

Campus and Political Participation Assignment

Each of the following assignments requires you to participate in or analyze politics or campus life in some active way, and then write a two-page paper reflecting on your activity and how it relates to what we have learned in class.

**In your two-page essays**, answer the specific questions in the assignment, and also make sure to briefly discuss how you felt about participating in the political process in the way that you chose to participate, what difference such participation might make, and whether you will likely engage in such behavior again.

You **MUST** complete one of these assignments. For your required assignment, you can only select from the first category of activities, the “Active Participation Activities.” This required essay is due on NOV 2.

If you wish to improve your grade, you **MAY** complete **THREE MORE** of the participation activities listed below. If you complete three activities and turn in three essays by the last day of lecture, December 14, and your essays are of high quality, you will receive up to 2 extra credit points on your final grade, which may mean the difference between a C+ and a B-, an A- and an A, or some such grade jump.

If you choose to do the extra credit, you can mix and match any three activities from either the “Active” or the “Armchair” activities.

**ACTIVE PARTICIPATION ACTIVITIES** (You may complete up to four of these.)

1. Research a public policy issue that is important to you. Write a letter or email to your member of Congress or US Senator urging them to take a specific action on the issue. Remember that your member will take your letter more seriously if there is something they can actually do about it—there is a specific bill to be voted on in their house of Congress in the near future, an amendment to cosign, a bill to sponsor, etc. Make a photocopy of your letter and the envelope that you address and stamp, and turn that in to me with your essay. (Or Cc me on your email, or copy your text from the online form that you use to send your remarks). When you write your two-page reflective essay, be sure to discuss any responsive behavior or written response from the member that you receive.
2. Find a newspaper article that you have a particularly strong response to and write a letter to the editor about it. You may email your letter in accordance with the newspaper’s submission policy, and if you do so, please ‘cc’ me on the email. When you write your two-page reflective essay, make sure that you describe the initial article, what made you respond strongly to it, whether your letter was accepted, and if not, whether any other similar letters were printed in subsequent days.

3. Attend a public meeting of a local city council, city or county board, school board, or political party. Public meetings are usually announced in local newspapers and on the organization's website. In your reflective essay, make sure you describe what the board talked about, who besides board members attended the meeting, and what you learned about local government through your observation.
4. Join a group that registers voters, and work to register voters for 5 hours. Local and campus political parties and some nonpartisan groups may begin voter registration drives that you can participate in here on campus. When you write your reflective essay, make sure that you talk about any training you received to register voters, the responses people gave to you when you asked them if they were registered, and any other interesting stories.
5. Volunteer for a political campaign, and work for at least five hours making phone calls, stuffing envelopes, or doing whatever else they ask you to do. In your reflective essay, make sure to discuss how effective you feel your efforts are, and how it feels to be part of a campaign team. Is this the kind of activity you would do again?
6. Attend a campus event. Choose an event that seems substantively related to the class. RSVP if asked to. If you have a question about whether an event qualifies, please ask me! I will also announce these talks in class. Attend the talk or event, and then write your reflective essay about how the substance of the discussion there relates to what we have talked about in this class. You may also want to discuss whether attending this kind of a meeting helps build social capital or makes you feel that you may participate in politics in other ways.
7. Attend a First Year Experience Workshop on any topic. Before you go, write a few notes about why you are attending that workshop, what you hope to learn there, and what three specific questions you hope to get answered by the time you leave. (Suggestion: *ask* those questions!!!) Then write a two page essay summarizing what you had hoped to learn, what you took away from the workshop, and how you will incorporate that new knowledge into your approach to your USD experience. At the end of your essay, include any suggestions for how this workshop might be made more effective in the future.

## ARMCHAIR PARTICIPATION ACTIVITIES

1. In your *Logic* textbook, at the end of each chapter, there is a list of movies that relate to the substance of the chapter. Choose two of the movies from one chapter, watch them at your leisure, and then write an essay comparing the two, and relating them substantively to the class. What specific readings and course content help you evaluate these movies? In the course of your essay, describe at least two specific ways in which the two movies realistic portrayals of political life, and two (or more!) specific ways they are unrealistic. If people only watch movies like these, and don't learn what you've learned in this class about politics, what will they think about the political world?
2. In your *Logic* textbook, at the end of each chapter, there are exercises to be completed on the internet. Complete two of the exercises at the end of one chapter, and write an essay summarizing what you did and what you learned by doing it.
3. Take all of the modules of the Information Literacy Tutorial available at the Copley Library Website. From Copley Library homepage <http://marian.sandiego.edu/>, choose TILT: Online tutorial <http://www.sandiego.edu/tilt/intro/registration.htm> . Under "Research Help," sign on using your USD identification card. Read all four modules and take the quizzes at the end. Turn in printed copies of your quiz results for each module, along with a two page essay describing what you learned, and how you will use that information as a citizen and a student. If you have any suggestions for how to improve the tutorial (I already know it's a little dorky!), please include those as well.