Blogging assignment = 150 points overall

The assignment: Beginning March 6 and ending April 10 students are to post twice a week on some aspect of the presidential primaries/election to a blog they've create. Included in these posts should be minimally one additional aspect, including:
- Links to other relevant stories
- Photos
- Videos
- Audio
- At the top of your blog you should post the following: This blog has been created and is being kept for an academic class at William Paterson University, Wayne, NJ.

What's a blog: A blog is an online diary or journal in which the writer shares his or her thoughts and opinions with the public on a particular subject. Examples of political blogs would be:
- **www.talkingpointsmemo.com**
- **www.redstate.com**
- **www.politico.com**
- **http://fivethirtyeight.blogs.nytimes.com/author/nate-silver/**
- **www.huffingtonpost.com (this started as a blog but has developed into a full fledged political website)**

How: In order to write a blog about the primaries/election you need to be informed about what is happening in the political world. This requires that you read, daily, a newspaper or online news site that covers this world.

For example, the president gave his State of the Union address on Tuesday and that night and the next day the media was full of coverage and analysis about what every one thought. A very good blog post would have been your opinion about the president's speech (which you could have caught online if you missed it in person) and a summary and links to what other political writers thought. You could include a link to the speech video, a photo of the president and/or links to articles also discussing the speech.

Topics: I'm flexible about what you write about.
- You could just post each week on the news from the campaign trail or
- Follow a topic and a candidate's position, here are some:
  - The economy, healthcare, foreign policy,
  - Crime, student loans, gay rights, education
  - Unemployment, immigration

Blogging software: I said to set the blogs up using the university blogging software on Blackboard, but it doesn't seem to allow for links, photos, video, etc. You can use whatever blogging software you like, I've list a few below, but once it's set up you must send me the URL link. I'll put all of the blogs in a folder on Blackboard and we can read each other's.

You must set up a new blog. You can't use an existing blog and just add your assignments on top. The software below is free and allows you to include photos and video and audio. You may also use blogging software that isn't listed here.

www.blogger.com
www.wordpress.com
www.tumbler.com

Rules:
1. Post twice a week and date your posts.
2. Posts are due by Sunday night at 8 pm. There are 25 of you which means I have to read 50 posts. If the 25 of you make your second post at 8 pm on Sunday I have a chance of getting through them.
3. There must be a space of at least two days between posts.
4. Your comments are to be between 200- 350 words in length.
5. Include another element to your post.
   a. This can be a link to the article you read (the news) you're commenting on; a link to the video you're commenting on, etc. The more elements the better your grade.
   b. Whatever forms the basis of your comment, you should include a link to it. Even if you woke up and decided to write about the crazy way we elect our presidents (meaning there was no article that prompted the thought) you need to find one that will provide some information to those reading the blog, and support what you write.

Conduct:
1. No foul language. These posts are public and are part of an academic class.

2. Civil discourse is required at all times.

   a. If you believe strongly that a candidate's position on foreign policy will lead to another war, or a candidate's position on healthcare will lead to death of Americans, that's fine (support for your opinion would be helpful, of course). In sharing these opinions, however, you need to express yourself in an acceptable manner.

  b. You may not suggest the candidate would be better off dead, or wish someone would kill him, or some horrible disease befall his children or grandchildren.)

  c. I am the sole arbiter of what is acceptable, civic discourse.

3. Just to be clear, anyone who drops the f-bomb in a post, or other offensive language, fails the entire assignment (good-bye 150 points).

Grading:
- The most you can earn is 15 points per blog post.
- 2 posts a week x 5 weeks = 150 possible points

14-15 points = Wow, a great post, I am late to class because I've just run off with my laptop to show Dr. Peck (who is also late) how impressive this is.
- It meets the requirements of word length and one additional element, however, in addition:
- The writing is flawless (no grammar or spelling mistakes, complete sentences abound.).
- The opinion offered is insightful and based not just on what you heard on the radio that morning.
- There are additional links or video, all of which are relevant to what your post is about.

11-13 points = Pretty good. You've met the word length and the additional element. On my way to class (I'm on time this week) I share with Dr. Lesher (who is always on time), my thoughts on your post.
- The writing is flawless except for the period at the end of the sentence you missed and there's a sentence that isn't making sense because you forgot a word.
- You've offered some insight and I can see you're been following the news and are up to date on the latest news on your subject or candidate.
- There are one or more additional links or a video all of which are relevant to your post.
-

 9-10 points = OK. You have met the minimum requirements. I am in class, on time, before Drs. Lesher and Peck arrive: I share nothing.
- You've offered some thoughts in your post, but are struggling. You don't seem to understand what 'insight' means in the political sense. My suggestion will to be read some political blogs and note the style and voice of the writer.

- The writing has some problems. You've got basic spelling and grammar down, but you're running into trouble with sentence structure. I may suggest a stop at the Writing Center.
- You've got additional link(s) or video or some other element.

7-8 points = You have met the minimum requirements, but nothing more. But I am worried about your progress.
- You have reported on what is happening in the news or with your candidate or on your subject. There is no real insight, just a repetition of what you've read.
- I am starting to struggle to read what you've written. It's or its? They're, there, or their? You should know these things. If I read this out loud I stumble a lot.
-

4-6 points = You've met the minimum requirement, but wow, I have to read this?
- Your post is based on dinner table conversation, which is OK if it's a good dinner.
- You've included a link, but it isn't related to your post.
- On you paper I will encourage you, as I have others, to use spell check, read your paper out loud and go to the Writing Center. If this happens in a second post I will probably want to sit down with you and chat about how we can turn this around.

0-4 points = You have not meet the minimum requirements. I am pounding my head against the wall wondering where I went wrong.
- You post sounds like it came out of the radio that morning by the local shock jock. Bombastic, poorly thought out.
- I can barely read your post because of the errors both in grammar, spelling, punctuation and sentence structure. I'll ask to sit down with you after this first paper and chat about what I can do to help you.