various methods described in the prologue of contacting voters in Colorado?
2. What was unique about the messages the voters received?
3. Which method was more successful?
4. What is the issue with voter turnout?
5. How have data-driven methods changed the political process?

### Chapter 1: Blinded by Political Science
1. What is political science? How has the discipline changes over the years?
2. Why is it important to explain voter behavior?
3. What was Gosnell's major publication? How did it affect the work of political scientists?
4. What caused the infamous "Dewey defeats Truman" headline?
5. Looking to the 2016 Presidential race, are Presidential candidates still making mistakes that are similar to their predecessors? Provide at least two instances of events that have occurred during the 2016 Presidential race that are similar to two historic errors made by past Presidential candidates mentioned in this chapter.

### Chapter 2: A Game of Margins
Find a recent (With a year of May 2018 so you may not use the 2016 Presidential race) past political campaign where the margin of victory was below 4% (meaning that the victor received less than 4% of the vote more than the loser). Races can be at any level of government- local, state, or federal. What were the key issues of this race? Give a roughly 150 word summary of the race and why the margin of victory was so small.

### Chapter 3: The New Haven Experiments
1. What is Rational Choice Theory? Who developed this concept?
2. Using rational choice theory, what are some reasons people might choose not to vote?
3. What was unique about the techniques that Green and Gerber used to try to understand voter why people would choose to vote?
4. What did this experiment discover? What is the problem of collective action?

### Chapter 4: The Two Percent Solution
Find a recent past political campaign where the margin of victory was greater than 4% (meaning that the victor received more than 4% of the vote more than the loser). This should be a state level campaign but it can come from any of the 50 states. What led to this victory being a "blow-out" as compared to the race detailed in this chapter. Your answer should be roughly 150 words.

## Chapter 5: "You Mean You Don't Do This in Politics?"
1. What are the American National Election Studies? What are they used for?
2. What are "perception analyzers" and why were they important to work in political polling?
3. What made Michigan different when it came to mobilizing voters?
4. What made Gage's targeting techniques similar to those used in business?

5. What are two of ways we saw Gage's targeting methods being adapted and used in the 2016 Presidential elections? Which campaigns utilized these methods?

## Chapter 6: Geeks Versus the Gurus
Find a race other than the 2016 Presidential election where a non-professional candidate managed to beat out an "establishment candidate" or traditional politician/traditional candidate. What types of unconventional campaigning did they do? Why did they win? Who helped them- geeks or gurus? Your answer should be roughly 150 words.

## Chapter 7: When Shame Pays a House Call
1. Who is the person being followed in this chapter?
2. What did he study before political science? How did this change how he viewed questions that needed to be asked regarding political campaigns?
3. What are social norms? How were they applied to political campaigns via Rogers' work?

## Chapter 8: Showdown at the Oasis
1. Which campaign were the academics invited to be part of?
2. How did Carney run this particular campaign?
3. How did the academics build on Green and Gerber's work?

## Chapter 9: Models and the Matrix?
1. What was the VAN? Who created it?
2. How was what was learned from the Obama campaign translated to other political campaigns?
3. What is a "hard-id"? Why is it important?
4. How did Strasma develop a way to "hard-id" those in the Iowa Caucus? Why is the Iowa Caucus so important?

## Chapter 10: The Soul of a New Machine
How would other campaigns go onto use the findings made during the 2006 campaign chronicled in Chapter 8? How did we see these same tactics used in the 2015 Louisiana Gubernatorial race? How did we see these same tactics used in the 2016 Presidential campaign? Compare and contrast the 2006 campaign, the 2015 Louisiana Governor's Race, and the 2016 Presidential campaign. Your answer should be roughly 150 words.