

Date of the Debate:
Friday, September 26th

This assignment is meant to help you think about a constitutional issue of your choice. All of these topics have been hotly debated and now it is your chance to get involved in the discussion. In addition to gaining an increased sense of how the Constitution guides our lives, this assignment will hopefully help you reawaken your researching and public speaking skills.

So what exactly is the assignment? The class will be divided into two groups. Each group will be assigned to a different current Constitutional issue. Your assignment is to research your particular issue and to debate its merits. While you will be assigned to a particular side of the chosen issue, it is probably a good idea to familiarize yourself with your opponents' points.

How should you begin?

First, as a class we will select two topics that relate to the Constitution.

Next, start your research. You will have some time in class (one block+) to research your topic, but you will need to do additional research outside of class in order to successfully complete this assignment.

To prepare for the debate, you will need to conduct research using the internet, your textbook, and/OR library resources. You will have one full class to research and meet as a group. The remainder of your preparation should be done outside of class. We will be going to the computer lab on Tuesday, September 23rd. You should already have begun your research when you meet in the lab.

As a group, you will need to decide who will do what during the debate itself, as well as who will prepare which arguments for the debate. ALL group members MUST participate in the research and preparation for the debate, as well as participate in the debate itself. Your grade will be adversely affected should you opt not to participate in some facet of the debate (preparation or execution.)

The format for the debate will be as follows:

1. The pro group will open and give a thorough introduction to the issues and the pro and con sides. [The opening should be an objective statement of the issue under discussion and the brief overview of the two sides.]
2. The pro group will present their arguments, supported by facts, evidence and reasoning.
3. Then the opposing group will present their argument and rebuttal.
4. Open debate will ensue as time allows.
5. The pro group will make their closing statements.
6. The con group will make their closing statements.

The final grade will be broken down in the following manner:

1. **Your participation in the issue debate you are assigned. (40 points)**
2. **Your "fact cards." (10 points)** (6 to 10 note cards or sheet of notes that list specific evidence and details that back up your position on the topic – handed in after the debate. These notes should be substantive.)

3. **Your group evaluation.** (+/-) (While this will not be counted as a specific percentage, it can bump your grade up or down. The evaluations are due the next class after your debate.)

Reminder: Preparation for the debates needs to be done outside of class. You will have one block to meet with your group to plan. I will give you a few minutes on the day of the debates to meet as a group before the debates begin.

You should take notes on all of your sources (internet, books, and magazines.) Highlighting computer print-outs is ok but it is not as good as taking notes. Also, please remember that **you will need to hand in a complete group bibliography** on the day of the debate; therefore, make sure that you get down all bibliographic information so that you can submit a full and accurate bibliography.

Areas you may want to research/address as you prepare for the debate:

1. the history of your issue;
2. your issue's legal and Constitutional significance;
3. the beliefs of those who support AND oppose your issue (remember, it's always a good idea to research your opponent's argument so you know what to expect and can counter their arguments);
4. the current status of your topic

Possible Topics

Freedom of Speech Issues	(Hate Speech, Flag Burning)	Drug Testing
Abortion	Gun Control	Death Penalty
Affirmative Action	Doctor-Assisted Suicide	Medicinal marijuana
Racial Profiling	Prisoner/criminal rights	Gay Marriage
	Others?	