

American Government

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Photo-Essay Assignment – Political Participation

Description

In this assignment, you will have the opportunity to attend in person or online a political event that takes place in New York City. A political event could be a variety of things: for example, 1) a public debate between politicians or scholars or journalists or other public figures in a panel discussion on societal and political issues, 2) a peaceful public protest with a political cause in any open public space, 3) a political party's convention, 4) a trade union meeting, 5) volunteering for a political candidate, 5) a community meeting to discuss issues that affect the community with political ramifications, etc. The purpose of the event **must be political**, as we have been unpacking *politics* in class through the following lenses: democratic processes (by way of direct or indirect democracy), governmental policy, civil liberties, and/or civil rights-related issues. In short, any organized event that is relevant to the aforementioned approaches of politics qualifies for the purpose of this assignment.

One way to find an event is through Eventbrite, by using the category of “Government and Politics” under filters: <https://www.eventbrite.com/d/ny--new-york/government--events/government-and-politics/> Once you find a political event that interests you, I strongly encourage you to run the information of the event by me before attending and writing.

During your attendance, you would need to take 5 images (or 5 screenshots if it takes place online), which you will then use to create a photo-essay for the purpose of describing and evaluating what went on during that event. Your photo-essay should be between **700-1000** (or more if you wish) words in length, incorporating the following:

1. A title page that includes your name, name of the event you have attended, and one of your photos as a “cover” image.
2. A 200-word introduction, describing in detail what action, event or campaign did you attend. What challenges/concerns did you face (if any)?
3. Your 5 images will follow, each on a single page and preferably centered on the page. Each image must feature a title or caption in the following format: Title or Caption, Location, Event Name, and Date.
4. Then, provide a narrative context for your images by telling a story. This should be a 500-800 word narrative in which you will:

- a. Think critically of the separate items at the event: themes, goals, speakers, etc.
- b. Use course material that we have discussed in class to relate on themes, topics or ideas observed in the event.
- c. Use material from other sources in the specific context of the event that you attended. These may be media coverage, books, journals, etc. (minimum 3 – maximum 5 sources).
- d. Elaborate on the importance of political participation. Why does it matter? Think of the event you had attended in a national or global context, for example, the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, the economy, racial and class inequality, polarization in Congress and US society, climate change, or other current challenges the nation faces.
- e. Conclude your essay by expressing your feelings about the event. Note the successes or failures of the event based on your personal judgment (speaker, people’s participation, outcome, etc.). Would you participate in any political activity in the future. Why yes or why not?

Format and Style

- **700-1000 (or more) words**, Times New Roman, double-spaced, 12-point size, 1-inch margins.
 - Word Format preferred.
 - MLA or Chicago Manual style for references (if you bring external sources).
 - Bibliography for external sources (not included in the word count requirement).
- The photo-essay must be turned in on **BMCC’s Open Lab** by the time and date it is due.