

Tuesday, September 30, 2008

Quick Tips

C-SPAN Classroom

Election season brings interest in all things political.

But finding (and trusting) unbiased, un-slanted, un-spun reporting from modern mass media outlets? You be the judge. Then, there is C-SPAN Classroom.

C-SPAN Classroom is a public service of the cable industry.

Since Cable Operators are folks that eschew regulation and are wary of politicians who might turn on them, despite the overly generous contributions, these folks business bottom lines can't afford to alienate either political party. This motivates them to provide even and fair news coverage. A Super Primary Source C-SPAN Classroom offers unique, primary source video. (This means "original" sources of information rather than information about primary elections…which they also cover.)

C-SPAN Classroom focuses on free materials for teaching Civics and U.S. Government. These include a focus upon: Principles of Government

The U.S. Constitution

The Legislative, Executive and Judicial Branches

Political Participation C-SPAN Classroom also offers teacher resources that include: Sample Clips

A Newsletter

A Video Search

Grants and Fellowships

A Very "Liberal" (pun intended, C-SPAN Classroom's words - meaning: generous) Copyright Policy C-SPAN Classroom encourages teachers to use C-SPAN resources without cost. The policy allows teachers to make video tape copies without obtaining permission if the use…Is for an educational use

Is not offered for sale or subsequent distribution

C-SPAN is credited as the source of the video These materials can be used by teachers at school and at home…and these copies can be kept for as long as you want.

C-SPAN Classroom also allows saving video taped materials on digital media; i.e., CDs and DVDs, or saving this content using online storage systems such as video servers.

Rules for using C-SPAN Classroom Digital Content

Teachers can use C-SPAN Classroom by: content and teachers can digitize C-SPAN Classroom content for use by: Digitizing the content

Purchasing the content from the C-SPAN Store and using it, sharing it

Downloading the content from the C-SPAN Archives

Keeps backup copies of the content indefinitely

Providing C-SPAN content to students on CDs or DVDs as long as the content is available without cost to all students in the course

Posting C-SPAN-produced content on a non-commercial Website or a school district Intranet site

Using C-SPAN-produced content during professional presentations as long as the fee for delivering these presentation is nominal Uses that Require Licensing (and maybe paying a fee) Teachers that use C-SPAN content for distance learning classes will have to obtain a written license, and might have to pay a licensing fee.

The reason: Many colleges and universities charge for distance learning and dual-credit classes.

Distance learning would be classes that are distributed by: Public broadcasting stations

Local cable or public access

Internet and Network access

Distribution of courses by CDs or DVDs (not just copies of programs that you give to all your students) C-SPAN Classroom "StudentCam" Contest C-SPAN Classroom sponsors a StudentCam Contest each year.

This Year's StudentCam Topic is, "A message to the new President"

Students (alone or in teams of up to three students) develop a presentation to ask the new president, "What is the most urgent issue for the new president to address after taking office, and why?"

Students create a short (5 to 8 minutes) video documentary to explore an issue of national importance. This should be an issue that they believe the new president of the United States must act upon.

Student documentaries need to include more than one viewpoint and must contain C-SPAN program content to qualify for the contest.

The deadline for submitting the documentary is January 20, 2009" (Inauguration Day). Students in grades 6 to 12 are eligible to enter.

Winning students will be interviewed on C-SPAN, and there are \$50,000.00 USD in available prizes. Link to the C-SPAN

StudentCam Press ReleaseC-SPAN PoliticsAlthough the Primary and Full-Fledged Presidential Campaigns seem like they has been a long and acrimonious road, C-SPAN Politics has kept up with the fray and the frayed nerves. Of course, there is still time for one or both of the campaigns to take an even more nasty turn for the worse. If either candidate fails to reign in the zealots that support them, "mud could fly and sleaze could tarnish" both campaigns; even though the principle aspirants have agreed to step above the "ooze and slime" that characterized the last several campaigns.

C-SPAN reports on political ads, debates and campaign "stump stops." And they offer fair coverage, rather than slants and spins that "Dote and Promote" for their owner's (or stockholders' favorite) and "Thump the Chump" for the candidate that their employers disfavor.

C-SPAN Politics also shares Podcasts and historical documentaries of previous political campaigns. These are real, primary sources.

SidebarUnfortunately, many of these resources require RealPlayer to be installed on your computer. Get

RealPlayer HereRed State, Blue State: The Real PatchworkEveryone has seen the ubiquitous

"Red-State-Blue-State" political maps that shrink understanding of the Electoral College to a simplified graphic.

But, voting in states also divides along "urban/ suburban/ rural", ethnic make up, and racial make up.

C-SPAN Politics provides a political map that drills into the "voting-block-tendencies" of areas within states.

States Political Regions Map (not overall, one party takes all summary)

Unfortunately, sifting through primary source material is time consuming and tedious. (Students get lost or distracted when turned loose on sites with tremendous resources, so teachers must sort out appropriate information and provide rubrics, project maps and assignment blueprints to keep students on track.)

The extra work is worth the effort.

Even elementary school teachers can benefit from these resources when they develop presentations that add color and commentary to augment the boring (politically correct, uncontroversial) textbook content.

SummaryC-SPAN Classroom, C-SPAN StudentCAM and C-SPAN Politics contain a huge primary source archive. Resources for teaching current events, civics, social studies, government (even history) are available without charge.

Take advantage of these resourceswhen you have the time.

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