

STS 201: Consensus conference assignment

Due: December 1, 2017

In this assignment, we'll be conducting a mock "consensus conference"—a technique developed by Danish policy makers to involve the lay public in making decisions about controversial scientific or technological questions. You will take on the role of a Wisconsin citizen and conduct research on your character for the conference.

Your assignment for the consensus conference has three parts:

- 1) **Decide how best to represent the citizens of Wisconsin.** The characters chosen for the conference should represent a range of different demographic variables, cultural values, and degrees of familiarity with the specific topic of the conference. We will set aside time in section to discuss what a representative group of citizens should look like and to allocate individual roles.
- 2) **Preparation of a 750 word background document** for your character. This document should describe the relevant features of the person you will be playing in the conference, and present your research on how these features will affect the way your character is likely to evaluate the issue. You do not have to decide what position your character will take on the issue prior to the conference.
- 3) **Participation during the conference.** The conference will be held over two days, during class time. Your participation will involve responding to the expert presentations, and formulating opinions and recommendations. Some students will facilitate small group sessions, and orally report the results of the small group sessions on the final day of the conference. You will also be responsible for evaluating your fellow classmates on how well they represent their characters during the conference.

Please submit your assignment by uploading a .pdf, .doc, or .docx file to Canvas. Please **do not** include your name in the body of the document or the file name to allow for blind grading of the written part of the assignment.

STS 201: Consensus conference rubric

	Exemplary	Competent	Needs development	Score
Research	Background document addresses a number of relevant demographic/cultural variables; sources are used creatively to understand these variables and their relationship to the issue	Background document shows research into relevant variables; but addresses a limited number of variables, does not explain well their connection to the issue, or uses questionable sources	Background document draws on general knowledge rather than specific research; sources are non-existent or inappropriate for the topic	/8
Analysis	Makes specific predictions about how the character is likely to react; predictions follow clearly and logically from the research	Makes specific predictions about how the character is likely to react, but connections between predictions and research are not always articulated	Predictions about how the character is likely to react to the issue are based on personal opinion and unrelated to the research presented	/6
Conference participation	Responds actively to expert presentations and takes a lead in small group discussions; comments reflect the specific attributes of the character chosen	Participates in small group discussions; comments are general or reflect personal opinions rather than the character role	Says little during large or small group discussions; lets others do all the talking	/3
Group work	Section members work together to decide on characters; as a group the characters are representative of the population; evaluation sheets are carefully and thoughtfully completed	Section members divide their roles and then work independently; characters are representative of the population in most respects; evaluation sheets are completed	A few members dominate the group or did all the work; many relevant demographic features are overrepresented or absent; evaluation sheets are not completed	/3
				/20