

First Paper

POLI 100, Section 002, Spring 2008

One primary goal of this class is that you be able to write a logical and coherent cause-and-effect argument. It is also a goal of our study of the Constitution that you be able to explain the purpose behind the institutions the Framers crafted. To accomplish these goals, this paper asks you to make arguments regarding the text of the Constitution.

Your assignment requires you to choose and study one section or clause of the Constitution. Argue what caused the Framers to write this section or clause as they did. Then, design an alternative to what the Framers created and argue how this alternative would do a better or worse job of meeting the Framers' consideration.

Since you cannot know for certain what was on the Framers' mind as they wrote the Constitution, you will have to articulate a line of reasoning that plausibly explains the Framers' actions based on what you do know. For example, you might be able to use background information from the textbook, as well as *Federalist* 10 & 51, to argue what the Framers' motives were.

Basics:

The maximum length for the paper is 1500 words in length (about five pages); please list the word count on the first page. The paper should be double-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, with default margins and all pages numbered. Please turn-in a typewritten hard copy to me at the beginning of class on the due date, February 1.

Criteria for a Successful Essay:

1. Argument on origins of original text (does the writing make a believable case as to what motivated the Framers in writing this section or clause?)
2. Comparison of original and new text (how good is the argument of which version best meets the Framers' criteria?)
3. Presentation (does the writing correctly use grammar & punctuation?)
4. Organization (does the writing have a clear direction that is followed throughout?)
5. Originality

A = excellent performance on all five criteria

B = above average on four or excellent on some but flawed on others

C = average across the board or above average in part but with significant flaws

D = below average across the board