

**Summer Assignments**  
2009-2010

**Assignment #1**

Read the book *Politics Hardball: How Politics is Played by One who Knows the Game* by Chris Mathews.

“*Hardball*, first published in 1988, is like a modern version of Machiavelli's *The Prince*, only much more richly illustrated, with anecdotes drawn from talk-show host Chris Mathews's stint as a congressional staffer (where he worked for, among others, renowned Speaker of the House Tip O'Neill). Discussing such basic principles as "It's not who you know; it's who you get to know" and "Don't get mad, don't get even--get ahead," Mathews not only dishes out choice Washington insider info, he has over the years inspired many readers to apply his principles for political success to their own professional lives.” (Amazon Review)

Mathews structures the book around a series of political maxims:

- What've ya done for me lately?
- All politics is local.
- It's better to receive than to give.
- Triangulation
- Dance with the one that brung ya.
- Keep your enemies in front of you.
- Don't get mad; Don't get even; Get ahead.
- Leave no shot unanswered.
- Hang a Lantern on Your Problem.
- Politics = Power
- Only talk when it improves the silence
- Retail politics.

After reading Chris Mathews' book, complete the following in a 6-8 page paper:

- Choose one quote or passage from six of the chapters – to analyze each quote, make sure you explain what the quote means, the quote's importance to politics or government, and your personal opinion of the quote. Make sure that they are quotes/passages that evoke a real response in you.
- Analyze the 2008 election in terms Mathews' political maxims. Discuss some of the maxims that each of the candidates excelled at as well as the maxims that at which they failed.
- Make predictions for the 2012 election. What do each of the Democratic and Republican candidate have to do in order to win the presidency. Be specific with Mathews' political maxims as well as any other area in which you think that each party needs to improve.

**Assignment #2**

**Journal Assignment:**

During the summer you will start your journal that you will be adding to over the course of the year. The journal is a way for you to document current events and respond to them. Your journal should be in a three ring binder (one that you will keep in the classroom) and you should have one entry per week for the month of August and the first week of September (total of five). Your responses and copies of the articles should be included. Your journal response should contain the following information:

- Brief summary of the main points of the article,
- Analysis of how this issue affects the US or affects politics (this will be the longest piece and most thought provoking),
- Why is this important (why was this the most important issue of the week politically or globally)
- Your own personal reflection on the issue.

These assignments are due on the first day of class which will be on Sept 1, 2009 or e-mailed to me by this date.

If you have any questions, please feel free to e-mail me over the summer at [nniland@cox.net](mailto:nniland@cox.net).