

Final project

Goal: The final project should demonstrate your complete mastery of the three thinking skills that this course aims to develop.

Basic requirements:

Your final project must express your responsible opinion on some contemporary issue of freedom of speech.

The problem can be real or hypothetical; it does need to be a true problem--that is, it must be an issue with at least two sides, now. Ideally, it is a problem that deeply interests and concerns you.

Your project can be in any format, as long as that format allows you to demonstrate:

1. your ability to articulate your own view--it cannot simply report or describe.
2. your ability to defend your view--it cannot simply state, it must argue.
3. your ability to locate yourself within the free speech tradition--it cannot argue in isolation--it must rely on the resources the tradition provides.

One project format, and one I recommend, is to continue your work this quarter by writing a "Supreme Court Opinion" or advocacy paper taking a stand on some controversy and arguing for your position. Another possible format is the tutorial. This format asks you to discuss intelligently your contemporary problem with me for an hour, sometime during finals week. But any format is acceptable, as long as it allows you to demonstrate your skills; one student's wrote a short story, for example, which is online together with some other sample student work at the course website.

Your final project must be your own, individual work. But you are free--and indeed, strongly encouraged--to develop your project together with a group. As with your previous work during the quarter, you may find that working in a group allows you to share research and other labor; allows you to sharpen your arguments against dissent; and makes the process more fun.

As with your previous Opinions in this course, you must hand in a brief of every case you mention (however briefly) in your final project. If you work in a group, you may hand in these briefs collectively.

To keep you on track towards submitting an excellent final project, I'm going to encourage you to hand in pieces of it starting around midquarter. On the back of this sheet is a detailed timeline specifying what you should hand in, when. Please talk with your group and then with me if you find this information confusing or inadequate.

Good luck!

Final Project Timeline:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Due</u>	<u>Details</u>
No later than class time, M 1/29	"Find an Issue" email	Send me an email describing a new issue or controversy and in a few sentences stating your position on it. "New" means not covered in class AND not included in the online Free Speech Controversies Bank. Please check both the syllabus and the course website before sending in your issue.
No later than class time, M 2/5	Permission for final project topic	Send me an email describing the "Contemporary Problem of Freedom of Speech" you want to work on, plus your current ideas about project format/group membership (if any). I'll give you some feedback and probably approve it.
No later than class time, M 2/12	Statement of facts	Send me (as a group) an email containing a 1-2 page detailed description of the basic facts of your controversy.
In class, M 2/19	Initial case briefs	Hand in (as a group) briefs of the cases you expect to be relying on in your final project. No email, please!
In class, F 3/2	Complete draft of final project	Hand in (as a group) a complete draft of your final project, if you want feedback. Please note: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The more complete it is, the better feedback I'll be able to give.• I'll reserve the entire weekend to respond to your work. After that, I will try but cannot guarantee I'll have a chance to read and give feedback.
In class, M 3/5	Class discussion of one issue	On this day, a group that I select will lead the class in discussing their final project issue.
Tenth week	Optional group meetings	If you are working in a group of at least four people, you're welcome to schedule an appointment with me to talk through your issue.
Finals week	Tutorials	If you've chosen the "tutorial" format, you'll meet with me for an hour of intelligent conversation. Please email me well in advance to arrange a time.
Friday 16 March	Completed final project, with self-assessment and portfolio of work.	Due by 5:00 p.m. in my mailbox, 1815 Chicago front office.