**HARVARD UNIVERSITY**

**HARVARD EXTENSION SCHOOL**

**January Term, 2016**

**LSTU E-190A**

**A CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION**

**Allan A. Ryan**

**COURSE PAPER REQUIREMENTS**

Your grade in this course will be determined by the paper you write after the class sessions have concluded. The paper will be due in two weeks, on Sunday, January 24 at 6 p.m. Boston time. Further details are below.

Here is your assignment:

Now that we have examined every part of the Constitution, draft an amendment that will fix a problem that the Constitution, including amendments, has created or failed to address. You can choose any problem you like, except reform of the presidential electoral process (the Electoral College), about which a great deal has already been written.

The paper will be in three parts:

1. The problem you identify that needs fixing. What is it? What part of the Constitution creates it (or fails to fix it)? Why is it a problem that needs fixing?
2. The amendment you are drafting. Imagine you are a delegate to a constitutional convention. Draft the actual text of the amendment you are proposing, and identify what if any text of the present Constitution would be amended.
3. The discussion of the problem and your solution. How would your amendment fix, or at least improve, the problem you’ve identified? What are the arguments in favor of your proposal? What are the arguments that could be made against it? What is your response to those opposing arguments?

Papers will be graded according to the problem selected, the clarity and appropriateness of the drafted amendment, and the nature of your discussion in Sections I and III. Originality and thoughtfulness are expected.

I expect your paper to reflect an appropriate degree of independent research, and citation to sources. For example, if the problem you are addressing has been the subject of academic, political, or journalistic commentary, you should cite and discuss such commentary to an appropriate degree. You may (but are not required to) address the political difficulties or consequences of your proposed amendment, such as whether it is likely to be ratified, or what opposition to it might be anticipated.

Students taking this course for undergraduate credit will submit a paper of 10 to 12 pages (no more, no less).

Students taking the course for graduate credit will submit a paper of 15-17 pages (no more, no less).

Students taking the course for no credit do not receive a grade and so are not required to submit a paper, but if you wish to submit one, I will read it and let you know the grade you would have received.

Please use Microsoft Word, double-spaced, with conventional fonts and margins, and run a header with your name and page number at the top of each page. I prefer footnotes (bottom of the text page) and not endnotes (end of the paper) to cite your sources.

Submit your paper by email to these two addresses: [ryan@hbsp.harvard.edu](mailto:ryan@hbsp.harvard.edu) and [aar4@comcast.net](mailto:aar4@comcast.net) by the deadline. Please use “Constitutional Convention paper” as the subject line so it does not get overlooked in my mailboxes.

Given the tight schedule I have to submit course grades, the deadline must be enforced. Extensions cannot be granted except for genuine emergencies. I regret that my deadline for submitting course grades does not afford me enough time to comment on your papers and return them to you.

After grades have been submitted and reported to you (by DCE, not by me), I would welcome any thoughts you might have on the course, including suggestions for improving it in future years. Please send any comments to me at the email addresses above.

I hope you have enjoyed taking this course as much as I have enjoyed preparing it. Best wishes for your continued academic career.