

Group Presentations

Introduction to US Government

Tennessee Technical University

Spring 2006

Each person is required to take part in one of these presentations as part of a larger group. This allows one to learn how to deal with others and how to distribute the workload fairly and/or effectively (not always the same). It also allows you to learn many skills associated with working together. Here, you will be placed in groups randomly by the second class meeting. These groups will not change. You cannot leave one in order to join another. I do, however, reserve the right to add members as the need arises. Some of the groups will be assigned option 1; the rest will get option 2 – my choice. Your choice comes within the option I select for you. If your group gets option 1, your group needs to select one of the Court cases listed – first come, first served. If you are assigned option 2, your group needs to select the question you will debate within the group. I will post the groups on the website (<http://web.utk.edu/~oforsber/pols2210/>).

Option 1: A Supreme Court Case

A Supreme Court Case The purpose of this homework is to help you get to think about the effects of cases heard by the Supreme Court. Your group gets one of the cases below. As a group, you will write the paper and do the presentation. Divide the workload as you deem fair.

There are four sections to the paper:

1. Give the background to the case. What caused it? What were the political and historical events leading up to it?
2. What were the major questions the court had to answer?
3. What were the findings of the court (the answers to the questions)?
4. What was the result of this case on the country, on the states, on ourselves, on our rights?

This should be more extensive than a simple brief: The precedents should be explained, rather than merely listed; the background should contain more history; and the results should examine the far reaching results, as well. In addition to the paper (which should be a few pages), your group will present your findings during class. This presentation should be very simple and should take about fifteen minutes to do. You will stand up there, without your paper, and explain the four parts. You then answer any questions that arise from the class or from me.

The cases from which I can choose:

- Pierce v. Society of Sisters 1925
- Olmstead v. United States 1928
- L. A. Schechter Poultry Corp. v. United States 1935
- Hirabayashi v. United States 1943
- Korematsu v. United States 1944
- Engel v. Vitale 1962
- Baker v. Carr 1962
- Griswold v. Connecticut 1965
- Furman v. Georgia 1972
- Wisconsin v. Yoder 1972
- United States v. Nixon 1974
- Buckley v. Valeo 1976
- Mississippi University for Women v. Hogan 1982
- Texas v. Johnson 1989
- Sutton v. United Airlines 1999
- Bush v. Gore 2000
- Rogers v. Tennessee 2001
- Virginia v. Black 2003
- Elk Grove USD v. Newdow 2004
- Hamdi v. Rumsfeld 2004
- Padilla v. Rumsfeld 2004
- Oregon v. Gonzales 2005

Some suggested sites:

Findlaw:	http://www.findlaw.com
Legal Information Institute:	http://supct.law.cornell.edu/supct/
The US Supreme Court:	http://www.supremecourtus.gov
InstaCase:	http://www.instacase.com/
Oyez Project:	http://www.oyez.org/oyez/frontpage

Option 2: A Policy Debate

A Policy Debate The purpose of this project is to help you get to think about the sides of a policy issue. Your group gets one of the policy questions below. As a group, you will write the paper and do the debate. Split up your group so that both sides of the issue are argued. Divide the workload as you deem fair. Do not unnecessarily venture into religion; we need to stay constitutional when discussing these issues.

There are four sections to the paper:

1. Argue that the question is important and give sufficient background to the question.
2. Argue the 'yes' side of the debate.
3. Argue the 'no' side of the debate.
4. What conclusion does your group come to about the question.

The questions from which I will choose:

- Should the president be a delegate or a trustee?
- Should the death penalty be abolished in America?
- Should a national identification card system be established?
- Should the Electoral College be abolished and replaced with popular election of the president?
- Does the mass media have a liberal bias?
- Is the bureaucracy a threat to democracy?
- Will gun control reduce violence?
- Should the Senate take into consideration the political ideology of a Supreme Court Justice nomination in its confirmation decision?

- Should the federal government's prohibition of drugs be ended?
- Should the Supreme Court abide by a strict constructionist philosophy?
- Is racial profiling ever justified?
- Is globalization a benefit to the world?

...In Either Case

Make sure that you follow the style sheet and properly document your sources. That means using the APSA format for both citations and reference lists.