

News Literacy

Wikileaks & The New York Times Homework Directions

Name:	Rec. #
Rec. Instructor:	

What you're doing: In the Wikileaks folder, read the stories on The New York Times' decision to publish classified documents provided to Wikileaks. Based on the readings, make four lists of at least 5 talking points each that you could use in a debate or a courtroom:

List 1: Five arguments in support of the Times' decision and/or its right to publish the information.

List 2: Five arguments against the Times' decision and/or against its right to publish the information.

List 3: Five arguments in support of Julian Assange and Wikileaks' decision to provide the information and classified documents to news media outlets.

List 4: Five arguments against Assange and Wikileaks' decision to provide the information and classified documents to news media outlets.

A talking point is a simple statement of a point you wish to make, followed by the list of supporting facts or information. Here's an example of one of the talking points circulated to supporters of Elena Kagan's nomination to the U.S. Supreme Court. Each of yours won't be this comprehensive, perhaps, but you get the idea. List your arguments and support them with evidence from the reading.

Critics who have attacked Kagan's record for hiring minorities at Harvard Law School have failed to include other appointments/hiring/promotion decisions that enhanced diversity while she was the Dean:

- Lani Guinier was the only woman of color on Harvard Law School's faculty – a source of great complaint until 2005, when Kagan hired Jeannie Suk, an Asian-American woman and up-and-coming young scholar.
- Guhan Subramanian, a South Asian law professor, was given tenure in 2004 – making him the only South Asian law professor on the faculty.
- Kenneth Mack, an African-American legal historian, was given tenure in 2006.
- Harvard Law School already has one of the largest group of black tenured law professors in the nation (Scott Brewer, Lani Guinier, Ken Mack, Randall Kennedy, Charles Ogletree, David Wilkins).
- Of the 12 Clinical Professors Kagan hired, three were minorities – 25%. This included Ron Sullivan – a highly sought-after African-American law professor Kagan poached from Yale University, Brian Price – an African-American professor who teaches in the area of community economic development and Ashish Nanda – a South Asian professor who helps run the school's executive education program.
- Kagan dramatically expanded public interest clinics at Harvard – important vehicles for students to work with underserved communities in the Boston area.
- She created clinics in areas like Child Advocacy; Death Penalty; Environmental Law and Policy; Gender Violence; and War Crimes. The number of students participating in clinics increased 240%, from 360 to 866.

Why you're doing this: In recitation, your class will debate the merits and repercussions of the Times' decision to publish information provided to them by Assange and Wikileaks. You won't know until you get to class which side of the debate you'll be on, or how extensively you may be called to argue, so you must be prepared to argue from either side.

What you should aim to get out of it: This week's lecture addresses whether the U.S. press has too much or too little freedom, a brief history of press freedom, and the legal and ethical limitations on what stories can be published or broadcast. This assignment will require you to study that material and apply it to a critical analysis of the Wikileaks story, one example of a difficult decision made by journalists. You should come out of this assignment with a more nuanced understanding of the mission and responsibilities of the press. A great job earns 4 points.

Wikileaks Debate Guidelines:

Please read the document containing articles about Wikileaks in its entirety. See the written assignment's directions for how you will use the readings in the homework. In class you will participate in a debate of these and any other issues concerning the First Amendment, freedom of the press, and national security.

Preparing for the debate in Recitation:

- Familiarize yourself with the details of the story: what happened, who's involved, why the actions of Julian Assange and The New York Times and other news outlets have been controversial
- Consider the many sides of the debate. Was Assange right to share the cables? Was *The New York Times* right to print stories based on classified information? Are their critics right? Is new legislation necessary to prevent something similar from happening in the future?

The Debate Question: *Was the New York Times correct to publish the Wikileaks documents or is this information so damaging to the national security of the United States that it all should have been withheld? Could the Espionage Act of 1917 be applied to this situation by the government?* Each group should devise a position on this appointing two-three members to make a presentation of 5-10 minutes to the group as a whole. When we reconvene in large group each will make their point.