

First Amendment Media Project – Essay

Goal: To synthesize the content of our unit on the Constitution and produce an original, convincing, and eloquent argument about the future of the First Amendment.

Due dates:

- Rough draft brought to class on October 23rd
- Essay posted on your DP and hard copy submitted by the end of class on October 24th

Length: 600 to 800 words (non-honors); 800-1000 words (honors)

Choose one of the following prompts:

1. Which of our First Amendment freedoms will be most important over the next 100 years?
2. Which of our First Amendment freedoms will be most contested?
3. How will our First Amendment evolve over the next 100 years?
4. How should interpretations of the First Amendment change to meet the challenges of the next 100 years?

(Note: If you'd like to answer a different question related to the future of the First Amendment or pursue a specific alternative to a written paper, come talk to me. You will need to include the same core elements that others are grappling with in their paper if you choose a non-essay option.)

To receive a good grade, your essay must have the following basic features

- Readable plan – You must have a clear thesis and forecasting statement in your introduction. Paragraphs should have topic sentences. The best papers will use repeated words or phrases to focus the reader and include strong transitional phrases to move the reader from one section of the essay to the next.
- Well-supported argument – You will need to have at least two reasons justifying your thesis that you explain and elaborate within your paper. You should support these reasons with evidence: personal experience, examples, statistics, and outside texts. You can draw support from our study of current events, your issue group presentations, history, relevant case law, and our general study of the Constitution. The strongest essays will use different types of evidence.
- Effective counterargument – You will need to include at least one potential objection to your thesis and a corresponding counterargument to that objection. You will need to accommodate or refute this objection, not simply acknowledge it. We will discuss counterarguments in class.
- Effective mechanics – You must need to write in complete sentences and use proper syntax, punctuation, spelling, and capitalization. Your verb tenses must be consistent and use the active voice. Your tone must be professional and follow the formatting guidelines.

Match these requirements with the general description in the Grading Rubric to understand how I will evaluate your essay.

Formatting guidelines

All papers, including first drafts, must have 1-inch margins, use a Times New Roman, 12 pt. font, and have double-spacing. Papers must use a consistent format when citing sources in the text and at the end of the paper. **Only 2-sided printing will be accepted.**

What you will turn in

Outline of your essay that includes the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thesis• Main points or reasons supporting your argument• Reference to supporting evidence	
Peer annotated rough draft of your essay	600-800 words
Peer review worksheet from your partner	
Reaction to peer comments and self-assessment	150 words
FINAL draft of your essay	600-800 words 800-1000 words (honors)

Where do I start?

Re-read your First Amendment Posts and Learning Journal #2 to develop your thesis. There have also been several homework and in-class assignments that might generate ideas. Once you have a thesis you can look for support and evidence by reviewing your own notes and my DP, which includes readings, documents, and links that I've integrated into class. Additional research is encouraged but not necessary.

When do I start?

You can start right away. It might help your video project to develop your thesis in the next couple of days. We will spend 2 ½ to 3 days (October 22-24th) working in class on the essay. You must bring a draft for a structured peer review on **October 23rd**. I encourage you to send me your outline and draft to me ahead of time for review so can see if you are meeting my expectations for formal writing. I am happy to provide feedback and suggestions anytime before the 23rd. I will be grading this essay using the standards of a college-level writing program. **Papers that are hard to understand and have consistent errors in punctuation and syntax will not pass.** Getting started before the 21st will make these last days of the project more relaxed.

Schedule:

October 21 – Watch videos, group project wrap-up, formal writing review, begin work on essay
October 22 – Work on writing in-class or independently.
October 23 – Bring rough draft for peer review; writing in class
October 24 – Turn in final essay at the end of class