

**4. Social media has changed the way many Americans communicate about politics.**

Develop an argument as to whether the use of social media has helped or hindered participatory democracy.

Use at least one piece of evidence from one of the following foundational documents:

- First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States
- *Federalist No. 10*
- “Letter from a Birmingham Jail”

In your response, you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a defensible claim or thesis that establishes a line of reasoning.
- Support your claim with at least TWO pieces of specific and relevant evidence.
  - One piece of evidence must come from one of the foundational documents listed.
  - A second piece of evidence can come from any other foundational document not used as your first piece of evidence or it may be from your knowledge of course concepts.
- Use reasoning to explain why your evidence supports your claim or thesis.
- Respond to an opposing or alternate perspective using rebuttal or refutation.

**STOP**  
**END OF EXAM**

**Question 4: Argument Essay****6 points**

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row A Claim/Thesis  (0–1 points)	<b>0 points</b> Does not meet the criteria for one point.	<b>1 point</b> Responds to the prompt with a defensible claim or thesis that establishes a line of reasoning.
<b>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</b>		
<b>Responses that do not earn this point:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only restate the prompt.</li> <li>Do not make a claim that responds to the prompt.</li> </ul>		<b>Responses that earn this point:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Respond to the prompt rather than restating or rephrasing the prompt and establish a line of reasoning.</li> <li>Provide a defensible claim or thesis that establishes a line of reasoning as to whether the use of social media has helped or hindered participatory democracy.</li> </ul>
<b>Examples that do not earn this point:</b> <p><b>Restate the prompt</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“Social media has improved or impeded democracy.”</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Do not respond to the prompt</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“Americans love to talk about politics.”</i></li> </ul>		<b>Examples that earn this point:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“Using social media helps participatory democracy because users can improve their political knowledge.”</i></li> <li><i>“By connecting people to multiple institutions and political processes, social media has helped participatory democracy in the United States.”</i></li> <li><i>“Social media has hindered participatory democracy by making Americans less certain about political information.”</i></li> <li><i>“When social media is used to spread negative information about politics, it makes citizens less willing to participate in the democratic process.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Additional Notes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The claim or thesis must consist of one or more sentences that may be located anywhere in the response.</li> <li>A claim or thesis that meets the criteria can be awarded the point whether or not the rest of the response successfully supports that line of reasoning.</li> </ul>		

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria			
Row B Evidence (0–3 points)	<b>0 points</b> Does not meet the criteria for one point.	<b>1 point</b> Provides one piece of evidence that is <u>relevant to the topic</u> of the prompt.	<b>2 points</b> Uses <u>one</u> piece of specific and relevant evidence to <u>support the claim or thesis</u> . <b>OR</b> Provides two pieces of evidence that are relevant to the topic of the prompt.	<b>3 points</b> Uses <u>two</u> pieces of specific and relevant evidence to <u>support the claim or thesis</u> .
<b>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</b>				
<b>Responses that do not earn points:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do not provide any accurate evidence.</li> <li>Provide evidence that is not relevant to the topic.</li> </ul>	<b>Responses that earn 1 point:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Must provide one piece of evidence relevant to the topic of the prompt. This evidence can come from one of the foundational documents listed in the prompt, any other foundational document, or from knowledge of course concepts.</li> </ul>	<b>Responses that earn 2 points:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide one piece of specific and relevant evidence that supports the claim or thesis.</li> </ul> <b>OR</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Must provide two pieces of evidence relevant to the topic of the prompt. This evidence can come from one of the foundational documents listed in the prompt, any other foundational document, or from knowledge of course concepts.</li> </ul>	<b>Responses that earn 3 points:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide two pieces of specific and relevant evidence that support the claim or thesis. One of these pieces of evidence <b>must</b> come from a foundational document listed in the prompt. The other piece of evidence can come from a different foundational document or from knowledge of course concepts.</li> </ul>	
<b>Examples that do not earn points:</b> <p><b>Provide evidence that is not specific</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“Politics is about communication.”</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Provide evidence that is not relevant to the topic of the prompt</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“The Third Amendment stops the military from seizing a civilian’s house.”</i></li> </ul>	<b>Examples of evidence that are relevant to the <u>topic</u> of the prompt:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“Linkage institutions connect people to their representatives.”</i></li> <li><i>“Political information includes new events and investigative journalism.”</i></li> </ul> <b>Examples of acceptable specific and relevant evidence that support the claim or thesis (one example is one piece of evidence):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“Social media can be used to learn more about candidates and the election process.”</i></li> <li><i>“Presidents have used social media to encourage voters to support their policies.”</i></li> <li><i>“Having freedom of speech means that people can complain to their representatives.”</i></li> <li><i>“Misinformation on social media has led to violent reactions from citizens.”</i></li> <li><i>“The First Amendment guarantees that people have the right to communicate their needs to their elected representatives.”</i></li> <li><i>“The First Amendment makes it easier for social media to distribute false information.”</i></li> <li><i>“Federalist No. 10 argues that factions are a threat to democracy.”</i></li> <li><i>“Letter from a Birmingham Jail urged citizens to take direct action to seek equality and justice.”</i></li> </ul>			
<b>Additional Notes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To earn one or two points in Row B, the response does not need to have earned the point for claim/thesis in Row A.</li> <li>To earn three points in Row B, the response must have a defensible claim/thesis (earned the point in Row A).</li> <li>To earn three points in Row B, the response must use one of the foundational documents listed in the prompt.</li> </ul>				

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row C Reasoning (0–1 points)	<b>0 points</b> Does not meet the criteria for one point.	<b>1 point</b> Uses reasoning (classification, process, causation, or comparison) to explain how or why the evidence supports an argument relevant to the prompt.
	<b>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</b>	
	<p><b>Responses that do not earn this point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Include evidence but offer no reasoning to connect the evidence to the claim or thesis.</li> <li>Restate the prompt without explaining how the evidence supports the claim or thesis.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Responses that earn this point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explain the relationship between the evidence provided and an argument.</li> </ul> <p><b>Examples of reasoning that explain how the evidence supports the claim or thesis:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“Social media gives us better access to what’s happening in politics, and when we know what’s going on, we can act to make things better. That’s good for participatory democracy.”</i></li> <li><i>“Social media makes it easier for our representatives to respond to citizens’ needs, which improves efficacy and increase participation further.”</i></li> <li><i>“If the First Amendment allows citizens to spread misinformation, the quality of political knowledge will continue to decrease, and people will participate less in politics.”</i></li> <li><i>“When social media intensifies political polarization, people can be discouraged from participating in the political process and may even tune out politics all together.”</i></li> </ul>
	<p><b>Additional Notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To earn this point, the response must have provided at least one piece of specific and relevant evidence.</li> <li>The explanation of the relationship between one piece of evidence and a well reasoned argument relevant to the prompt is sufficient to earn this point.</li> </ul>	

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row D Responds to Alternate Perspectives  (0–1 points)	<b>0 points</b> Does not meet the criteria for one point.	<b>1 point</b> Responds to an opposing or alternate perspective using rebuttal or refutation.
<b>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</b>		
	<p><b>Responses that do not earn this point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restate the opposite of the claim or thesis.</li> <li>• May identify or describe an alternate perspective but do not rebut or refute that perspective.</li> <li>• Rebut or refute a foundational document rather than an alternate perspective.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Responses that earn this point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must describe an alternate perspective AND rebut or refute that perspective.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Examples of responses that do not earn the point:</b></p> <p><b>Restate the opposite of the claim or thesis</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“Some people say that linkage institutions are good for democracy.”</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Describe an alternate perspective but do not rebut or refute that perspective</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“Changes in communication have given rise to ideologically-driven programming, which has contributed to issues with political knowledge and political participation.”</i></li> </ul>		
		<p><b>Examples of acceptable responses to an alternate perspective may include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“Even if social media has introduced people to questionable information, it has encouraged them to become involved in politics anyway, which is good.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“Even though the rise of ideologically driven news sources has created some confusion, they are also giving our elected representatives a better perspective on what the people want, and that is good for participatory democracy.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“While some may argue that social media improves democracy because it improves linkage institutions, it has also harmed the credibility of news sources, which is ultimately worse for participatory democracy.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“Many would argue that social media gives more people an opportunity to express their opinions to a larger audience, but that could lead to an overwhelming amount of information that can discourage people from wanting to engage in the political process in the first place.”</i></li> </ul>
	<p><b>Additional Notes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To earn this point, the response must have a defensible claim or thesis (earned the point in Row A).</li> <li>• Responses that demonstrate an incorrect understanding of the alternate perspective do not earn this point.</li> </ul>	