
Lesson Name: PARS: Problem, Analysis, Resolution Seminars

Category: Canadian and World Politics

Course Code: CPW 4U1

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School: Markville Secondary School

Level: Grade 12

Time: 6 Seminars of 76 Minutes each

Rationale:

During the PARS activity, a group of students will conduct a seminar discussion. Each group member will present, ask questions, and lead a discussion with a small group. The focus of the seminar will follow from the lecture or topic area of the week and is based on an assigned reading. The PARS activity is similar to the Student Led Tutorials (SLT) conducted in the first half of the course, yet there is an expectation that students will now try to move beyond identifying problems that exist in the Canadian sphere to trying to search for practical resolutions to international issues.

The small group Seminar allows students to present information in a less intimidating forum, and prepare them for a common format for learning in post-secondary education.

Expectations:

Overall Course Expectations

- explain the rights and responsibilities of individual citizens, groups, and states in the international community;
- describe the main ways in which sovereign states and non-state participants cooperate deal with international conflicts;
- evaluate the role of Canada and Canadians in the international community;
- describe the structure and function of international intergovernmental and non-govern organizations;
- evaluate the role and operation of the international human rights protection system.

Specific Expectations

Researching, Recording, and Organizing Information

- formulate meaningful questions that lead to a deeper understanding of a political issue and of the different ways to approach an issue;
- collect data from a range of media and sources (e.g., print or electronic media, interviews, government and community agencies);

- classify and clarify information by using timelines, organizers, mind maps, concept webs, maps, graphs, charts, and diagrams;
- prepare summary notes in a variety of forms and for a variety of purposes (e.g., for recording research findings, making oral presentations, and studying for tests and examinations).

Analysing and Evaluating Information

By the end of this course, students will:

- distinguish among opinions, facts, and arguments in sources;
- describe some of the key methods of analysis used by political scientists;
- draw conclusions based on an effective evaluation of sources, analysis of information, and awareness of diverse political interpretations.

Communicating Research Results

- present ideas, understandings, and arguments effectively in a variety of contexts (e.g., in role plays, interviews, simulations, debates, group presentations, seminars), using graphic organizers and displays (e.g., graphs, charts, images);
- use political terms accurately;
- write clear, coherent, and logically organized reports, papers, and essays that include correctly documented citations and bibliographies, demonstrate academic honesty, and avoid plagiarism.

Responsible Citizenship

- think creatively and analytically to develop potential resolutions to a series of given issues and issues that they select;
- work effectively both individually and in groups;
- demonstrate the ability to seek and respect the opinions of others;
- communicate and exercise their own political views and convictions in a responsible, democratic manner.

Instructions:

Refer to the Handouts. The teacher must present the handouts and structure to the class at least one week prior to the first seminar. The number of seminars will depend on the size of the class. Ideally, the instructor will develop a set of 6 seminars that will occur on a weekly basis. For example, with a class of 30 students, have five set groups of six. A class of 24 would have six groups of four. That will allow for 6 separate Seminars, with each person in the class running one seminar. This activity also distinguishes itself from the SLT in that students will be asked to sit with a different group each week so that they will be exposed to a variety of opinions.

At least one week prior to the seminar the instructor will provide the leaders with their assigned article. Three groups will be given the “Yes” side of the debate, while three will be given the “No” side of the debate. I use books such as Crosscurrents or the Taking Sides series (links are provided in the supplements section).

1) Introduction: Frame the Problem (10-15 Minutes)

The instructor will “Frame the Problem” at the beginning of the class with a brief overview of the issue. A brief summary of the articles will be interwoven with a broader perspective on why this issue is important within the international sphere. The instructor will attempt to bring media to the introduction (video, audio

2) Seminar Begins

The seminar leader will now give each of their table-mates a copy of their Handout (including a Summary of the article, a list of 7-10 Questions that will be used for discussion, and evidence to support the argument put forth in the article).

3) Seminar

The Seminar will now run for approximately 20-30 minutes where 3 tutorial leaders will present the “NO” side of the Issue, and 3 will present the “YES” side of the issue. The teacher will circulate and observe the seminars, and if relevant, sketch out some important elements of the issue to be analyzed prior to the open debate. I like to move from group to group asking what each table believes is the central question/problem with the issue. These will be brought to the full class discussion.

4) Supplementary Evidence

When the Seminar element of the issue is complete, if students are able to find supplemental evidence to highlight certain elements (Video, Documents, Statistics), etc... this is a good time to bring the evidence to light. CBC News in Review, Foreign Assignment, and news agencies such as The New York Times all have extensive multimedia areas.

5) Issue Analysis and Open Debate

The instructor will now lead an analysis and debate on the issue. At this point the class will have formed some opinion about the issue. This is a time for the teacher to guide, question, moderate and provide clarification.

6) Debate Closure

In the last few minutes of class try to provide examples that inspire hope. Some of the challenges that exist in our world often overshadow the small or large successes. Students should not leave the room thinking that “we are all going to die”. They should leave with more questions, and the desire to solve the world’s problems in their own way.

7) Student Reflection

Students will spend the last 5-10 minutes of class building a group of reflections on the issues that will be covered in the seminar series.

*Note: As many University Seminars are less formal than lectures, Seminar leaders are allowed to bring in food and beverages for their table to make for a more relaxed atmosphere.

Materials:

- ⇒ Television & Overhead (if requested by tutorial leaders)
- ⇒ Course Pack
- ⇒ Seminar Leaders must bring Handouts for each member of their table, plus one for the Instructor.
- ⇒ Laptop, multimedia, LCD projector if necessary

Assessment & Evaluation:

Part 1: Assess and Evaluate the Seminar through Observation

Part 2: Use Evaluation Rubric for Student created Handout containing a Summary, Evidence, Questions.

Part 3: Evaluate the Reflections that will follow the series of seminars.