**Chapter Four - Writing & Project Assignments**

**Writing**

1. Compare and contrast the process of legislating in the House and the Senate. Be sure to consider differences in scheduling and debating legislation.

CT, COMM

1. Pick one of the three types of caucuses (issue, ideological, minority and women’s) in the Texas Legislature from the list in the textbook. Research the policy concerns of this caucus and find their record for success. How would you explain the success or failure of this caucus?

CT, COMM, SR

1. Explore examples of the use of the line-item veto by the last two Texas governors. What are the possible positive and negative outcomes of the line-item veto power? Should the line-item veto power be removed from the governor’s toolkit?

CT, COMM, SR

**Projects**

1. Organize your class first into political parties and then into standing committees. Give each committee a recent bill from the Texas Senate.

<http://www.capitol.state.tx.us>.

Engage the students in markup and discussion within their committees of the existing bills. Once students are ready simulate the calendar procedures in the Senate and open the floor for debate. Set a time limit for the session, but require them to hear legislation through the procedures of the Senate (allowing for filibusters, calendar votes, etc).

Once time has expired, ask the students to reflect on the following questions:

* How many bills were heard?
* How influential was committee in changing the original content of the bill?
* What was the greatest challenge for getting a bill passed?

CT, COMM, PR, SR

1. Present the class with a list of issue and minority caucuses in the Texas legislature. Ask students to break into groups and research each caucus.

They should find out:

* Who are the members?
* What issues are they concerned with?
* What legislative successes can the caucus claim?

Once the students have collected this information, ask them to present the results to the class as a whole. During the presentations, keep a tally on the board of the successes and issues of concern for each caucus.

After the presentations, lead a discussion over the following questions:

* Is there a relationship between success and the type of caucus?
* To what extent do issues of concern for various caucuses overlap?
* Reflecting on the overall demographics of the Texas Legislature, what level of success would you predict for minority and women’s caucuses? Does their record confirm your expectations or upturn them?

CT, COMM, PR, SR