

Assignment Suggestions for New Voter Project Participation

The assignment below may be used either in combination with a sequence you're teaching on the election (e.g., as a response paper) or as a stand-alone assignment for which students receive extra credit or a participation grade. Use the suggestions in conjunction with the outcomes you're already working with in class. Use them in conjunction with the Sabato text, if you're using it in class. *Please modify to suit your classroom situation!*

New Voter Project Assignment

Context: New Mexico is regarded by analysts of voting patterns and voter behavior as a swing state whose electoral votes may well determine the outcome of the election. For this reason New Mexicans are getting a lot of attention from interested parties. Not only are commercials aired in New Mexico media that are not seen in other states, we have on campus a non-partisan group whose mission is to get out the vote: the New Voter Project. The Project's particular target is the youth vote, that is, people between the ages of 18 and 24. *[Provide more data about how many UNM students are registered -- YTK. Cite Sabato articles if you've used them. Cite any classroom discussions pertaining to voting.]*

Purpose: To gather information about voting behaviors of New Mexicans and evaluate efforts to get out the vote; to practice rhetorical analysis.

Action: On September *XX* in *XXXX* Hall on campus, New Voter Project representatives will speak directly to undergraduates trying to persuade them to a) register to vote and b) go to the polls. To complete this assignment you must attend this event. *[Alternative: On September XX, New Voter Project representatives will be attending our class to persuade you to register and vote.]*

Writing Assignment [*mix, match, modify the elements*]: Whether or not you are between 18 and 24 years old and whether or not you are registered to vote, assume that you are the target audience for the speakers.

First identify your audience.

Possible audiences:

1. The NVP representatives themselves**
2. Friends who are not registered to vote
3. Friends who are disaffected and disenchanted with politics
4. Classmates who did not attend this presentation or who were absent

Now write a one-page paper evaluating the persuasiveness of the New Voter Project presentation. Include the following information, using your discretion and according to your sense of audience.

- a) Your age group and whether or not you are registered and/or have voted. (You can use "I"; this is a first-hand, eye-witness report.
- b) A summary of the presentation or a list of "reasons to vote" presented.

- c) Your evaluation. Which of the points made by speakers were persuasive? Which were not?
- d) Analysis: Why were given reasons persuasive or not persuasive, in your estimate?

****The New Voter Project presenters will appreciate very much your directing your responses to them and have requested your permission to read them. *[Consult with your students about this option. Make it clear that sending their responses to the presenters is optional and that their grades will be unaffected if they decide not to.]***

Grading and Credit:

- a) Your one- **[two-, etc.]** page paper counts as a response paper and is worth **X** points.
- b) Your attendance and response are optional and are worth **X** extra-credit points.
- c) You'll be using the writing you do for this assignment as evidence for your analytical papers on the election process. Credit—up to **20** points.

Outcomes: As you write and revise this paper, consider the following Outcomes, which we've discussed in class:

[list outcomes]