

## Anatomy of a Sample Assignment Write-up

**Title** → **Position Paper on Super PACs**

Descriptive,  
introductory,  
and contextual  
position

You have read a summary and some commentary on the Supreme Court's Citizens United decision as well as viewed some news reports on the subject during week 4. We discussed some of the arguments, pro and con, surrounding it, including the possible influence of Super Pac-funded negative ads on the outcome of primary and general elections. We also watched and discussed a humorous video clip of Stephen Colbert announcing the formation of his own Super PAC. Now you are being asked to take a position on the subject.

### **Instructions**

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- In addition to referring to our class materials, read the following report found at \_\_\_\_\_ on the laws and history of campaign finance reform of the past decade. Then take a position, pro or con, on whether Citizens United decision is likely to have a negative effect on the conduct and results of our elections.
- Write a 500-750 word essay in the form of a position paper to support your view on the subject, with your position clearly stated in the first paragraph. (This need not be your actual personal view—you may argue from the opposite point of view.) Quote from at least three “reliable” sources as part of your evidence. (See my commentary from week 5 on how to evaluate sources.) Alternatively, you have the option of creating a video essay of 7-10 minutes in duration.
- Submit to the instructor as a Word document (include your name and Positionpaper in the file name) via Blackboard assignments area by August 2<sup>nd</sup> or upload to YouTube using the special media instructions in our syllabus.
- Be prepared to post your essay or a link to your video in our Position Paper forum after August 5<sup>th</sup> by creating a new topic thread with your name in the subject line. Comment and critique on at least two classmates' work by August 12<sup>th</sup>.

Assessment  
criteria and  
requirements

This essay/video is worth 25 points and will be graded on the following elements:

- Clarity and organization of essay or video presentation—4 pts
- Persuasive and logical argument—7 pts
- Selection of reliable sources—5 pts
- Evidence of research into the issues—5 pts
- Quality of comments on classmates' essays or presentations—4 pts

Late papers will be docked total points at the rate of 1 point for every day late. No papers or presentations will be accepted after August 5<sup>th</sup>.