How do graded discussions work?

Students research the unit topic by taking notes on the various articles and websites as provided. One class period in the IMC is provided for work time. Students will need to allow additional time outside of class for preparation. After taking notes, answer the questions. Questions are to be answered on note cards. One question per note card, please.

On the day of the graded discussion, you will be assigned to a group with a designated group leader. At the end of class, you will evaluate the members of your group as part of your participation grade.

What will I hand in?

At the end of the discussion, notes from the websites and note cards from the questions will be collected and graded, as will the evaluation sheet for the group members.

How will I be graded?

There are two components to your grade.

A) Participation

Since this is a discussion that will be graded, participation is a must. For some this will require you to leave your “comfort zone.” Please note if you do not participate your teachers have no choice but to give you a 0/20 on this portion of your grade.

Part of your participation grade is also based on the thoughtful completion of the evaluation sheet.

B) Preparation

Preparation has two elements to it:

1) You are expected to take written notes on your readings. These notes will be graded. Simply printing off articles and/or “coloring” web pages does not constitute preparation.

2) You are to prepare and answer the discussion questions that follow below.

Your preparation for the discussion is critical. Therefore, your preparation is worth as many points as your participation (20 points).

Websites for note taking:


The Not-So United States  http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?index=13&did=1025586161&SrcMode=1&sid=1&Fnt=3&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&RQT=309&VName=PQD&TS=1190035603&clientId=51572


The Key Issue for the Court Isn’t Abortion  http://www.cato.org/pub_display.php?pub_id=4724

Battle Over Same-Sex Marriage  http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/law/gay_marriage/q5.html

Battle Over Same-Sex Marriage  http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/law/gay_marriage/states.html

The following article may be difficult to access. Ask your teacher how to get to the article.


“Marriage” Mayhem  http://www.nationalreview.com/kurtz/kurtz200405200836.asp

Constitution Not Intended to establish Social Policy  http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?index=1&did=1069225301&SrcMode=1&sid=3&Fnt=3&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&RQT=309&VName=PQD&TS=1190035999&clientId=51572


Federalism, Marijuana and the Commerce Clause  http://www.constitutioncenter.org/education/ForEducators/DiscussionStarters/FederalismMarijuanaandtheCommerceClause.shtml


Medical Marijuana, American Federalism and the Supreme Court
Six Democrats at Candidate Forum Wear Shades of Gray on Gay Marriage

A Crisis of Political Faith For Evangelicals

Republicans Face a Fork in the Road:
http://writ.news.findlaw.com/hamilton/20050908.html

Guiliani, the Federalist Candidate

Ronald Brownstein on Guiliani:
http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?index=2&did=1309571891&SrchMode=1&sid=1&Fmt=3&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&RQT=309&VName=PQD&TS=1190035831&clientId=51572

Fred the Federalist
http://www.nysun.com/article/62746

Questions for preparation:

1. Articulate your opinion concerning abortion, in light of who should have jurisdictional* control- should the federal government or the state government handle laws and regulations pertinent to the topic?

1. Articulate your opinion concerning same-sex marriages, in light of who should have jurisdictional* control- should the federal government or the state government handle laws and regulations pertinent to the topic?

1. Articulate your opinion concerning medical marijuana, in light of who should have jurisdictional* control- should the federal government or the state government handle laws and regulations pertinent to the topic.

** - If you don't know the meaning of this word, consult a dictionary, please.

1. For all three above, are there any inconsistencies in your opinion, such that you believe that in some cases the federal government should control one area, but not another. If so, explain your reasoning for this.

1. Identify the forces that prompted a change in the relationship between the federal and state governments concerning these issues.

1. Identify any inconsistencies that seem to exist with these issues and their proper jurisdiction amongst the presidential candidates.

1. In your opinion, what would a consistent Republican Party stand be when considering these three issues in terms of federalism?

1. In your opinion, what would a consistent Democratic Party stand be when considering these three issues in terms of federalism?

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