

**Assignment: Position Paper**

Your assignment is to choose a public policy and/or political issue (and/or piece of legislation) that is **specifically related to the subject matter of the class (i.e., California politics and/or local political and social issues)** and write an essay (**five to eight pages in length; typed, double spaced, 12-pt. Times New Roman font**) that will:

**(1) Present the background behind the issue.** This should address the following:

\*\*\*Where does the issue or policy fall in terms of the traditional political spectrums and divisions (leftwing/rightwing; liberal/conservative; Republican/Democrat; etc.) and ideologies? In a general sense, who is “for,” who is “against,” and why?

\*\*\*How does the issue determine or affect public policy for the present and the future? What effects will the resolution of this issue have upon public policy and/or social/economic conditions?

\*\*\*How has each side of the issue been “framed” in terms of public deliberation and debate? What are some of the more important implications for other issues or policies that arise from these arguments and their premises?

\*\*\*Where does it stand in terms of the respective agendas and policies of each of the state, county and local office holders (where applicable)? Where is it in terms of garnering the attention of the public and media? Is there a national or international “angle”?

\*\*\*How – if at all – does this affect your life and the lives of classmates/colleagues?

**(2) Present an argument for one side of the issue (i.e., the “pro” or the “con”). Your argument should be founded on logical and falsifiable premises and empirical evidence.** This may include research to support your side of the issue (e.g., quotes, empirical evidence, data, news items, etc.). Also, **a good, well-formulated argument anticipates objections and counterpoints, and addresses them.**

**\*\*\*\*This should include specific public policy legislative and/or executive actions that will (so your argument goes) address the issue.**

**To research and explore their topic, students should read and collect newspaper and magazine articles, while garnering information from relevant books, as well as from organizations and/or government agencies that take an active interest or have a stake in the issue. All sources must be cited.**

**(3) (Optional):** Present an argument for the other side of the issue, following the guidelines and requirements of #2.