Town Hall Meeting

The Town Hall Meeting is a program that allows students to truly engage in politics while taking required Political Science coursework. Over the course of this semester you will learn the basics about the institutions of American and California government. You will also supplement this knowledge with research on a current topic relevant in state or local politics.

The Basics

Each student will be assigned to a team of 8 students; you will then receive a group number and choose a topic. Teams will work over the semester in preparation for an in class presentation on the assigned issues. The topics were chosen to provide students with an opportunity to experience government. Once a topic has been chosen, each group will dive into researching the topic and begin preparing a presentation. Groups should look at several key factors:

- What is the policy issue?
- Who is impacted?
- Who are the major groups involved, the stakeholders, the interested parties?
- What are the viewpoints?
- What are the solutions? What role does the government play in solving this issue?
- What is your recommendation for action?
- What are the barriers to given solutions?

Each group can divide their work as they see fit but suggested roles for the group members are as follows:

- Group Liaisons (2 Person): These persons gather all of the group information keeps the group on track. They communicate to the Professor for the group. These persons are charged with keeping a log of the group’s progress and ensuring the check in assignments are completed. These people makes sure each research person is doing their part and that they are not overlapping. These people are also charged with ensuring team members are ready to present at the appropriate time. These people are also charged with coordinating the research and assembling the final work product for submission.
- Creative Coordinators (3 people): These people will be in charge of the final production of the creative work product.
- Researchers (3 people): These people do the research, coordinate with other team members to compile research and convey information for the final work product and discussion. Explore all sides of the issue before making a final determination on your opinion for a solution.

Division of Work
You are all adults, I expect you to divide your work evenly and function as a group and effectively working within the defined roles. With a class of 200 I cannot manage every group individually. Please work together to produce the best possible work product. Each of you will grade your peers when the final presentations are over. With each student being responsible for their fair share of the project, you will be evaluated for this assignment based on my evaluation of your team’s process and your participation in that process; peer evaluation from team members; and the quality of your reports and participation in the final presentation.

Assignments

There will be three assignments associated with this group, but only one will receive a grade - the final work product. It is not possible to receive full credit on the final work product without turning in the check in assignments.

Check in Assignments

After each in class work period, each team needs to turn in a check-in assignment. This is a brief, one page summary to include the following:

- Group number, names of members, assigned roles of the members and topic.
- How is the groups focusing research for this specific topic/narrowing the topic?
- What are the research sources the group is using?
- What is your creative work product?
- What steps have been taken to ensure the final work product will be completed on time?
- Where is the group at in their preparation (a brief summary of work accomplished)
- Are there any areas the group needs assistance or is struggling in?

This document needs to be turned in to Titanium by 5PM on Friday of the week the check in is due (see syllabus for dates).

Final Work Product

Creative Work Products will be presented in class on the dates listed in the syllabus and at the larger Town Hall event. I expect to spend four class periods on these presentations.

After each class presentation, each team will turn in the final work product, which is a compilation of the research conducted and needs to include the following:

- A cover page with all group members names, group number and topic
- The creative work product
- A reference page with all sources used
- A one page executive summary of the different points covered in your presentation (there is one of these per group)
- A one page explanation of how the work was divided within your group and your process for completion
• Peer evaluations. In your peer evaluation, each group member will give the liaisons or the Professor a written evaluation of fellow group members. Please include your name and assign each group member a grade and explain why (you cannot just assign low grades – I need a valid reason). This can be done in paragraph format and does not have to be more than one page. Then give me your opinion on the project, what worked, what didn’t and why. Put thought into these evaluations as they can help dictate future curriculum.

*A note on research: since many of these issues are local you are permitted to use local new sources and first-hand experience (attending City Council Meetings) but when conducting research please keep in mind that sources such as Wikipedia and the like are not acceptable. Focus your research on reputable sources and scholarly materials.

Topics

Each group may choose from this list of topics below. This project is designed to let you topics and areas of government you are interested while at the same time illustrating the complexity of our government system.

- Voting Issues and Representation
- Environment and Business Relations
- Criminal Justice (law enforcement and decriminalization of drugs)

We can talk about your topic during our work periods and I can help guide your topic focus.

Creative Work Product

The Creative Work Product is your way of conveying your research and message about the topic you have selected. You will convey your points and your conclusions through this medium. It is creative because the medium you use is completely up to you. I have had groups do a film, create models, posters, scrapbooks, Prezis, websites, even record a dance to convey their point. Use your group talents (and variety of interests and majors) to come up with something good. I would also encourage you to make your creative coordinators your most creative people of the group, it will help in the long run. If you do not know what to do, come and talk to me and we can discuss options.

In Class Presentations

When you present in class, you have 15-20 minutes, you will not present this entire time. Aim for about a 10-minute presentation with 5-10 minutes for Q & A. During this time you will present your research and cover the main points of your research. Your final work product is due at the end of the presentation. All group members need to be present to get full credit.

Community Town Hall

The Community Town Hall will take place at the end of the semester. It is at a time that is outlined in the syllabus and attendance is mandatory. At this event you will engage invited elected officials and
government staff on the topics you have researched. You will present your creative work product as a part of your presentation and Town Hall Meeting discussion.

Your group will be paired with a professor and/or elected officials/government staff for a breakout session. In this session you and two other groups will present your topics. Aim to mimic the presentation given in class. In you breakout sessions you will have a Town Hall style discussion about your policy issue and provide feedback to others in other classes who researched the same topic. Regardless of your role in the group, you need to be well versed enough in your given topic to discuss it intelligently at the Community Town Hall.

I do not require you to come to class for the final exam period, so the time spent at the Town Hall meeting is an exchange for that time.

**Conclusion**

Unless you are fairly politically astute, I do not expect any of you to have a great deal of knowledge of these issues, the point is to have you really explore a policy topic. Go forth and start researching, consult a variety of sources and really try to educate yourself.

Feel free to contact me or our ADP Assistant with any questions you may have (as long as it isn’t already answered here 😊), dive into the project and have fun!