



Balancing Acts

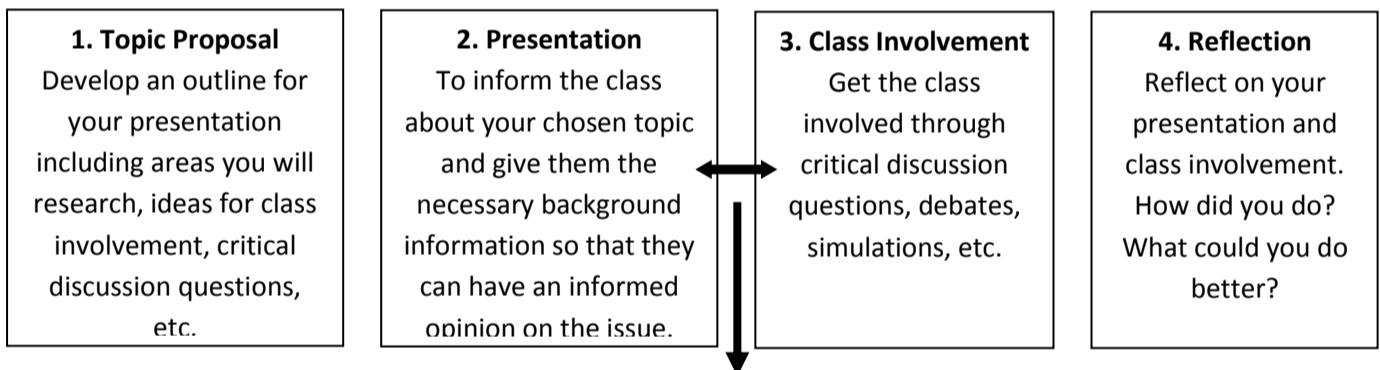
“Weighing the merits of controversial bills, acts, and laws.”

Meaningful discussion is a really important aspect of law class. Over the course of the semester you will have a turn at leading a presentation and discussion about a controversial bill, act, or law of your choice. Each week one day will be set aside for student-led presentations.

Here’s how it will work:

1. Students will form groups of three.
2. Groups will select one of the following to present, discuss and debate. It could be:
 - a proposed law (bill) that legislators are considering introducing in the legislature
 - a proposed law (bill) that legislators are currently debating
 - a proposed law (bill) that legislators introduced and debated but never passed
 - a law that currently exists but has recently come to attention in the media because it may need to be changed or even abolished
 - a law that no longer exists because it was abolished
 - No repeats – each group must have a different topic.
 - Must be Canadian focused.
 - **TIP: Choose something YOU are interested in, otherwise, you will have a challenging time getting the class to be engaged**

There are **FOUR** main elements to this assignment:



The presentation and class involvement should happen simultaneously. For example, don’t present for 30 straight minutes and not involve the class. Get them involved from the beginning!

1. TOPIC PROPOSAL

Each group must fill out the topic proposal and submit it by the assigned due date. This will allow groups to explore ideas for their topic and assign roles for each group member to get started on.

2. PRESENTATION

You will provide a classroom presentation to inform the class about your chosen bill, act, or law. You will deliver an **UNBIASED** view of the bill, act, or law. Be sure to include the following, but it does not have to be presented in this order:

- Creative hook! Get the class interested in your topic
- Explanation of the bill, act, or law (what is its purpose?)
- Status of the bill, act, or law (ex. 1st reading? Passed?) *if applicable
- Consequences of breaking the law?
- Pro’s and con’s of the law/bill (consider having the class develop these)
- Media coverage?
- Looking forward....what are the ramifications of this bill?
- Any other relevant issues

Other Considerations:

- Consider using creative audio-visual programs (think beyond PowerPoint) to make your presentation stand out – example: [Prezi](#) !
- Incorporate elements like video clips to break up the presentation and generate more interest.
 - o Video clips are great, but are not to be shown just to be shown. In other words, it must be properly introduced and smoothly incorporated, and must be debriefed/reflected upon.
 - o Use only credible sources (ex. CBC, CTV, CBS, PBS)

3. CLASS INVOLVEMENT

Within your presentation, there must be components of class involvement. This could take many forms:

- **Critical** discussion questions (this goes beyond “what do you think?”). For example, “if you were ____, what would you think about this?”
- Formal debates (*need to be well set-up)
- Simulation activities (scenarios, role-play, etc.)
- Articles/Readings (If you need anything photocopied for your presentation, I need it **2 days** before the presentation date)
- Anything else you can think of!

4. REFLECTION

Each group member will prepare a reflection on their presentation **due 2 days later** (maximum 1 page in length, minimum 2 paragraphs). You should reflect on your presentation and the class involvement component. What did you do well? What did not go as well? What would you change the next time and why?

***This often gets forgotten about, yet is 1/6th of your overall mark!!!* If you do not submit the reflection, you will receive a mark of ZERO since this is a component of the assignment.**

Resources:

- CBC.ca
- RCMP Website
- News shows (The National, CTV, etc.)
- Newspapers
- [Legislative Assembly of Ontario Website](#) (check out bills currently being debated in the legislature)

Some Ideas: (there are many, many, many other options!)

- Polygamy Laws
 - Assisted Suicide Law
 - Prostitution Laws
 - Cyberbullying Law
 - Human Trafficking Laws
 - Mandatory Retirement Laws
 - Terrorism Laws
 - Human Reproduction Laws
 - Adoption Laws
- Many more options!!!!**

Some final thoughts...

This is a major assignment this semester and must be treated accordingly. Your group must be thoroughly prepared in order to execute a meaningful and thought provoking presentation. It is expected that you will **dress in presentation appropriate clothing, be ready to go on time,** and be **enthusiastic about your topic.** Finally, all material presented during the Balancing Acts presentations is testable material so attendance is crucial.

Evaluation:

Please see the rubric for the evaluation breakdown.