

Paper Assignment

For this assignment you are required to write an 8 to 10 page paper on one of the topics listed below. In researching your paper you must draw on sources other than the readings assigned for the course. Other sources include books, articles from scholarly journals, articles from news sources such as *The New York Times*, *National Journal*, and reputable Web sites. Your papers should follow standard term paper format (i.e., as described in the *MLA Handbook For Writers of Research Papers*, *Chicago Manual of Style*, or a similar guidebook). Parenthetical citations to sources are preferred.

The preliminary summary of your paper is due in class on April 1st. This summary will be one, double-spaced page of text that includes a thesis statement and the general outline of your argument and one page of a preliminary bibliography. Your papers are due in class on April 29. **Attach your original preliminary summary (with comments, if any) to the final paper.** Make sure you keep an extra hard copy of your paper in case anything happens to the copy you turn in, and maintain backups as you work on the paper.

1. Mary and Jane Doe are a same-sex couple who were married recently in New Paltz, NY and then moved to Texas because Mary was hired as an employee of the state government there. Jane fell ill and required major surgery, but the state government refused to provide medical benefits that spouses are entitled to under state law. The government cited the Defense of Marriage Act of 1996, which provides that states are not obligated to recognize gay marriages performed in another state. The couple sued claiming a violation of constitutional rights under the equal protection and full faith and credit clauses. They lost in the lower courts but appealed to the Supreme Court. Write an *amicus curiae* brief taking a position in this case (*Doe v. Texas*) on the central question of whether or not Jane was entitled to medical benefits. Support your argument using relevant case law, writings of the framers and/or constitutional law scholars, and any other sources that may be relevant. A key part of your brief should address whether or not the Defense of Marriage Act is constitutional.
2. Many scholars have claimed that political parties have been in decline since the 1960s. The high degree of cooperation recently between President Bush and congressional Republicans suggests otherwise. Do arguments about the decline of parties hold up for recent years? If so, how? If not, why not? A good essay will address the issues of how parties operate in government and specifically how they operate in the separation of powers system.
3. In a recent article entitled "The Hispanic Challenge" (see the course web site for a link), renowned professor Samuel P. Huntington argues that "The persistent inflow of Hispanic immigrants threatens to divide the United States into two peoples, two cultures, and two languages. Unlike past immigrant groups, Mexicans and other Latinos have not assimilated into mainstream U.S. culture, forming instead their own political and linguistic enclaves—from Los Angeles to Miami—and rejecting the Anglo-Protestant

values that built the American dream.” He goes on to claim, “If this trend continues, the cultural division between Hispanics and Anglos could replace the racial division between blacks and whites as the most serious cleavage in U.S. society” and warns of a political backlash against Hispanics, with whites organizing and lobbying for special privileges as they become the minority in particular parts of the country. Do you agree or disagree with Huntington’s argument? What implications does his argument have for the civil rights of Hispanics? For the civil rights of whites? What political solution, if any, do you see to the problems that Huntington foresees? Your argument should include a discussion of the political realities of organization and political participation, possibly referencing the African-American civil rights movement of the 20th century.

4. Write a memo to John Kerry’s campaign manager that outlines a strategy for Kerry’s election campaign, focusing on international relations and security issues. Drawing on the literatures in political science on the presidency, presidential elections, and public opinion, discuss where and how Kerry should direct his resources. Your memo should include a discussion of foreign policy initiatives as well as international events that might affect the 2004 elections, such as another terrorist attack or the capture of Osama Bin Laden.