

Valdini- PS 204- Spring 2018- Constitutional Design Project & Paper

You must complete:

1. A signed, completed constitution submitted one week before your paper is due. For example, if you are in the United Kingdom group, I will expect to receive your completed constitution on Thursday, May 10.
2. An individual 6-8 page paper. In other words, every member of every group must turn in their own, original paper. Any collaboration on the paper is unacceptable. The paper is also due on the day that I discuss your country. For example, if you are in the United Kingdom group, your paper is due on Thursday, May 17.

****Please Note:** I will NOT ACCEPT your constitution unless all group members have signed it. That is, in order to successfully turn in your constitution, one group member will turn in a single, completed constitution on the due date, and all group members will have signed that draft of the constitution. If any member declines to sign, the entire group will be penalized.

A bit of advice...

1. Feeling lost about your new identity and/or the country that you're redesigning? I recommend that you:
 - a. Read the chapter in your case book on your chosen country right now.
 - b. Go to the NYTimes.com and search for articles about your country/identity.
 - c. Go to this website (made by our friendly librarians to help you):
<http://guides.library.pdx.edu/comparativepolitics>
 - d. Come visit me in office hours or talk to me after class.
2. If your identity has been designated "SECRET," you absolutely cannot reveal your identity to anyone until the day that your paper is due.
3. If you cannot all agree on a system, your group gets an 'F' for the paper grade. In other words, you must compromise and agree on a design.
4. You will not be able to get everything you want! The key is to fight for the institutions that are most important to your character, and let the others go. Sneakiness is encouraged. You do not have to reveal to your group what you really want, and secret alliances are encouraged (just as long as you're sure that your preferences match). JUST REMEMBER: All group members must be present in order to formalize an institution. You can make secret deals, but all group members must agree on the institution before it becomes valid.
5. If you want to do well on this project (i.e., get an 'A' or a 'B') you must go beyond the information presented in your course texts. Use recent newspaper articles to learn more about your country of choice, as well as the person that you are assigned to be. Make sure to CITE these articles in your paper. Cite newspapers or reputable news sources- Wikipedia is a good starting point, but is not considered a quality citation.
6. As you design the new political system, remember that you must protect your own interests, as well as the interests of the group that you represent. The old constitution is completely gone- though the history, culture, and current challenges of the country remain- so you must figure out how to design your constitution in a way that gives your character at least some power. Public policy is not your top priority (though you are welcome to add some policy elements to the constitution)- your top priority is to get yourself access to power through the design of institutions.
For example: let's say that you are assigned to be a top official in the U.S. Republican party, currently serving in the U.S. Senate. Your next move should be to figure out the types of institutions which will most benefit both yourself AND your party. How can you increase your own power? How can you guarantee that your party will gain more power?

How can you increase the power of the Senate (thus giving you more power)? If, in the new re-design, Senators will again be selected by the voters, how can you keep the voters happy with your institutional design? These are the sorts of questions that you should be thinking about.

****Please note: if you do not protect the interests of yourself, the group that you represent, and/or the person/people who selected you for your position in government, your grade will be negatively affected.** For example, if as a Republican Senator, you allow the Senate to be dissolved, you must explain and defend why you let this happen. If you don't explain why you allowed this (or if your explanation is based on a misunderstanding of the effects of institutions), you will be penalized.

Finally, it IS possible for every group member to get an 'A' on the project. If everyone in your group works hard, writes a good paper, and successfully defends their most important interests, then everyone will get an 'A'.

Advice for the Paper:

The most important thing to remember is that absolutely no collaboration is allowed on the paper. Each individual will submit their own paper with its own unique perspective.

1. The paper must be submitted as follows (you must do both of the following 2 things):
 - a. Turn in one paper copy that will be handed to me on the day that we discuss your country.
 - b. Turn in one electronic copy that will be emailed to me on that day as well (my email address is: mev@pdx.edu).

****Please note: these copies must match one another EXACTLY. If there are any differences, the paper will not be accepted.****

2. The paper must be double-spaced, 6-8 pages in a 12-point font. Spelling, organization, clarity- these are all crucial for any good paper, so keep them in mind as you write and revise. Also, make sure to include a bibliography in addition to your 6-8 pages of text, and cite your sources using the APSA citation style.
3. The ultimate goal of your paper is:

Briefly explain your identity in the project (give a background on who you are, and what your primary interests are- remember to support this with outside literature), but spend the MAJORITY of your paper on explaining the impact of the new institutions on your identity. That is, the goal of this paper is to show that you understand the new institutions of your country, and that you also understand how these institutions will impact the political power/goals of your identity. Thus it will be valuable to consider the following questions: How do you expect the new institutional design to benefit your interests and those of the group that you represent? How do you expect the new system to be detrimental to your interests and those of the group that you represent? Your goal is to explain why you made the decisions that you did, using both our readings on the effects of institutions as well as outside readings that demonstrate what "you" ultimately want. In other words, most of your paper should be spent explaining why you chose the institutions that you did, and backing up your choices with facts from our readings on the effects of institutions. For example, if you are choosing an institution because it increases efficiency (and this efficiency benefits you), provide a source that confirms that this institution will increase efficiency AND argue as to how it will benefit you.

AND...Do you have questions about the "who are you?" assignment? Look at your syllabus- lots of information on it can be found there.