

Dear 2009-2010 Government students,

Congratulations on making it almost to your senior year at Mercy! We are looking forward to having you in our government classes next fall (well-----right now we're not looking forward to it but we will be by August!)

You do have one little task before class starts - the ever-popular summer reading. You will need to read the book Hardball: How Politics is Played by One Who Knows the Game. (New York: Touchstone: 1999)\_ by Christopher Matthews.

This book is a first hand account of how politics works in Washington D.C. Mr. Matthews was an aide to Senator Tip O'Neill when he was the Speaker of the House of Representatives. Along the way he learned a lot about how things get accomplished in politics. Each chapter of the book describes a different technique used by politicians to achieve their goals. **You will need to complete the following written assignment as you read the book:** (typed of course)

**After you read each chapter do the following: (in separate paragraphs for each chapter with the chapter number and title noted)**

- 1) Summarize – **in your own words** - the main technique or strategy discussed.
- 2) Explain - **in your own words** – one specific example that Mr. Matthews used to show the strategy. Do this for each chapter of the book. (*Do not copy or quote the examples*)

**After you have finished the book: For 5 different techniques do the following:**

- 3) Research to find newspaper, internet or newsmagazine articles that show the techniques currently being used in politics (either on the local, state or national level). (**within the last year**) Cut out the article/information and paste it on a piece of paper. (Be sure to cite the source of the information) On that paper also discuss - **in your own words** - which strategy it illustrates and your explanation for how the incident reported illustrates the political strategy outlined in the chapter. (*See the sample paper on the back of this letter*) Do this for 5 of the different techniques. (You will end up with 5 papers)

**Turnitin.com: (did you notice how many times we said “in your own words”???)**

The day after the assignment is due you will need to use turnitin.com. Please turn in your chapter summaries and examples and your analysis of the current articles. **Do not** turn in the newspaper articles themselves. *\*\*You will need to turn everything in as one document\*\**

***This assignment will be due on the second day of class.***

So, read and enjoy, and remember that this written assignment will be your first grade of American Government.

You can purchase the book at most bookstores and on Amazon.com. It will cost around \$12-\$14. *Make sure you get the 1999 up-dated edition.* **But don't wait until the last week of summer before you get the book - it might not be available immediately and that will not be an acceptable excuse for not having completed your assignment.**

Have a great summer and start paying attention to political issues.

## The phony attack on Bush's stem cell research "ban" (8/17)

By [Brendan Nyhan](#)

In his response to President Bush's radio address on August 7, Democratic presidential nominee John Kerry [drove home](#) one talking point - that President Bush had banned embryonic stem cell research. He began by saying, "Three years ago, the President enacted a far-reaching ban on stem cell research" and later referred once to "the stem cell ban" and twice to "the ban on stem cell research." He never clarified his use of the word, leaving listeners to believe that President Bush has banned all stem cell research. But that is simply not true. The reality is that the President has actually allowed federal funding for research into embryonic stem cell lines that had already been created before August 9, 2001 (22 are currently available according to the [National Institutes of Health Embryonic Stem Cell Registry](#)). Furthermore, privately-funded research can be conducted without restrictions in the United States. The only "ban" is on federal funding for *new* stem cell lines that were not included in Bush's original group - hardly the meaning that Kerry suggested in his address. Unfortunately, this is part of a pattern, as [Slate's Will Saletan](#), [the Washington Post](#) and [the Associated Press](#) have all pointed out. The Kerry campaign has pounded the "ban" talking point over and over in the last few weeks. For instance, on July 26, a Kerry press release [referred](#) to "the ban on stem cell research," and an August 7 release on Kerry's radio address also referred to the alleged "stem cell ban" in its title and uses the term "ban" four other times. Also, in an August 9 speech, vice presidential nominee John Edwards [falsely claimed](#) Bush had created a "ban" three years before. The press release promoting Edwards' speech [referred](#) in its title to a "stem cell ban" and in its first sentence to "the three year anniversary of President George Bush's ban on federal funding of embryonic stem cell research," which is described as an "ideologically-driven ban." Only later did it clarify the meaning of the "ban". When pushed on this issue, the campaign's defense - given by a spokesperson [to the Associated Press](#) - rings hollow: Kerry spokesman Phil Singer said Bush's restrictions apply to 99.9 percent of potential stem cell lines that could be studied. "If that's not a ban," he said, "we don't know what is." But as stated previously, Bush's restrictions apply only to *federal funding*, not to embryonic stem cell research itself. Nor does Singer's figure even make sense. "99.9% of potential stem cell lines" is an exaggerated and meaningless figure - there are an infinite number of "potential stem cell lines," and it is not true that 99.9% of currently available lines are off-limits. In May 2004, a Boston Globe survey [found](#) 51 lines available that were not eligible for federally-funded research, a number the newspaper said could rise to "more than 100" by the end of the year. In any case, the percentage of available lines that are off-limits is substantially less from 99.9%. Other Democrats have also joined in recently. In one prominent example, Senator Hillary Clinton (D-NY) said during her address to the Democratic National Convention on July 26 that "We also need to lift the ban on stem cell research" without clarifying the meaning of the term "ban". And in a July 13 press conference promoting the convention, New Mexico Bill Richardson, a Democrat, referred to "the need to deal with diabetes and many other diseases that are prevented from the President's ban on stem cell research." In a free society, there are no bans on misleading spin, but it's time for a moratorium on this deceptive attack.

Subject: Part IV: "Reputations" Chapter 11 "Spin"

Nyhan, Brendan. "The Phony Attack on Bush's Stem Cell Research Ban"  
<http://www.spinsanity.com> 17 August 2004.

Summary/Analysis:

When responding to the President's August 7<sup>th</sup> radio address, Democratic Presidential hopeful John Kerry referred to one point in particular – the “ban” on stem cell research. In saying that the President had banned stem cell research he led listeners to believe that the President had banned all stem cell research, which wasn't true. The President hadn't fully banned the research, in fact he allowed federal funding for those lines that had been created before August 9<sup>th</sup>, 2001. Also, research that is funded privately can still be conducted. In saying that the President had banned stem cell research, Kerry put a negative spin on the President's words and led many of his listeners to believe that the President had banned all research, which was not the case.