

08-20 Class Summary: Civil Government Political Ideologies and Infographic Project

A class session focused on political ideologies and a major project began with pedagogical exercises designed to foster critical thinking. The instructor used a Socratic method to explore ethical dilemmas, including a scenario about a 15-year-old using a fake ID to get a tattoo. This exercise contrasted the mother's legal right to sue the tattoo parlor with the lesson of personal accountability for her son, arguing that suing would teach the teenager he is not responsible for his actions. The discussion highlighted the significant professional and financial investments a tattoo artist makes (education, unpaid apprenticeship, licensing), making the risk of tattooing an underage client—and losing their license—far outweigh any potential reward.

Core Concepts: Liberal vs. Conservative Ideologies in the U.S.

To provide a foundation for the main project, a Khan Academy video was used to outline the two major political ideologies in the United States. The instructor supplemented this with contemporary examples.

| Issue | Liberal (Democratic) Viewpoint | Conservative (Republican) Viewpoint | Instructor's Examples & Commentary |

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| **Abortion** | A reproductive rights issue (pro-choice), emphasizing a woman's right to choose. | A life issue (pro-life), emphasizing the rights of the developing fetus. | The instructor noted the recent Supreme Court reversal of the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision. |

| **Affirmative Action** | In favor of proactive measures to address historical and current inequality. | Against using race as a factor, advocating for a "racially blind" society. | **Example:** President Trump's executive order dismantling DEI policies and the subsequent conflict with universities like Harvard. |

| **Gun Rights** | Pro-gun control, viewing guns as a primary factor in crime and mass shootings. | Pro-gun rights, citing the Second Amendment and attributing crime to other societal issues. | **Example:** Hawaii's restrictive state law on gun ownership, which claims states' rights. |

| **Crime** | Focuses on addressing social root causes (e.g., poverty) and protecting defendants' rights. | Favors tougher policing, stricter laws, and punishment as a primary deterrent. | The liberal view was framed as helping those who commit crimes out of necessity. |

| **Taxes** | View taxes, especially on the wealthy, as necessary for funding social

programs. | View taxes as a disincentive to work and a friction on the economy. | - |

| **Government Spending**| Favor spending on social programs like welfare and universal healthcare. | Favor minimal government spending, with a notable exception for the military. | - |

| **Regulation**| In favor of government regulation, particularly for environmental protection. | Against most regulation, viewing it as an impediment to business growth. | - |

| **Military**| Support a basic military for essential defense services. | Advocate for a strong, "muscular" military as a deterrent. | - |

Major Assignment: Controversial Topic Infographic

The main assignment is a "Big Fat Project" (BFP) requiring students to create a professional infographic on a controversial topic using Canva. The project is an evolution from a traditional research paper, designed to convey the same depth of information in a modern, visual format.

Core Principles and Requirements:

- ****Strict Objectivity:****The central rule is to present only the facts for both sides of an argument without including personal opinions or bias.
- ****Student Autonomy:****Students are encouraged to make their own judgments and decisions, provided their work fulfills the assignment's requirements.
- ****Content Requirements:****The infographic must include:
 - An explanation of why the issue is controversial.
 - A brief history of the topic in America.
 - A clear delineation of the liberal/Democratic and conservative/Republican viewpoints.
 - The core values or principles at stake for each side.
 - Specific laws, court cases, or other actions proposed or passed by both sides.
- ****Example Topics:****Water rights (collecting rainwater) and access to birth control.

Guidance on AI Tool Usage

The instructor provided detailed guidance on using AI ethically and effectively.

Using ChatGPT as a Research Tool:

- Students were shown how to use ChatGPT to brainstorm ideas, get visual and structural suggestions (e.g., a two-column layout), receive step-by-step instructions for using Canva, and integrate all assignment requirements (history, court cases like *Furman v. Georgia*).

- The key message was to use AI as a guide to be resourceful, not to generate the final product.
- Students were strongly advised to create a free ChatGPT account to save their conversation history, as it will be used throughout the semester.

Final Project Submission: Deadline and Procedures

Clear and strict instructions were established for the project submission.

- ****Final Deadline:****The project must be submitted by **Sunday afternoon**. Failure to do so will result in a grade of zero.
- **Submission Protocol:**
 1. In Canva, click the **"Share"** button.
 2. Select **"Download"**.
 3. Change the file type to **JPEG**.
 4. Email the downloaded JPEG file to the instructor.
- 2. ****Critical Warning:****Sharing a Canva link is not an acceptable submission method and will not be graded.

Next Steps

- [] Assign the previously mentioned controversial topic to the class.
- [] Use the majority of the class period on Friday to work on the Controversial Topic Infographic.
- [] Research a chosen controversial topic, focusing on its history, complexity, and differing political viewpoints.
- [] Create a professional, informative infographic using Canva that presents the research findings, ensuring all required elements are included.
- [] Finalize and submit the infographic as a JPEG file via email by Sunday afternoon.
- [] The instructor will use the submitted infographics for a class exercise on Monday.