QVTHS U.S. Government

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Government Project

Failures of the American Justice System

The focus of this project is to detail failures in the American justice system. In recent years investigative reporters and a series of documentaries have shed light on many of the flaws that exist in our legal system. From mishandled and manipulated evidence to procedural errors by lawyers and judges there are many examples of innocent citizens being locked up and even fewer examples of those exonerated for their crimes. This project will investigate many of those failures through the examination of case studies and attempt to prescribe remedies for this flawed justice system.

Research Based Homework

Each student will hand in their own research to add to the group’s bibliography. Each student will be required to hand in *at least 3 sources* of information pertaining to their topic. Students should utilize information from the library (books, magazines, and newspaper articles), interviews and the internet (using the databases shown in the library, as well as relevant “.gov” or “.edu” websites). *This means that each group depending on your size will have a bibliography of at a minimum 10 - 12 sources.*

There will be 2 rounds of research checks for this assignment. Failure to complete these research based assignments will negatively impact your homework scores & overall ability to properly execute the project!

##### Research Check # 1 - share research & printed out sources

##### (15 Homework Points = Each source will be graded on a 0-5 scale, 0 being a useless source & 5 being a highly credible source. Students who have earned a perfect score and printed out hardcopies of their internet based research will be awarded an extra credit point for a total of 16 points.)

##### Research Check # 2 - share research & printed out sources with completed MLA Works Cited List

##### (10 Homework Points)

Project Component #1 - Written Component - 50 % of project grade

This is not to be written like a traditional research paper. However, the group’s work should be equivalent to 5-6 pages written pages. Each individual student should write 1 to 2 pages to reach the group goal. It is the group’s decision to break up the work, but everyone must write.

Despite not following a traditional essay format students must still meet the following expectations using MLA in-text citations and the creation of an MLA works cited list:

➢ Have 1 inch margins

o You must go to Page Layout --- Margins ---

o Set Top, Bottom, Right & Left to 1.00” margins

➢ Include double spaced paragraphs

o Highlight the entire essay after you have written it.

o Right click on the text and click on the paragraph tab.

o Set Line Spacing to Double

➢ Use font size = 12; font style = Times New Roman or Arial

The group’s written assignment should answer the following questions.

Question #1: Explain to what extent police, lawyers & court procedures are resulting in failures in our justice system?

Question # 2: Provide examples of your topic’s failures in the justice system.

Question # 3: Detail the background, court case & possible outcome of 1 specific case study that best highlights the group topic. Be as specific as possible.

Question # 4: What efforts can be taken to address these problems? How do we fix these problems?

Question # 5: How has this unit affected your perspective of the American judicial system?

Project Component # 2 - Visual Component - 25 % of project grade

When students come up to present the oral component of the assignment they will have a poster board and/or Power Point (Or Google) slide presentation in order to enhance their presentation. This component may be done on a poster board or the tri-fold science fair boards if completing the assignment by hand. Computers and mobile devices may be utilized to create a Power Point (or Google) slide presentation as well. Groups are expected to include a cover slide with their group topic & names. It is necessary to present all relevant information to the class. This may include all of your written work, but I recommend making bullet notes where appropriate. You can also include any charts, pictures, maps, etc., that you feel will enhance your project. Every individual student is responsible for adding something to the visual component, but construction does not need to be completed by the whole group.

Project Component # 3 – Oral Presentation - 25 % of project grade

Each group will be responsible to present all of their findings to the class. During this time each student will be given the opportunity to share their completed portion of the assignment with the class. Again this isn’t optional. It is mandatory. Students must report verbally in a clear and concise voice the information they have been researching and studying to their fellow classmates. Each student should be talking for a minimum of 2 - 3 minutes about your specific subtopic. Meaning, each presentation should last 10 - 15 minutes. Points will be deducted for groups going under and over the allotted time.

Finalizing the Grade

At the completion of the project your group’s work will be calculated to determine your grade. However, it does not end there. Each group will then determine if anyone in their group deserves a different grade. Each group will be allowed to add a total of +10 points and subtract -10 points to each others grades. (Note: That is to be distributed across the group, not +/-10 points per student.) This must be done as a group. For example, Johnnie really did a good job finding charts, but Sabrina also did an amazing job on the Power Point presentation, so the group can give each of them +5. The same can be done the opposite way. For example, Jason was too busy cutting class and never completed his work so the group can deduct points from his grade. I will not allow the aimless adding of points to everyone’s grades or hurting people’s grades because of personal reasons. If no one deserves the boost or deduction then no one will earn the points. Finally, I will have the ability to add and/or subtract 5 points from an individual’s group grade based on my assessment of their work during the course of the project (meaning what I see you do in class). Realize, your grade will be based on your work, your classmates’ opinion of your work and finally my own assessment of your work habits. I have the right to veto any student based decision ( in order to make sure you are fair, not to come off like a dictator.)