

PAPER - INSTRUCTIONS

The research paper should be turned in by the beginning of class on the date due, to my email address (tkalino@siue.edu), from your University email address, with an attached Word file, and a Subject Line similar to the following: POLS 498 - Research Paper. The name of the Word file should be <lastname><firstinitial>ResearchPaper498.doc. An example KalinowskiTResearchPaper498.doc. The extension may be .docx

Your Assignment:

Your journal is a collection of your thoughts pertaining to each reading. The project should answer the broader picture regarding the functioning of the entire legal system in the United States. In particular you are to address how a society continues to function as a majoritarian democracy while protecting freedoms and rights for both the majority and minority members of society. In particular, there has been a strong shift to resolve every major societal issue in the courts. Your project is to explain your thoughts based upon the collection of readings regarding how a majoritarian democracy can continue to exist given the current influence of the courts. You should use readings to illustrate your understanding of this issue with examples, arguments, critiques, and supporting statements. There is no specific page requirement, but you cannot adequately address this in less than 15 pages.

As an analogy, there are old sayings that you can't see the forest for the trees; you can't see the trees for the forest. If you treat each individual reading and the reflection on that reading as the trees, you can treat this project as the forest. Once you have the collection of readings (the trees), your project is to illustrate your understanding of the entire legal system (the forest).

Graduate Student Differentiation:

You are to undertake the same project, but it is a higher percentage of your grade and the depth of thought and material should represent that higher percentage (if you can quantify such things, the expectations are about twice that of the undergraduate project -- i.e. twice as thorough [that might be read as twice the length, except graduate students should be able to write more concisely]). You should expect to not only use the readings from this class, but you are expected to bring in other primary sources (possibly mentioned in the assigned readings, but to be included in a bibliography) to supplement your source of examples, arguments, critiques, and supporting statements.

Technical Details:

Please review the article in Blackboard by the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals regarding Typography -- sections 2, 3, and 5. Conform to this document unless it conflicts with something specified below.

- 1) Cover page with your name, semester, and course number.
- 2) Page setup: 8.5" x 11", 12 pt Bookman Old Style font, double spaced, 1 inch margins, and left justified except for headings. If for some reason you do not have access to this font, please come talk to me. If for some reason you *need* to use a sans serif font, the only one that I can read passably well is Ebrima, but I would prefer that you work in your favorite font, then convert the final document to Bookman Old Style, but go back and deal with any formatting changes.
- 3) Every assertion of fact should be cited unless it is common knowledge. If the fact is not cited, it may be ignored.
- 4) Citation method is discretionary (see Syllabus), but should be consistent. Briefs and cases tend to use embedded (usually pinpoint) citations with a list of cited authority either at the beginning or end. Legal journals tend to footnote sources with a bibliography at the end. Over citation is almost impossible. Try to make sure to put information in your own words. While 1-3 sentences might be quoted, large blocks of text should not be used unless absolutely necessary. In this rare instance, block indent and single space the quotation.
- 5) You should use at least 5 sources; all sources should be reputable and easily accessible to other students. Your assigned readings consist of more than 5 sources. Blogs/wikipedia/encyclopedias do not count as reputable sources.
- 6) First person statements or "in my opinion" statements should be avoided -- no "I", "my" or "we". Contractions should be avoided as well.
- 7) To adequately cover the topic, you should expect the paper to be a minimum of 15 pages and probably no more than 30. I do not take points off for being outside of that page range, but if you are, your grade will probably reflect that you did something wrong.
- 8) If you have any confusion about your assignment, please discuss with me.
- 9) Avoid using IT IS, THERE IS, IT WOULD, THERE ARE, and the like. I originally wrote number 8 above as "If there is any confusion..." Other examples and corrections:

It is unethical to use someone's words as your own.

Using someone else's words as your own is unethical.

It is important to cite information even if it is being used under the fair use doctrine. Even if someone else's content may be used under the fair use doctrine, the material must be cited.

It may be a violation of United States copyright laws to copy too much material. If too much material is copied, a violation of the United States copyright laws may occur.

Please try to avoid using IT in this fashion. It is simply lazy. [Irony intended]

Grading Rubric

Content:

75 points

Majoritarian Rule

Minority Rights

Morality

Final arbiter of these conflicts

Writing:

25 points – earned as each of the following are judged on a 5 pt scale:

- 1) Clear and persuasive.
- 2) Arguments are supported with reasons, evidence, and examples.
- 3) Organized and unified.
- 4) Sources are correctly documented and cited.
- 5) Grammar, punctuation, spelling, layout, and word choice are proper and free from errors.