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South Mississippi High School Seniors' Perceptions of Civic Duties and Responsibilities

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The University of Southern Mississippi

South Mississippi High School Seniors' Perceptions of Civic Duties and Responsibilities

By

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A Thesis

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Chapter One: Problem Statement

Former United States Representative Lee Hamilton once explained what it takes to be a citizen of the United States. He stated, “Citizenship requires both knowledge about government and the ability to be involved in governance. It means knowing how to identify and inform oneself about issues, explore and evaluate possible solutions, and then act to resolve problems. It demands that you know how to interact respectfully with others. And it asks that you accept responsibility for meeting your community’s and the nation’s challenges.” (Hamilton, 1) This quote comes from a well-known civics program used in American high schools today called *We the People*. The purpose of this program is to help educate high school students in Civic Education. In addition, *We the People* informs students of the opportunities they have to participate politically in local and national civic government. Young people should be prepared for the responsibilities of citizenship in a democratic society.

High school teachers in America today shoulder the principal responsibility for preparing students for the demands of citizenship and civic responsibility. The National Curriculum Standards for High School Social Studies Teachers (NCSS) clearly expects that students understand what civic participation is and how they can become involved in civic engagement. In addition, they must understand their role as a citizen in their community, nation, and the world, as well as how they can make a positive difference. The NCSS clearly states that “High school students should increasingly be able to recognize the rights and responsibilities of citizens in identifying societal needs, setting directions for public policies, and working to support both individual dignity and the common good. They will become familiar with methods of analyzing important public

issues and evaluating different recommendations for dealing with these issues.” (NCCSS, 1) Students are expected to understand the importance of civic practice and engagement. Yet, there is considerable evidence that, despite formal education in citizenship and civic duty in their senior year, many graduating high school students have a low or negative perception of their civic responsibilities. (NCCS, 1)

In a representative democratic system, such as the United States, voting to select public officials is counted as a major civic obligation. Civic responsibility and the importance of voting should be taught in High School American History and American Government courses. According to the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE), 53 percent of Americans under the age of thirty voted in the 2008 Presidential election. CIRCLE looked at the 2000 election and determined that among young people voter turnout rose 11 percent from 2000 to 2008. However, nearly one half of citizens from the ages of 18-30 are not voting. In 2008, 70 percent of the young voters had gone to college, meaning that college-educated youth were much more likely to vote. Furthermore, voters who earned a high school diploma represented only 24 percent of the total. (CIRCLE, 1-2) The Center of Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement also provided statistics on the state of Mississippi regarding the 2008 election. In that state, 56 percent of citizens from the age of 18-29 voted in the 2008 election. Although this level is above the national average, it is evident that many young people avoid voting. (Kawashima-Ginsberg, Nover, Kirby, 1)

Generalizing from such data, the National Alliance of Civic Education concludes that high school students have not mastered an understanding of what it means to be an informed and active citizen. Donovan R. Walling, senior consultant for the Center for

Civic Education, suggests that in education today there is a nearly exclusive focus on testing in the subjects of math and reading. As a result, civic education receives limited emphasis, resulting in poor perceptions among students of their civic responsibilities. (Wichowsky, 2) In 1999, the National Association of Secretaries of State conducted a nationwide study of American youth. Fifty-five percent of respondents agreed that schools do not do a very good job of providing young people the information they need to vote. In addition, this study indicated that young people lack meaningful understanding of the democratic process and citizenship. (Wichowsky, 3)

This proposed study will pursue the issue of students' preparedness for civic life at the local level, attempting to answer the following specific research question: What are South Mississippi High School seniors' perceptions of their civic duties and responsibilities?

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Political Socialization/Effects of Education

The *United States, Adventures in Time and Place* is a McGraw Hill textbook sponsored by the National Geographic Society. This textbook explains that the Constitution of the United States protects the basic rights of America citizens, such as freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and the right to earn a living as one chooses. These rights are called Civil Rights. Also citizenship includes civic responsibilities. The textbook uses a quote from Thomas Payne that said, “Those who expect to reap the blessings of freedom must undergo the fatigue of supporting it.” (Banks, Beyer, Contreras, Craven, Ladson-Billings, McFarland, Parker, 14) These responsibilities include voting, obeying the law, taking part in government, paying taxes to provide for the benefits that Americans receive, and respecting the rights of others. In 1994, Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell stated that, “Americans are lucky to live in a country that grants us rights in the Constitution such as the freedom to speak, write, worship, and live as we chose. These freedoms place a responsibility on each of us to become involved in our system of government. America is run by the people.” He further explained that “There are many reasons why I ran for senate. I wanted this job because I care about my state and its people. I wanted to ensure that the peoples’ interests were well represented in Congress.” (Banks, Beyer, Contreras, Craven, Ladson-Billings, McFarland, Parker 14)

Scott Keeter, researcher from the Center of Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, explained in a report, *The Civic and Political Health of the Nation*, three indicators of political and civic participation. The first is electoral participation such as voting, volunteering for a campaign, and supporting candidates by

wearing a campaign button. The second indicator is having a political voice. Americans should know that they have the right to contact their public officials. Other actions include writing to the media, protesting, and boycotting. The last indicator is civic participation such as volunteering for a community organization or helping with a fundraiser for charity. (Reich, 26)

Joseph Westeimer and Joseph Kahne's spectrum of three kinds of citizens include the personally responsible citizen, the participatory citizen, and the justice-oriented citizen. "The personally responsible citizen acts responsibly in his or her community. This citizen contributes to the cause when asked, volunteers to help the less fortunate, and emphasizes character traits such as honest, integrity, self-discipline, and hard work. The participatory citizen engages in collective community-based efforts, knows how government and community based organizations work, and actively organizes efforts to care for others. The justice-oriented citizen analyzes and understands the interplay of social economic and political forces and calls attention to matters of injustice and to the importance of pursuing social justice." (Doppen and Feinburg, 113)

"Uncovering the Effects of High School Civic Education on Turnout" is an essay written by Jenifer Bachner. She noted that The National Center of Education Statistics reported that in year 2000 77.3 percent of high school graduates completed at least one semester of coursework in Government or Civics. Bachner explained that "There is a widespread mandate that high school students complete a course in which political participation, along with other aspects of American government, is emphasized. This course is often required for graduation and taking it necessarily precludes a student from taking a course in another academic area. Yet despite this relatively high value that state

and local governments place on civic education, scholars have not satisfactorily quantified its effects.” (Bachner, 4) “High School civic education can strengthen students’ psychological engagement with politics.” (Bachner, 5) These courses are supposed to increase their level of political knowledge because political knowledge promotes political interest, trust, and efficacy.

Delli Carpini and Michael and Scoot Keeter, authors of *What Americans Know about Politics*, found that “Citizens must possess political knowledge to develop enlightened preferences.” (Bachner, 5) Bachner followed their quote and explained that citizens who are aware of their interests are more likely to take action with their thoughts. Political knowledge teaches high school students to not be fooled by politicians who use misleading sound bites and images. “When the media covers a mistake by a politician, knowledgeable citizens will integrate this new piece of information into their existing perception of the featured person’s character and policy agenda.” (Bachner, 6) With this said, an uninformed citizen will only focus on the negative attention media brings out about politicians. This could lead to a negative outlook on government and all elected officials.

The Civics Report Card was published by the National Center of Educational Statistics. James Gimpel, Celeste Lay, and Jason Schuknect, writers of *Cultivating Democracy: Civic Environments and Political Socialization in America*, found that “students who take more than a year of civics coursework, compared to students who take none, are able to discuss politics with friends and family five percent more each week.” (Bachner, 7) If students are able to discuss politics with their friends and family, they become more comfortable with their views and then they are more likely to vote.

Kids Voting USA is a K-12 curriculum used to engage students in activities that teach civic skills. (Bachner, 8) In addition, this curriculum promotes conversational skills. It teaches students the willingness to disagree. Students learn to always have an open mind while listening to the opinions of others. It prepares students for political conversations. In addition, *We the People* is a Civics program used in all fifty states. “The curriculum asks students to research a policy issue relevant to their community. Then they develop solutions and communicate these solutions to civic and political leaders.” (Bachner, 8)

The National Longitudinal Study proved that in the 1998-2000 election students who took one year of American Government or a Civics course were 5.2 percentage points more likely to vote than students who did not take a course. (Bachner, 21) This study looked at six elections from the year 1992 to 2004. “For the 1992 election, a one-year increase in American Government/ Civics coursework is expected to increase one’s probability of voting by 11.4 percentage points. Across all six-elections, the average estimated increase in probability is 8.7 percentage points. (Bachner, 23) Students taking American Problems Courses that strictly deal with current issues on a local, state, and national level had the highest probability of voter participation. (Bachner, 24)

This article further pointed out that the influences of parents play a large role in the political participation of students. “Highly politicized parents will possess stronger opinions on the importance of voting. Family discussions about politics provide opportunities for children to be exposed to and absorb political opinions given by their parents.” (Bachner, 22) Therefore, students who come from nonpolitically involved parents must learn in the classroom their civic responsibilities and the importance of

political participation. However, often parents who are interested in politics and who share these interests with their children negate the influence of schools. Therefore, students should be encouraged to listen to their parents but also learn that it is their right as a citizen to form their own opinions on political issues. (Bachner, 22)

In conclusion, Bachner explained that “The probability that a young citizen votes in a presidential election hovers around 50 percent. This means that even a three to four percentage point increase in probability could be the difference between this citizens turning out to vote or staying home on Election Day.” (Bachner, 23) Yes, some students are receiving political knowledge from home; however schools are not certain if those students are taught to think independently. With that said, Civic Education courses especially those dealing with current problems and events, can help students learn the importance of being an informed citizen. It is imperative that students be confident and comfortable with their decisions on Election Day.

Pamela Taylor and Christine Ballengee-Morris, writers of the research article *Service Learning a Language of We*, quoted P. Freire in explaining in their article that a teacher’s main goal and hope for service learning is to instill an enduring sense of civic responsibility. “Service Learning experiences must assist young people in critically perceiving how we exist in the world.” (Ballengee-Morris and Taylor, 11) “These experiences help young people see the world as a process of transformation, not just as a static reality in which we must function according to our rules and values of the dominant culture.” (Ballengee-Morris and Taylor, 11) Service Learning provides opportunities for students to work together. As a team, they gain the understanding that together Americans can work towards social justice and democracy. Teachers should search for

local service opportunities. It is important for students to see their local and community needs. Teachers should provide a time of reflection for students to express their thoughts about the projects. This is important for students to understand fully that it is part of their civic duty to give back to their community. (Ballengee-Morris and Taylor, 11)

In 1972, immediately after the Twenty-Seventh Amendment, lowering the voting age to 18, only 52% of those aged 18-24 voted in the presidential election. The 2000 election was the closest presidential election in modern history, and 36% of those aged 18-24 voted in this presidential election. In 2004, the turnout rate rose to 45%. “In future years, it is likely that voter turnout overall will continue to decline given the current tragedy of civic engagement among the youngest member of the electorate.” (Campbell, 64) Many decide not to vote because they feel their vote does not count. Research proves that nonvoters use that as an excuse. Americans register to vote and show up on election days because they feel it is their civic responsibility. They do not participate in the voting process because they feel their vote will change the outcome of the election. Political scientists Sidney Verba, Kay Schlozman, and Henry Brady conducted a study asking politically active Americans why they engage in civic and political activities. In 1995, an overwhelming majority answered that they felt it was their duty.

In 1998, two political scientists, Richard Niemi and Jane Junn, agreed that civics classes have no effect on students’ political participation. With that said, they believe students will be more inclined to participate politically if they experience a school community. Creating a civic climate is crucial to teaching students the importance of voting. For example having Student Government where students are elected by the student body will foster that experience. Allowing students to participate in activities

such as campaigning for a position, hosting political rallies, and demanding students to create a speech for their position all help reveal what the election process is like in society. Students who are taught that voting is a part of civic responsibility and who experience a community where these actions can be carried out are more likely to vote. “Political Cohesiveness is merely an indicator of values held in common within a community. A promising course of action to strengthen a school’s civic climate is to identify ways to foster a sense of commonality among the schools’ students.” (Campbell, 69)

Current Levels of Participation

In an article titled *Seeking 100 Percent Voter Registration and Effective Civic Education*, the author Robert Richie explained that “In a well-functioning democracy, voting should be protected as a fundamental citizenship right and responsibility.” (Richie, 39) There is a lack of understanding of government, elections, and citizens’ power. This is true because in 2007 three out of ten eligible American voters were not registered to vote. Richie proposes that programs be designed to register every eligible voter systematically and provide information about voting mechanics and electoral choices. He thinks this could be best implemented in high schools. It is in their senior year when most students reach the voting age. “There is no better place to challenge the expectations of nonparticipation than in our high schools. Nearly every citizen enters high school too young to vote and leaves eligible to vote. Yet, in this intuitional setting, most students leave without registering or obtaining even rudimentary information about how to vote.” (Richie, 41)

For example, implementing a Constitution Day in high schools will raise the awareness of the importance of voting and other civic responsibilities. Also, some states allow students even as young as twelve to help work the election polls. This opportunity allows students to see the election process and how interesting it is that all Americans are given this right. Montgomery, Maryland allows young people to work the polls and it proved to have positive results in those students understanding of the electoral process. (Richie, 42)

In 2008, the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning issued a Civic and Political Health of the Nation report. The study was conducted in a racially and ethnically homogenous region of Southeast Ohio and a diverse metropolitan area of Northern Georgia. Participating in the study, 108 students were from rural areas; while, 82 students were from urban areas. These students were given the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services Naturalization Test. This was a revised immigration exam that focused on the concepts of American democracy and the rights and responsibilities of citizens. When asked to list two ways that Americans participate in their democracy: 95 students listed two ways, 45 students listed one way, and 50 students provided no response at all. Some answers included voting, running for a political office, volunteering for a campaign, protesting, and joining a political party. (Doppen and Feinberg, 111-114)

The Effects of Catholic Schooling on Civic Participation, written by Thomas S. Dee, quoted Henry M. Levin, author of *The Economics of Educational Choice*, by saying that “There is a concern that private schools may focus on producing skills and knowledge with clear individual benefits and place less value on the external social

benefits that are derived from instilling a variety of civic values and beliefs.” (Dee, 1)

However, Anthony S. Bryk and Peter B. Holland, writers of *Catholic Schools and Common Good*, pointed out that “Private schools may be more efficient at producing human capital and may simultaneously increase student exposure to social capital.” (Dee, 1) Bryk and Holland believe that Catholic Schools are more effective at promoting civic engagement than public schools. Dee also quoted Andrew M. Greenly and Peter H. Rossi, authors of *The Education of Catholic American* by saying that there is very little evidence on how private and public schools compare to the promotion of civic engagement.

In 1998 Jay P. Greene, author of *Civic Values in Public and Private Schools*, discovered that 12th graders from private high schools, predominantly Catholic Schools, have higher levels of racial tolerance and are more committed to the growth of their community by acts of volunteering than public high schools. (Dee, 3)

David E. Campbell conducted a survey that proved the idea that Catholic High School students have better attitudes towards civic engagement, and they have higher levels of civic participation and civic knowledge. Campbell’s analysis is from the 1996 National Household Education Survey and is based on 4,213 participating high school students. “High School and Beyond” was a study conducted by the United States Department of Education. “This study began with a cohort of high school sophomores in 1980. In 1992, a follow-up interview of roughly 12,000 members of the sophomore population was conducted and most respondents were 26 years old.” (Dee, 3) In the interview participants were asked four civic-related questions. Where you currently registered to vote? (Mean=66%) In the past year, did you vote in a local, state or national

election? (Mean=35%) Did you vote in the 1988 election? (Mean=37%) Have you volunteered in the last month? (Mean=37%) Of those participating in the “High School and Beyond” study 19% attended Catholic High School as sophomores. This study suggested that by attending a Catholic High School voter turnout will increase by 7.6 percent to 11.8 percent and it increased voter registration by 9.6 percent. “However, the estimated effects of Catholic schooling on volunteer participation are much smaller. Often the statistic is negative and statistically insignificant.” (Dee, 3)

Studies of Students Political Perceptions, Political Knowledge, and Political Activity

In 1999, the National Association of Secretaries of State conducted a nationwide study of the American youth. Fifty-five percent of respondents agreed that schools do not do a very good job of giving young people the information they need to vote. In addition, this study proved that young people lack meaningful understanding of the democratic process and citizenship. This disengagement and lack of knowledge is hurting America’s democratic and political system. Amber Wichowsky, author of the article *The Importance of Civic Education*, explained that “Democratic values are not passed down through the genetic code; each generation of students is asked to recreate values and develop a vision for the future.” (Wichowsky, 3)

The National Alliance of Civic Education explained in its article, *The Importance of Civic Education*, that a citizen in the twenty-first century should be comfortable acting in several ways: upholding laws, protesting, voting, and forming new organizations for a cause. Citizens should have knowledge and intellectual skills for all of these tasks. “They also need the participation skills that are necessary to monitor and influence civic life.” (Wichowsky, 1) An example of this is the ability to work with others and express their

ideas. Statistics show that people who are well informed about government, politics, and public affairs are more likely to vote and join political organizations. Uninformed citizens tend not to participate politically. “Several surveys have shown that adults who know a great deal about politics and public affairs are more likely to vote, no matter how interested they are in politics. Those with little knowledge generally believe that they are powerless and abstain from politics.” (Wichowsky, 2) “Also, adults with high levels of political knowledge are likely to be socially tolerant, trustful, and engaged in community affairs.” (Wichowsky, 2)

In 1996 one-third of Americans from the ages of 18-24 voted. Many young people were asked why they did not participate in the election process. The main two reasons given were “My vote will not make a difference” and “I did not know enough information about the candidates running in the election.” (Wichowsky, 2)

In high schools today there is much work in improving the quality of math, science, and reading education. The National Alliance of Civic Education asserts that little attention is being paid to civic education. “A concerted effort is needed to place greater emphasis on civic requirements, in-school service learning, standards, curricula and teaching methods.” (Wichowsky, 3) In addition, private organizations, news media, political parties, and other institutions outside of the classroom must focus on creating a generation of citizens who understand the importance of civic responsibility and engagement. (Wichowsky, 1-3)

The National Alliance for Civic Education explained in an article that the civic knowledge of adolescents is correlated with their family background, but curriculum in their schools also has an effect. It is very important for schools to be informing students

about current events and provide time for open discussion about current issues. Allowing opportunities such as community service and student government is crucial to the basic understanding of civics.

In 1998, the results of the National Center for Educational Statistics Civics Assessment proved that students have not mastered Civics. Only 25% of the nation's students performed at proficient or advanced levels. The assessment proved that 75% of the nation's students performed basic (39-48%) and below basic (30-35%) At the 4th grade level, 74% of students knew that the United States laws must be applied equally. However, only 15% were able to name two services that the government pays with taxes. At the 8th grade level, 81% of students were able to identify Martin Luther King as someone who made a difference towards the removal of segregations laws. Yet, only 6% of students were able to describe two ways that countries benefit from having a constitution. Last, at the 12th grade level, 90% of students understood the Social Security is a program set up to help the elderly, but only 9% of them could list two ways that democratic society benefits from the active participation of its citizens. (Wichowsky, 1)

The National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS) completed a Millennium Project where they studied youth attitudes on politics, citizenship, government and voting. They discovered that students do not understand the democratic process and they do not understand information about candidates and political parties. The NASS asked three questions to assess the political knowledge of students. Seventy-nine percent of students knew the name of the current Vice-President of the United States. Only 67% of the students were able to name their state's governor. Last, merely 37% of respondents were able to give the length of term for a member in the United States House of

Representatives. When looking at their attitudes towards citizenship 94% of youth believe that “The most important thing I can do as a citizen is to help others.” Yes, volunteering and activities such as community service are very helpful to our country; however, electoral participation is very important to the country’s democracy. The NASS survey proved that young people do value their American citizenship; and, when asked in focus groups what it specifically means to be an American citizen many of the students could not explain what their role as a citizen was in the United States. (Wichowsky, 2-3)

Chapter Three: Methods

Specific research questions for the study of South Mississippi High School Seniors'

Perceptions of Civic Duties and Responsibilities

1. In looking at all four high schools separately, what are South Mississippi high school seniors' perceptions of their civic duties and responsibilities?

2. Students who say their parents are politically involved, what are their perceptions of their civic duties and responsibilities?

3. Students who say they are active in extracurricular activities that foster student leadership and civic ideals, what are their perceptions of their civic duties and responsibilities?

4. For students who say they read or watch public news and media, what are their perceptions of their civic duties and responsibilities?

5. In looking at the two parochial schools of Sacred Heart High School and Presbyterian Christian High School, how did those students' score compare to the students attending the private school of Simpson Academy High School?

6. In looking at the private schools of Sacred Heart High School, Presbyterian Christian High School, and Simpson Academy High School, how did those students' score compare to the students attending Hattiesburg High Public School?

Sample

The study sample includes South Mississippi seniors from private, parochial, and public high schools: 25 seniors from PCHS, 23 seniors from HHS, 17 seniors from SHHS, and 17 seniors from SAHS. All seniors who completed the survey were 18 years of age or older. The researcher chose these four high schools because they are all examples of the

different educational systems offered to Mississippi residents, and all have a specific curriculum inclusive of civics, albeit each system is unique. Therefore, a good cross sampling of students, teachers, and curriculum standards resulted. Only these four high schools therefore were contacted. The researcher was present at the distribution of the surveys. Seniors who were selected to complete the survey were chosen by the American Government teachers. Seniors must have completed all twenty-five survey questions or the survey was not scored.

Variables

This project's dependent variable includes the perceptions of high school seniors toward their civic duties and responsibilities, quantified as a composite score on a multi-item questionnaire survey. Independent variables are the school attended by the subject, the school civics curriculum, level of parental political participation, involvement in extracurricular activities, and amount of exposure to public news and media.

Instrumentation

Based on the textbook *United States, Adventures in Time and Place*, a McGraw Hill resource sponsored by the National Geographic Society, the twenty-five scaled survey items includes perceptions of voting, obeying the law, taking part in government, community involvement, paying taxes to provide for social benefits, respecting the rights of others, and other civic items. A 1-5 Likert scale of "agreement-disagreement" with item statements was used; for example, response options to a statement such as "I believe I have a responsibility to register to vote, therefore I can participate politically," includes "1-strongly disagree," "2-disagree," "3-neither disagree or agree," "4-agree," "5-strongly agree."

agree.” Each item was scored, and individual item scores were tallied to achieve a composite score for each completed survey.

Procedures

In the summer of 2011, letters were sent to the principals of Sacred Heart High School, Presbyterian Christian School, Simpson County Academy, and Hattiesburg High School. This letter requested permission to survey seniors on their perceptions of civic responsibilities; a copy of the survey accompanied the letter. (Please see Appendix A for the letter sent to South Mississippi principals, and please see Appendix B to view the sample survey) Within one week, the researcher followed up with phone calls to principals or principal-designated school administrators. When permission was granted, surveys were administered in the spring 2012. Senior participants must have completed American History and, if offered, American Government. As noted, the survey included twenty-five items regarding civic responsibilities, in addition to those items designed to elicit background information. (Please see Appendix C for example emails sent by the researcher and an American Government teacher.)

Data Analysis

With this study, the type of data drives the analysis. Survey data will consist of the specific item, individual subject, school, and categorical composite (e.g. level or political participation) scores. Analysis of Variance was used to analyze data. SPSS was used with this process. Reasonably clear conclusions were drawn about the perceptions of the civic responsibilities of the subjects and the correlates of these perceptions.

Teacher Interviews

In the fall of 2011, the researcher asked permission of the principal to interview the 12th grade American Government teachers to ask them specific questions about their class and their seniors. Below are the four questions the researcher asked each American Government teacher from Hattiesburg Public High School, Presbyterian Christian High School, Sacred Heart High School, and Simpson Academy High School.

Questions for American Government Teachers

- 1.) What American Government textbook do you use in your class, and how does it present American citizens’ civic duties and responsibilities?
- 2.) What instruction and activities do you use with your seniors in explaining civic duties and responsibilities?
- 3.) Does your school offer extracurricular activities to its students that foster student leadership and civic ideals?
- 4.) In teaching civic duties and responsibilities, what do you think is your school’s message to seniors?

Each teacher was responsive and cooperative in meeting with the researcher. Below are charts that explain each teacher’s response to the questions.

Hattiesburg High School	
	1.) What American Government textbook do you use in your class, and how does it present American citizens’ civic duties and responsibilities?
Teacher explained:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>United States Government In Action</i>, Richard C. Remy Ph D, Glencoe McGraw Hill, 2002 • Teacher explained that the topic if civic duty and civic responsibility is spread throughout the entire book.
	2.) What instruction and activities do you use with your seniors in explaining civic duties and responsibilities?
Teacher explained:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seniors must complete an active learning activity and project called Classroom Congress. Each of the six classes is classified as a “state”. Within that state, groups will be formed and they are congressional “districts”. Each class and state is entitled to 2 senators and 1 representative per 9 students. Every student had a

<p>role. Students not serving in elected office take roles such as coordinating special interest groups, lobbyists, and political party managers. They complete governmental duties such as campaigning for office with a mock election, creating and writing bills, and in their next unit they form a mock “Supreme Court.” The teacher said that students enjoy this project and because of it they have a better understanding of the voting system and the importance of that civic duty. (Please see Appendix D for the Classroom Congress handout the teacher at Hattiesburg Public High School provided.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All seniors must complete a senior project and there is a 25 hour community service requirement. In addition, students must find a professional mentor, create a resume, sign up for the ACT, and submit applications for the colleges, trade schools, or military branches they wish to be accepted to.
<p>3.) Does your school offer extracurricular activities to its students that foster student leadership and civic ideals?</p>
<p>Teacher said look on the school’s website: (Below is what the researcher found)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clubs and Activities: Beta Club, Jr. Beta Club, Blair Dance Company, Computer Systems Technology, Construction Trade-Skills USA, DECA, First Priority, French Club, Heath Occupations Students of America, Spanish Club, Future Business Leaders of America, Future Child Care Leaders of America, Jobs for Mississippi Graduates, National Honor Society, Orchestra, Student Council, and Yearbook Staff. • Sports: Boys and Girls Basketball, Baseball, Bowling, Dance, Football, Power lifting, Softball, Swimming, Tennis, Track, Volleyball, and Soccer • Arts: School Band, Show Choir, Dance, Choir • In the 2012 academic year, HHS Forensics Team wins California National Invitational.
<p>4.) In teaching civic duties and responsibilities, what do you think is your school’s message to seniors?</p>
<p>Teacher explained:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seniors at HHS are better prepared to be good citizens, and they are better equipped than before they took the course. • Seniors at HHS understand the importance of respecting service men and women. • Seniors at HHS understand the voter registration process and the importance of that civic duty. • Seniors at HHS understand the 2nd amendment and feel that is an important right to American citizens, the right to bear arms. • The state department and state and local public officials are asked to visit HHS, set up voter drives, and speak to students about the importance of voting and being an active citizen. Also, proper ways to contact them.
<p>Presbyterian Christian High School</p>
<p>1.) What American Government textbook do you use in your class, and how does it</p>

present American citizens' civic duties and responsibilities?
<p>Teacher explained:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Magruder's American Government</i>, William A. McClenaghan, Pearson Prentice Hall, 2009 • The teacher explained that civic duty and responsibility is spread throughout the entire text book. However, he focusing on these subjects in the units of voting, media, and political socialization.
2.) What instruction and activities do you use with your seniors in explaining civic duties and responsibilities?
<p>Teacher explained:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All seniors at PCHS must register to vote. The teacher brings in a mock registration cards to allow students the opportunity to become comfortable with the registration process. Once seniors turn 18, they must turn in a copy of their registration card. • In every lesson the teacher pulls in current events about local, national, and world news. • In every class period, with the exception of Friday, a student will be assigned to share the daily News, Sports, and Weather reports. To complete the activity the student must stand before the class and present his or her findings and where they located the information. • The teacher created a very detailed project called The Game of Life. It teaches students the many responsibilities of becoming an independent adult. (Please see Appendix E for a Game of Life handout and rubric the teacher provided.) • In the classroom there is a display of all military service men and women who graduated from PCHS.
3. Does your school offer extracurricular activities to students that foster student leadership and civic ideals?
<p>Teacher explained:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many athletic opportunities where students can learn leadership skills and teamwork. • Student Government where each class elects their class officers: President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Representatives. • Future Business Leaders of America, every year students complete a Christmas Service Project that fosters civic ideals. • Hands and Feet Service Club, students host a shoe collection drive and donations collected are sent with a private mission team to Honduras. • National Honor's Society, students raise money and volunteer for Edwards Street Fellowship Center which is a food pantry located in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. • Teenage Republicans, these students coordinate a service drive called Operation Christmas Child where students fill shoe boxes with toys and send them to children living in 3rd world countries. Also, in the fall 2011 elections this club completed a presentation explaining who the Republican candidates were and

<p>what their platforms and policies were.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All extracurricular activities at PCHS have a service or community involvement component.
<p>4. In teaching civic duties and responsibilities, what do you think is your school's message to seniors?</p>
<p>Teacher explained:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seniors at PCHS are taught to be informed and engaged voters • Seniors at PCHS are taught about choices and the unintended consequences that often come with them and how to prepare. • Community and military service is important on a local, state, and national level. • The little things matter. The teacher believes that the faculty at PCHS model accountability and responsibility. • Boys must tuck their shirts in and the faculty models professionalism. • Students who are late receive a tardy slip with no exceptions • PCHS seniors are held to a standard and they are taught to take pride in their work. • The teacher is confident that his seniors are equipped for succeed in the military and on the junior college or university level. • Many PCHS seniors have supportive and active parents • 100% of PCHS seniors are accepted into either junior colleges or universities. • With the exception of 1 or 2 students, every senior will move on to higher education
<p>Sacred Heart High School</p>
<p>1. What American Government textbook do you use in your class, and how does it present American citizens' civic duties and responsibilities?</p>
<p>Teacher explained:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Magruder's American Government</i>, William A McClenaghan, Pearson Prentice Hall, 2009 • Civic duty and responsibility is explained all throughout the book. Every chapter has a Citizenship 101 Activity Packet and the teacher presents this in every unit as open discussion. The class discusses how an American citizen, the individual, is affected by the information of that chapter. With this activity packet, the teacher asks the question "How do you as a citizen connect to and benefit from America's government?"
<p>2. What instruction and activities do you use with your seniors in explaining civic duties and responsibilities?</p>
<p>Teacher explained:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the November 8, 2011 election, seniors completed a hands-on learning activity called Mock Election Project. The teacher separated the classes into three different committees. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Voting Committee designed a voter registration form modeled after

- an actually one from the Hattiesburg voter registration office. These students handed them out to students and were responsible for holding their fellow classmates accountable.
- The Ballot Committee designed the ballot, listed the actual candidates for the November 8th election. These students were in charge of explaining about the “write in” section of the ballot
 - The Ballot Box Committee designed the box and served as poll workers. Their duties were to check voter card, sign name, vote, return ballot and count the votes
 - Class projects: There are two American Government classes, one was small and one was large.
 - The larger class researched each candidate running in an election and presented to the class each candidate’s politics, platform and party
 - The small class researched the specific offices and what their duties were
 - Each class presented to their own and the other as well.

3. Does your school offer extracurricular activities to its students that foster student leadership and civic ideals?

- Teacher said to look on the school’s website. (This is what the researcher found)
- Sports: Girls Volleyball, Cross Country, Swimming, Basketball, Football, Soccer, Tennis, Golf, Baseball, and Cheerleading
 - Arts: School Band
 - Clubs and Activities: Speech and debate Team, National Honor Society, Yearbook Staff, Student Council, Beta Club, Campus Ministry, Foreign Language Club, Newspaper, and Literary Guild
 - Seniors and other students complete a service work day where they clean up a local creek and creek bank
 - Students participate in community outreach and involvement by visiting local Hattiesburg, Mississippi nursing homes. Students visit with the elderly, sing hymns, and play guitar.

4.) In teaching civic duties and responsibilities, what do you think is your school’s message to seniors?

Teacher did not answer the question

Simpson Academy High School

1.) What American Government textbook do you use in your class, and how does it present American citizens’ civic duties and responsibilities?

- Teacher explained:
- *American Government*, Ethel Woods, Stephen C. Sansone, Houghton Mifflin Company, 2008
 - *United States Government Democracy in Action*, Glencoe McGraw Hill, 2007
 - Teacher explained that the topics of civic duties and responsibilities are spread throughout both texts.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seniors are assigned a senior project. Students must complete 40 hours of community service and there is a ten hour mentorship component.
<p>2.) What instruction and activities do you use with your seniors in explaining civic duties and responsibilities?</p>
<p>Teacher explained:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seniors register to vote in class. They learn about the importance of voting and voter apathy. During class students fill out the voter registration forms, and if you are under 18, the teacher will turn forms into the Circuit Clerk to ensure the process are completed for students. Once registered, students must bring in their voter registration card to class. The teacher teaches the ethical Supreme Court cases. Students conduct a political rally. This is a hands-on learning activity. Students write their bills. They brainstorm and decide how they can improve the state of Mississippi. The class is split into the House and the Senate and the Head Master of the school plays the role of the Governor. (See Appendix F and G for Senate and House agenda created by students at SAHS, both provided by American Government teacher at SAHS) Students learn about Congress and complete a Lobbying Project. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher completes a lesson on what a Lobbyist is and his or her duties. Then, students get in groups and form a project that will benefit the school or the community. Next, students present the project to the class, then the head master and last, to the school board. Last, The school board will vote to fund and carry out the project or not Some examples of project completed by students taking this class are building an outside classroom, installing windows for classroom doors, buying a sound system for the gymnasium, and in 2011 students created a video for an older man in the community who was highly involved with the school's athletics. The video served as a thank you and an appreciation gift. (See Appendix H and I for Lobbying Project worksheet and Grading Sheet, both provided by American Government teacher at SAHS) Students write letters to national representatives. Students complete a free market hands on activity that teachers students about voluntary exchange. Students complete a game called "Fluffier Nutters". This game teaches law of diminishing returns. Students work together and build a structure out of food items such as marshmallows and gram crackers. One student is the judge and can decide to add or take away workers. Students learn that when you hire too many people there is not an increase in product.
<p>3.) Does your school offer extracurricular activities to its students that foster student leadership and civic ideals?</p>
<p>Teacher explained:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many athletic programs

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future Business Leaders of America, student from SAHS is a current state officer and two are running for positions in the upcoming election. In 2012 26 out of 30 students placed at the 2012 state FBLA competition. • Every class must work together to complete a community service project. • During Homecoming week, classes compete against each other. Whichever class has the most participation in the community service events that week wins the competition. • Classes compete in Bucks of Book which was a project started by students to raise money to purchase new books for the school library.
4.) In teaching civic duties and responsibilities, what do you think is your school's message to seniors?
<p>Teacher explained:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students at SAHS are taught that you may not agree with certain opinions; however it is beneficial to listen and always respect what other people have to say.

Sample Survey

Below is the self-made survey that was distributed to South Mississippi High School Seniors in the spring of 2012. This survey is based on the textbook *United States, Adventures in Time and Place*, a McGraw Hill resource sponsored by the National Geographic Society. The twenty-five scaled survey items include perceptions of voting, obeying the law, taking part in government, community involvement, paying taxes to provide for social benefits, respecting the rights of others, and other civic items. The survey is included in the text to facilitate understanding of the responses. (Please see Appendix J to view the Short Consent Form signed by seniors 18 years of age or older who completed the survey.)

South Mississippi Senior Civic Duty and Responsibility Survey

Please circle one item below:

1. I am 18 years of age or older.
2. I am not yet 18 years of age.
 1. What high school do you attend?
 - a. Hattiesburg High School
 - b. Presbyterian High School
 - c. Sacred Heart High School
 - d. Simpson Academy
 2. Would you consider your parents to be politically involved such as an active voter, members of political parties, or informed citizens regarding America's politics?
 - a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither disagree or agree
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly agree
 3. As a senior in High School, I am actively involved in extracurricular activities that foster student leadership and civic ideals.
 - a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither disagree or agree
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly agree
 4. As a senior in High School, I keep up with public news and media.
 - a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither disagree or agree
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly Agree
 5. On a Saturday afternoon I would be open to attending a political rally.
 - a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither disagree or agree

- d. Agree
 - e. Strongly agree
6. It is important for the citizens of the United States to vote in the 2012 Presidential election.
- a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither disagree or agree
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly agree
7. When a young person reaches the voting age of 18 he or she should register to vote.
- a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither disagree of agree
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly agree
8. As a senior in High School, I would be open to participating in a political campaign.
- a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither disagree or agree
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly agree
9. In my community, if I noticed a torn up road or a dilapidated community center I would contact my local political officials about my concern.
- a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither disagree or agree
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly agree
10. As a senior in High School, I would be interested in watching the State of the Union presidential address.
- a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither disagree or agree
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly agree
11. Volunteering for the betterment of your community is important, and as a senior in High School, I participate in such civic engagement.
- a. Strongly disagree

- b. Disagree
 - c. Neither disagree or agree
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly agree
12. As a senior in High School I respect citizens of the police force and other service men and women.
- a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither disagree or agree
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly agree
13. As an adult, I will always strive to follow the laws of my country.
- a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither disagree or agree
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly agree
14. Americans should pay taxes to provide services for all citizens including public schools, safe highways, social security, prisons, and social services for low-income citizens.
- a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither disagree or agree
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly agree
15. Paying taxes is not a burden but a responsibility I have as a citizen.
- a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither disagree or agree
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly agree
16. As a senior in High School, I strive to respect the rights of others.
- a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither disagree or agree
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly agree
17. It is important to protect the environment and be a good consumer.
- a. Strongly disagree

- b. Disagree
 - c. Neither disagree or agree
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly agree
18. As a senior in High School, I take responsibility for my actions.
- a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither disagree or agree
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly agree
19. Watching the news and reading about local, state, and national issues and events are important to me because I strive to be an informed citizen.
- a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither disagree or agree
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly agree
20. It is my civic duty to vote.
- a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither disagree or agree
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly agree
21. It is important for me to know my local, state, and national public officials.
- a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither disagree or agree
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly agree
22. As a senior in High School, I would be open to volunteering in my community.
- a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither disagree or agree
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly agree
23. Learning my rights and responsibilities as a citizen is important for me to understand.
- a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither disagree or agree

- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

24. It is important for my state to be safe and clean.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither disagree or agree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

25. As a senior in High School, striving to be a good citizen of America is important to me.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither disagree or agree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

Chapter Four: Results

On May 9, 2012, 23 seniors from Hattiesburg High School, 18 years of age or older, successfully completed the *South Mississippi Senior Civic Duty and Responsibility Survey*. On May 9, 2012, 25 seniors from Presbyterian Christian High School, 18 years of age or older, successfully completed the *South Mississippi Senior Civic Duty and Responsibility Survey*. On May 7, 2012, 17 seniors from Sacred Heart High School, 18 years of age or older, successfully completed the *South Mississippi Senior Civic Duty and Responsibility Survey*. On April 26, 2012, 17 seniors from Simpson Academy High School, 18 years of age or older, successfully completed the *South Mississippi Senior Civic Duty and Responsibility Survey*. After the 82 surveys were returned, all data was imputed into an EXCEL sheet then transferred to SSPS software. Dr. James T. Johnson, Director of the Center of Research Support at the University of Southern Mississippi, assisted the researcher by utilizing SPSS software and explained the results. He was a major asset to this study.

The first research question is, “In looking at all four high schools separately, what are South Mississippi High School seniors’ perceptions of their civic duties and responsibilities?” See the table below to see how each South Mississippi High School scored in answering survey questions 2-25.

1. In looking at all four high schools separately, what are South Mississippi high school seniors’ perceptions of their civic duties and responsibilities? See chart below for results

Table 1	HHS Mean and (SD)	PCHS Mean and (SD)	SCHS Mean and (SD)	SAHS Mean and (SD)
2. Said parents were politically active	3.43 (1.34)	4.56 (.58)	4.41 (.62)	4.12 (.99)
3. Actively involved in extracurricular activities that foster student leadership and civic ideals	3.70 (1.18)	3.84 (1.11)	4.18 (.73)	3.35 (.93)
4. Keeps up with public news and media	3.78 (1.04)	3.84 (.80)	3.76 (.83)	3.53 (.94)
5. Would attend a political rally	2.78 (1.08)	2.96 (1.06)	2.94 (1.03)	2.35 (.86)
6. Important for US citizens to vote in 2012 Presidential Elections	4.09 (1.31)	4.88 (.33)	4.65 (.49)	4.71 (.59)
7 At 18, citizens should register to vote	4.00 (1.13)	4.88 (.33)	4.65 (.49)	4.59 (1.00)
8. Would participate in a political campaign	3.35 (1.11)	3.96 (.68)	4.12 (.70)	3.00 (.93)
9. Would contact a local public official about a torn up road or dilapidated community center	3.48 (.95)	2.76 (.88)	2.82 (1.01)	2.71 (.85)
10. Interested to watch the State of the Union Presidential Address	2.96 (1.06)	3.48 (1.16)	3.76 (1.03)	2.94 (.97)
11. Volunteering for your community is important and I participate in	3.43 (.99)	4.16 (.80)	4.00 (1.00)	3.41 (.94)

such civic engagement				
12. It is important to respect citizens in the police force and other service men and women	4.17 (1.19)	4.68 (.48)	4.12 (1.17)	4.47 (.72)
13. Strives to follow the laws of my country	4.09 (1.00)	4.44 (.65)	4.59 (.51)	4.47 (.80)
14. Pay taxes for public schools, safe highways, social security, prisons, and social services for low income citizens	3.87 (1.22)	3.72 (.89)	4.41 (.51)	3.82 (.95)
15. Paying taxes is not a burden, but a responsibility	3.96 (1.06)	3.96 (.84)	4.24 (.66)	3.35 (.93)
16. I respect the rights of others	4.17 (.98)	4.60 (.50)	4.65 (.49)	4.18 (1.18)
17. Important to protect the environment and be a good consumer	4.26 (.96)	4.36 (.76)	4.41 (.87)	3.94 (.97)
18. I take responsibility of my actions.	4.35 (.94)	4.56 (.58)	4.71 (.47)	4.41 (1.12)
19. I strive to be an informed citizen by watching and reading the local, state, and national news.	3.74 (.92)	3.96 (.79)	3.82 (.88)	3.94 (.90)
20. It is my civic duty to vote	3.83 (.78)	4.76 (.44)	4.35 (.79)	4.41 (1.18)
21. Important to know my local, state, and	3.91 (.73)	4.00 (.82)	4.18 (.64)	3.59 (.87)

national public officials				
22. I am open to volunteering in my community	4.00 (.91)	4.44 (.58)	4.35 (.86)	3.59 (1.06)
23. Learning and understanding my rights and responsibilities is important to me	4.26 (.54)	4.52 (.59)	4.65 (.49)	4.24 (.97)
24. It is important for my state to be safe and clean.	4.35 (.98)	4.68 (.56)	4.59 (.51)	4.41 (1.06)
25. Striving to be a good citizen is important to me.	4.17 (.98)	4.56 (.51)	4.53 (.62)	4.29 (1.16)
Overall Mean and (Standard Deviation)	3.86 (.62)	4.19 (.36)	4.20 (.40)	3.83 (.54)

This twenty-five scaled survey items includes perceptions of voting, obeying the law, taking part in government, community involvement, paying taxes to provide for social benefits, respecting the rights of others, and other civic items.

Students answered questions concerning the civic duty of voting. Question 7 reads, “When a young person reaches the voting age of 18 he or she should register to vote.” The results show that HHS scored a mean of 4.00, PCHS scored a mean of 4.88, SCHS scored a mean of 4.65, and SAHS scored a mean of 4.59. In addition, question 20 reads, “It is my civic duty to vote.” In looking at the results of question 20, HHS scored a mean of 3.83, PCHS scored a mean of 4.76, SCHS scored a mean of 4.35, and SAHS scored a mean of 4.41. On questions dealing with the civic duty of voting, seniors attending the South Mississippi private high schools scored higher on average than seniors attending Hattiesburg Public High School.

In looking at the civic responsibility of obeying the law, question 13 reads, “As an adult, I will always strive to follow the laws of my country.” The results show that HHS scored a mean of 4.09, PCHS scored a mean of 4.44, SCHS scored a mean of 4.59, and SAHS scored a mean of 4.47. Something that is interesting is the results to question 12. It reads, “As a senior in High School I respect citizens of the police force and other service men and women.” HHS scored a mean of 4.17, PCHS scored a mean of 4.68, SCHS scored a mean of 4.12, and SAHS scored a mean of 4.47. With that said, seniors attending Sacred Heart High School scored on average the highest on question 12 in dealing with obeying the law but scored on average the lowest in respecting the police force and other service men and women.

Students’ attitudes and perceptions of taking part in government were also measured. Question 8 reads, “As a senior in High School, I would be open to participating in a political campaign.” Results show that HHS scored a mean of 3.35, PCHS scored a mean of 3.96, SCHS scored a mean of 4.12 and SAHS scored a mean of 3.00. In addition, question 5 reads, “On a Saturday afternoon I would be open to attending a political rally.” The results for question 5 are HHS scored a mean of 2.78, PCHS scored a mean of 2.96, SCHS scored a mean of 2.94, and SAHS scored a mean of 2.35. This proves that the South Mississippi parochial schools on average are the most open to taking part in government and the private school Simpson Academy scored a mean that was significantly lower than the other three high schools.

In looking at community service and community involvement, question 11 reads, “Volunteering for the betterment of your community is important, and as a senior in High School, I participate in such civic activity.” The results for question 11 are that HHS

scored a mean of 3.43, PCHS scored a mean of 4.16, SCHS scored a mean of 4.00, and SAHS scored a mean of 3.41. In addition question 22 reads, “As a senior of High School, I would be open to volunteering in my community.” One can see that HHS scored a mean of 4.00, PCHS scored a mean of 4.44, SCHS scored a mean of 4.18, and SAHS scored a mean of 3.59. Presbyterian Christian High School on average scored the highest on both questions dealing with community service involvement.

Paying taxes was addressed in the student survey. Question 14 reads, “Americans should pay taxes to provide services for all citizens including public schools, safe highways, social security, prisons, and social services for low-income citizens. HHS scored a mean of 3.87, PCHS scored a mean of 3.72, SCHS scored a mean of 4.41, and SAHS scored a mean of 3.83. In addition, question 15 reads, “Paying taxes is not a burden but a responsibility I have as a citizen.” The results for question 15 are HHS scored a mean of 3.96, PCHS scored a mean of 3.96, SCHS scored a mean of 4.24, and SAHS scored a mean of 3.35. Sacred Heart High School on average scored the highest on both questions dealing with the importance of paying taxes.

In examining students attitudes towards respecting the rights of others, question 16 reads, “As a senior in High School, I strive to respect the rights of others.” HHS scored a mean score of 4.17, PCHS scored a mean score of 4.60, SCHS scored a mean score of 4.65, and SAHS scored a mean score of 4.18. This question proved that while all High Schools on average have high scores, the parochial schools scored the highest in fulfilling the civic duty of respecting the rights of others.

In interrupting students’ attitudes towards preserving the environment, question 17 reads, “It is important to protect the environment and be a good consumer.” The

results for question 17 are HHS scored a mean score of 4.26, PCHS scored a mean score of 4.36, SCHS scored a mean score of 4.41, and SAHS scored a mean score of 3.94. In addition, question 24 reads, “It is important for my state to stay safe and clean.” HHS scored a mean score of 4.35, PCHS scored a mean score of 4.68, SCHS scored a mean score of 4.59, and SAHS scored a mean score of 4.41. The parochial schools on average scored higher than Hattiesburg High School and Simpson Academy High School.

The results of question nine, however, are surprising. It reads, “In my community, if I noticed a torn up road or a dilapidated community center I would contact my local political officials about my concern.” The students of Hattiesburg High School scored on average significantly higher than the other High Schools. The results are HHS scored a mean score of 3.48, PCHS scored a mean score of 2.76, SCHS scored a mean score of 2.82, and SAHS scored a mean score of 2.71.

The second research question is, “Students who say their parents are politically involved, what are their perceptions of their civic duties and responsibilities?” This independent variable is addressed in the survey by question two and it reads, “Would you consider your parents to be politically involved such as an active voter, members of political parties, or informed citizens regarding America’s politics?” The table below explains how all high school seniors scored according to survey questions 5-25. These questions are designed to measure high school seniors’ perceptions of their civic duties and responsibilities.

2. “Students who say their parents are politically involved, what are their perceptions of their civic duties and responsibilities?”

Table 2	Number of Surveys	Mean (Standard Deviation)
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Low: Strongly disagree or Disagree	8	3.47(.78)
Medium: Neither disagree or agree	6	3.86(.29)
High: Agree or Strongly agree	68	4.12(.45)
Total	82	4.03(.51)

The results prove that High School seniors who said their parents are politically active scored high on survey questions 5-25. Students who selected “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” scored significantly higher than students who selected “Strong Disagree” or “Disagree,” $F(2.79) = 6.68, p = .002$.

The third research question is, “Students who say they are active in extracurricular activities that foster student leadership and civic ideals, what are their perceptions of their civic duties and responsibilities.” This independent variable is addressed by survey question three and it reads, “As a senior in High School, I am actively involved in extracurricular activities that foster student leadership and civic ideals?” The table below explains how all high school seniors scored according to survey questions 5-25.

3. Students who say they are active in extracurricular activities that foster student leadership and civic ideals, what are their perceptions of their civic duties and responsibilities?

Table 3	Number of Surveys	Mean (Standard Deviation)
Low: Strongly disagree or Disagree	12	3.56(.68)
Medium: Neither disagree or agree	14	3.82(.34)
High: Agree or Strongly agree	56	4.18(.43)
Total	82	4.03(.51)

High School Seniors who said that they are involved in extracurricular activities that foster student leadership and civic ideals scored high on survey questions 5-25. Students who selected “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” scored significantly higher than students who selected “Strong Disagree,” “Disagree,” or “Neither disagree or agree,” $F(2.79) = 10.41$, $p < .001$.

The fourth research question is, “For students who say they read or watch public news and media, what are their perceptions of their civic duties and responsibilities?” This independent variable is addressed in the survey by survey question four and it reads, “As a senior in High School, I keep up with public news and media.” The table below explains how all high school seniors scored according to survey questions 5-25.

4. Students who say they expose themselves to public news and media, what are their perceptions of their civic duties and responsibilities?

Table 4	Number of Surveys	Mean (Standard Deviation)
Low: Strongly disagree or Disagree	8	3.51 (.63)
Medium: Neither disagree or agree	16	3.91 (.44)
High: Agree or Strongly agree	58	4.13 (.47)
Total	82	4.03 (.51)

In examining the results, High School seniors who said they view public news and media scored high on survey questions 5-25. Students who selected “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” scored significantly higher than students who selected “Strong Disagree” or “Disagree,” $F(2.79) = 6.39$, $p = .003$.

This study proves that South Mississippi seniors who said their parents are politically involved participate in extracurricular activities that foster student leadership and civic ideals, and they engage in the public news and media scored high on survey questions 5-25. These questions were formed to measure their perceptions of their civic duties and responsibilities. This could mean that students who selected “agree” or “strongly agree” on survey questions 2, 3 and 4 have high perceptions of their civic duties and responsibilities.

The fifth research question is, “In looking at the two parochial schools of Sacred Heart High School and Presbyterian Christian High School, how did those students score compared to the private school Simpson Academy High School?” The table below explains how the 2 parochial schools and the 1 private school scored in looking at survey questions 5-25. Again, these questions were formed to measure High School seniors’ perceptions of their civic duties and responsibilities.

5. In looking at the two parochial schools of Sacred Heart High School and Presbyterian Christian High School, how did those students score compared to the private school of Simpson Academy High School?

Table 5	Number of Surveys	Mean and (Standard Deviation)
Parochial: Sacred Heart High School and Presbyterian Christian High School	42	4.19 (.37)
Private: Simpson Academy High School	17	3.83 (.54)
Total	59	4.09 (.45)

The mean score of the 42 seniors from the two parochial schools of Sacred Heart High School and Presbyterian Christian High School is higher than the mean score of the 17 seniors from the private school of Simpson Academy High School. In looking at survey questions 5-25 these results show a significant difference, $F(1, 57) = 8.46, p = .005$.

The sixth research question is, “In looking at the private schools of Sacred Heart High School, Presbyterian Christian High School, and Simpson Academy High School, how did those seniors score compared to the seniors at Hattiesburg Public High School?” The table below explains how the 3 private schools and the 1 public school scored in looking at survey questions 5-25.

6. In looking at the private schools of Sacred Heart High School, Presbyterian Christian High School, and Simpson Academy High School, how did those seniors score compared to the seniors at Hattiesburg Public High School?

Table 6	Number of Surveys	Mean and (Standard Deviation)
Private: Sacred Heart High School, Presbyterian Christian High School, and Simpson Academy High School	59	4.09 (.45)
Public: Hattiesburg Public High School	23	3.86 (.62)
Total	82	4.02 (.51)

The mean score of the 59 high school seniors from the 3 private schools is higher than the mean score of 23 high school seniors from the 1 public school. However, the difference between the two means is .225, meaning that there is not a significant difference between the two scores. With that said, in looking at survey questions 5-25, there is not a

significant difference between the three private high schools, including the private schools of PCHS and SCHS with parochial status, compared to the one public high school, $F(1,80) = 3.296, p = .073$.

This study's results prove that South Mississippi seniors attending parochial schools scored significantly higher on survey questions 5-25 than seniors attending the private school. In addition, seniors attending the 3 private schools, including the private schools of PCHS and SCHS with parochial status, did not score significantly higher on survey questions 5-25 than seniors attending the public school. In closing, seniors from the parochial schools of Sacred Heart High School and Presbyterian Christian High School have the highest perceptions of their civic duties and responsibilities.

Chapter 5: Analysis

South Mississippi seniors received a composite score of 4.0255 on the *South Mississippi Senior Civic Duty and Responsibility Survey*. When using the Likert scale from 1-5, "1" being the lowest and "5" being the highest, South Mississippi seniors, 18 years or older, have high perceptions of their civic duties and responsibilities. In looking at the instruction and activities of each class, the researcher noticed that every teacher implements hands on learning projects that expose students to their civic duties and

responsibilities. In addition, the majority of seniors from all four South Mississippi High Schools participate in extracurricular activities that foster student leadership and civic ideals. Last, many South Mississippi seniors complete 25 or more hours of community service and community involvement.

This twenty-five scaled survey items included perceptions of voting, obeying the law, taking part in government, community involvement, paying taxes to provide for social benefits, respecting the rights of others, and other civic items. In analyzing this data the researcher refers back to the interviews with each American Government teacher and the information that was received.

On questions that measure seniors' attitudes and perceptions of their civic duty of voting, seniors attending the South Mississippi private high schools scored higher on average than seniors attending Hattiesburg Public High School. Perhaps this is because the teacher at Sacred Heart High School implemented the Mock Election Project where students were exposed to the voter registration process. In addition, the teachers at Presbyterian Christian High School and Simpson Academy High School conducted activities where students filled out mock voter registration cards, and it was mandatory for students to bring in their voter registration cards. Perhaps when the teacher made this mandatory this instilled a sense of civic responsibility.

In looking at obeying the law, while all schools scored an average mean of 4.0 or higher, seniors attending Presbyterian Christian High School scored the highest. This could be true because while interviewing the American Government teacher at PCHS the researcher learned that students are held to a high standard and the rules at that school

are very strict with no exceptions. In addition, in the American Government classroom at PCHS the teacher displays all service men and women that have graduated from PCHS.

Seniors attending South Mississippi parochial schools on average are the most open to taking part in government and the private school Simpson Academy High School scored a mean that was significantly lower than the other three high schools. The researcher questions these findings because at all four South Mississippi High Schools students are exposed to hands on learning activities that enforces political participation, especially at Simpson Academy High School. Students there participate in the Lobbying Project, Bill Writing Activity, and students conduct their own political rally. Last, the researcher takes notice that on question 5, “On a Saturday afternoon I would be open to attending a political rally.” Each high school scored a mean of 2.96 or lower. Those were the lowest scores of the entire survey.

Presbyterian Christian High School on average scored the highest on questions measuring seniors’ attitudes and willingness to participate in community service and community involvement. Perhaps this is because these seniors must complete a senior project where they fulfill 25 hours of community service, and in every extracurricular activity at PCHS there is a service component. Their Hands and Feet Service club supports local mission teams and their National Honors Society raise money and volunteer for a local Hattiesburg food pantry.

The survey addressed the civic duty of paying taxes and understanding that is a civic responsibility. Sacred Heart High School on average scored higher than the other three South Mississippi High Schools. In looking back to the literature review, the researcher would like to point out an article *Effects of Catholic Schooling on Civic*

Participation, written by Thomas S Dee. Dee refers to a study completed by David E Campbell that proved the idea that Catholic High School students have better attitudes towards civic engagement, and they have higher levels of civic participation and civic knowledge. (Dee, 3) A community cannot support those civic services without a positive attitude in paying taxes. This could be true because the American Government teacher at SHHS presents a Citizenship 101 Activity that focuses on how the individual is affected by the information of that chapter. Also, the teacher explained how each citizen connects to America's government and benefits from its services. Therefore, these students realize the direct connection between community services and their tax dollars.

All South Mississippi High Schools scored an average of 4.17 or higher in respecting the rights of others. However, the parochial schools scored the highest. Every South Mississippi teacher interviewed shared with the researcher that they implement hands-on activities that involve student interaction. These seniors are working together while developing an understanding of their civic duties and responsibilities. Group interaction fosters cooperative education. This could be true as to why their scores are so high concerning respecting the rights of others.

In looking at preserving the environment, while the parochial schools on average scored the highest, each South Mississippi High School scored a 3.94 or higher. This could be true because Sacred Heart High School's seniors complete a service work day where they clean up a neighborhood creek and creek bank.

Something to take notice of is looking at the results for question 9. It reads, "In my community, if I noticed a torn up road or a dilapidated community center I would contact my local political officials about my concern." The students of Hattiesburg High

School scored on average significantly higher than the other High Schools. This could be true because while interviewing the teacher, the researcher discovered that local and state public officials travel to Hattiesburg High and host voter registration drives. Also, these officials instruct students how to properly report and communicate with them.

Every South Mississippi High School offers many extracurricular activities that foster student leadership and civic ideals. In looking at the data, High School Seniors who said that they were involved with extracurricular activities that foster student leadership and civic ideals scored high on survey questions 5-25. Students who selected “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” scored significantly higher than students who selected “Strong Disagree,” “Disagree,” or “Neither disagree or agree”. This could be true because in looking at survey question number three, “As a senior in High School, I am actively involved in extracurricular activities that foster student leadership and civic ideals” out of 82 seniors 14.6% selected “Strongly Disagree,” “Disagree,” 17% selected “Neither disagree nor agree,” and 68.3% selected “Agree,” and “Strongly agree.”

This study proves that South Mississippi seniors who said their parents are politically involved are active in extracurricular activities that foster student leadership and civic ideals, and they expose themselves to public news and media scored high on survey questions 5-25. This could mean that students who selected “agree” or “strongly agree” on survey questions 2, 3 and 4 have high perceptions of their civic duties and responsibilities.

In examining these four South Mississippi High Schools, this study proves that seniors attending parochial schools scored significantly higher on survey questions 5-25 than seniors attending the private school. In addition, seniors attending the 3 private

schools, including the private schools of PCHS and SCHS with parochial status, did not score significantly higher on survey questions 5-25 than seniors attending the public school. In closing, seniors from the parochial schools of Sacred Heart High School and Presbyterian Christian High School have the highest perceptions of their civic duties and responsibilities.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

High school teachers in America today shoulder the principal responsibility for preparing students for the demands of citizenship and civic responsibility. The National Curriculum Standards for High School Social Studies Teachers clearly expects that students understand what civic participation is and how they can become involved in civic engagement. In addition, they must understand their role as a citizen in their community, nation, and the world, and how they can make a positive difference. With

that said, studies show that despite formal education in citizenship and civic duty in their senior year, many graduating high school students have low or negative perceptions of their civic duties and responsibilities.

The tenth theme for the National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies is Civic Ideals and Practice. The Mississippi Department of Education has adopted these standards and the *South Mississippi High School Senior's Perceptions of Civic Duties and Responsibilities* study proves that South Mississippi High School seniors have high perception of their civic duties and responsibilities.

By looking at the interviews with each South Mississippi American Government teacher and the data received, the instruction and activities used in the classroom does affect seniors' perceptions and attitudes of their civic duties and responsibilities. This could be because these seniors participated in hands-on activities that taught civic participation through active learning, community service, and extracurricular activities that foster student leadership and civic ideals.

This study proves that South Mississippi seniors who said their parents are politically involved participate in extracurricular activities that foster student leadership and civic ideals, and they expose themselves to public news and media scored high on the *South Mississippi Senior Civic Duties and Responsibilities Survey*. This could mean that these three things make a positive difference on seniors' perceptions and attitudes toward their civic duties and responsibilities.

Eighty-two seniors from Hattiesburg Public High School, Presbyterian High School, Sacred Heart High School, and Simpson Academy High School were surveyed in the spring of 2012. Seniors attending the two parochial schools scored significantly

higher on survey questions 5-25 than seniors attending the private school. Remembering that, these questions measure students' perceptions of their civic duties and responsibilities. In addition, seniors attending the three private schools, including the private schools of PCHS and SCHS with parochial status, did not score significantly higher on survey questions 5-25 than seniors attending the public school. Seniors from the parochial schools of Sacred Heart High School and Presbyterian Christian High School have the highest perceptions of their civic duties and responsibilities. This study proved that there is a difference. Further research can seek to explain why.

What is most astonishing to the researcher is that South Mississippi seniors understand their taxes are going to civic services, and there are a number of students who are learning about the constitution and their personal role in government. In closing, South Mississippi seniors are understanding the civic duties and responsibilities of voting, obeying the law, taking part in government, community involvement, paying taxes to provide for social benefits, respecting the rights of others, preserving the environment and other civic items. South Mississippi American Government teachers are making a positive difference in teaching High School seniors their civic duties and responsibilities. Overall, seniors attending parochial schools have the highest perceptions of their role in American government.

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Appendix A

July 25, 2011
Presbyterian Christian High School
221 Bonhomie Road
Hattiesburg, MS
39401

Ms. Chelsea Lewis
11 Louise Lane
Brooklyn, MS
39425

Dear Mr. Jones,

Hello, my name is Chelsea Lewis, and I am a senior at the University of Southern Mississippi. I am a History Licensure major and a member of the University's Honors College. All students within the Honors College program must complete a thesis. My project involves students and civic responsibility. I would like to conduct research in measuring students' perceptions of their civic duties and responsibilities. I wish to work with public, parochial, and private high schools so I can compare and contrast the three. I am writing today to ask if I could work with your History and American Government teachers and your high school seniors. This project is a yearlong process, so, if allowed, I will complete this field work in the spring of 2012.

If you are interested in this project and want more information, please contact me at 601-467-7296 or my email is chelsea.lewis@eagles.usm.edu. Please know that I am currently living in the city of Hattiesburg. If you would like to set up a meeting, I would be more than happy to visit your office.

Attached to this letter is a sample of ten survey questions I will ask high school seniors attending Presbyterian Christian High School.

I hear exciting things about Presbyterian Christian High School, and I would enjoy working with your faculty and students. I look forward to hearing from you and thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Chelsea Lewis

Appendix B

Sample Survey Questions

1. On a Saturday afternoon, would you rather...
 - a. Attend a concert
 - b. Attend a political rally
 - c. Attend a sporting event
 - d. Go to the Movies

2. How important is voting in the 2012 Presidential election?
 - a. Very important
 - b. Kind of important

- c. Not important at all
 - d. I do not care about politics
3. How often do you watch any type of news station?
- a. 1-3 times a week
 - b. 5-7 times a week
 - c. Once or twice throughout the month
 - d. I cannot remember the last time I watched a news station
4. Once you turn eighteen, what are the chances you will register to vote?
- a. 100% committed to registering to vote
 - b. I will consider registering to vote
 - c. I do not plan on registering to vote
 - d. I have not thought about registering to vote
5. As a young adult, would you rather...
- a. Volunteer at a Zoo
 - b. Volunteer to help with a political campaign
 - c. Volunteer at a nursing home
 - d. Volunteer at a tutoring center for elementary students
6. If you saw something wrong in your community, such as a broken road or a worn down community center, how open are you to contacting your local political officials?
- a. Very open
 - b. Not open at all
 - c. They will not listen to me
 - d. I have contacted my political officials many times
7. Did you watch the State of the Union Address given by President Barack Obama on January 25, 2011?
- a. Yes, I did watch the State of the Union Address.
 - b. No, I did not watch the State of the Union Address.
 - c. I do not know what the State of the Union Address is.
 - d. I cannot remember if I watch the State of the Union Address or not.
8. Would you rather meet?
- a. A professional athlete from your favorite team
 - b. The lead singer from your favorite band

- c. The richest man in the world
 - d. The President of the United States
9. What activities outside of school take up most of your time?
- a. Hanging out with my friends
 - b. Playing sports or participating in the arts
 - c. Working a part time job
 - d. Volunteering for community service
10. Do you understand your rights and responsibilities as a citizen?
- a. I kind of understand my rights and responsibilities as a citizen.
 - b. I do not understand my rights and responsibilities as a citizen.
 - c. I do not care what my rights and responsibilities are as a citizen.
 - d. Yes I fully understand what my rights and responsibilities are as a citizen.
- If so, please list as many as you can on the lines provided.

Appendix C

Dear Ms. Lewis,

I am Bob Sybert, and I teach government at Presbyterian Christian School. Mr. Jones passed me the information concerning your Honors College thesis. I will be happy to assist you in completing your survey. I teach two sections of grade level Government (22 Students) and two sections of A.P. Government (47 students). You can contact me @ 601-261-5358 or by email. Email will be easier as I am often away from my phone.

Coach Sybert

Hello Mr. Sybert,

Thank you for emailing me back. I hope your school year got off to a great start. I look forward to working with you and your students. I am currently at work, and do not have my information in front of me. At the beginning of next week I will send you an email with some additional information about this project. This email is just to say thank you for responding to me, and again, I look forward to working with you and your students.

Sincerely,
Chelsea Lewis

Dear Mr. Sybert,

I hope your classes are going well. Thank you for being patient with me. Classes started at Southern Miss and already things are very busy. I am surveying high school seniors from Sacred Heart High School, Simpson Academy, Hattiesburg High School, and of course your students from Presbyterian Christian. This study will measure high school seniors' perceptions of their civic duties and responsibilities. I am surveying students but also looking at how civic responsibility is taught by the different school systems. Is there any way I could please meet with you at a time that is most convenient for you and discuss a few things. At this meeting, would you be open to sharing with me how your textbook explains civic responsibility, how you teach that specific lesson, and when would be the best time to survey your students? If you would like to complete this over the phone or through email that is completely fine with me. Please know that my parents both have a career in public education. With that said, I understand how busy you are, and I promise not to take too much of your time. Please email me back if are open to meeting with me, and if you are not please know that having the opportunity to survey your students will greatly help me with this project. Again, thank you for your time. Mr. Sybert, you can reach me by my email or my cell phone 601-467-7296.

Sincerely,
Chelsea Lewis

Ms. Lewis,

I can meet with you Mon-Thurs @ 1:30. This is my planning period. I am open next week. Just let me know which day works best for you.

Coach Sybert

Appendix D

Fairchild/ U.S. Government: "Classroom Congress" Activity/ Project

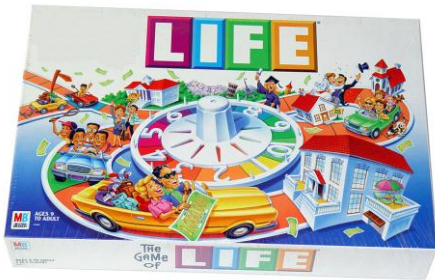
Each of the 6 classes will be classified as a "state" in our fictional "United States". Each class/state is entitled to 2 "senators" regardless of size or population, just as in the real Senate. Each class/state will have one representative per 9 students (more or less-this number will be rounded up or down at the teacher's discretion). Students can thus divide into groups. These will be Congressional "Districts". This will emphasize the fact that each state's representation in the House of Representatives is based on population. To approximate the citizenship, age, and residency requirements for Senators and

Representatives, there will be minimum requirements for the two positions in regard to age and number of years attending Hattiesburg High School (for instance, 17 years of age/2 years at HHS for Representative and 18 years of age/3 years at HHS for each house of the “Congress”. Campaign posters may be displayed in the classroom. When the elections are finalized, members of the “Congress” will have their profiles displayed within the classroom or behind the hallway-facing classroom windows. To add a technology element and generate inter-class affiliation, collaboration and competition, text or twitter could be optionally employed for the campaign and election.

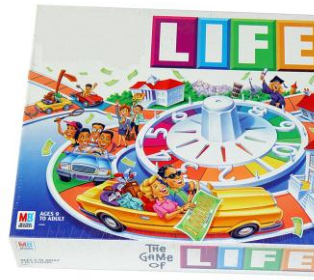
Students not serving in elected office will organize into special interest groups, lobbyists, and political parties. They will petition the student Congress to propose and pass “bills” regarding end-of-year classroom activities, extra credit opportunities, etc. The student Congress can divide into congressional “committees” to consider, refine, and push bills. Also, Speaker of the House and Senate President Pro-Tempore positions could be filled. Again, text and twitter could be optionally employed by the students to debate, vote, and generate inter-class affiliation, collaboration and competition.

Unlike real-life, limits will be placed on the number of bills that can be passed, and the teacher’s “presidential veto” cannot be overturned by the two-thirds vote of Congress. But, the student involvement will have some effort on classroom perks. In a future unit, we may have a mock “Supreme Court”, appointed by the “President” and approved by the student “Senate”, to hear “cases”. In any case, this project will be a steady source of daily grade and participation points.

Appendix E



THE GAME OF LIFE



Congratulations on your graduation from high school. This is a big accomplishment. I know that you plan on attending college this fall, but your plans have changed. Unfortunately, you failed to

turn in your college applications by the required deadline and now ALL the schools are full. Because of your transgression, your family has disowned you and will no longer provide any form of monetary support. For the next year you will be required to work and provide for all your expenses. Welcome to **LIFE!**

This will be a 12 month simulation. You will need the following to successfully complete the simulation.

- a. 1" binder with loose leaf paper
- b. Tabbed dividers
- c. Blank checkbook register (1st copy provided) Additional copies are available on RenWeb.
- d. Blank checks (1st copy provided) Additional copies are available on RenWeb
- e. Savings register (1st copy provided) Additional copies are available on RenWeb.

Instructions:

Your savings and money you received for graduation come to a total of \$1000. This will be your starting “nest egg.” Spend it wisely. From this day forward all your transactions must be by “check” or “debit card” and recorded in your checkbook register. This means NO CASH transactions. You must find a job, place to live, food to eat, and transportation.

Listed below are the requirements to be included in your LIFE SIMULATION PORTFOLIO. We will break these requirements down into smaller sections. I will give you more detailed instructions as well as intermediate deadlines as we progress through the assignment. I will assign a due date to each individual assignment. I will grade each individual assignment. There will be a point reduction for all late assignments. You will receive an overall grade for the finished portfolio.

1. Job
 - a. Job Application – you must procure a job application and complete for T/I. You must also complete a Form W-4.
 - b. Salary – I will determine your annual salary. I will provide you with your W-2. You must retain this for your records. You will need the W-2 when you file your income tax.
2. Housing
 - a. Apartment – you must research and provide a copy of a completed rental application.
 - b. Rent - You must provide proof of rent costs (from application or rental ad). Remember that there may be upfront costs such as security deposit and 1st month’s rent.
 - c. Electric/gas - The hook up/turn on fee for your gas and electricity will be \$200, \$100 for each. I will provide you with your utility bills.
 - d. Cable/Internet - You must research and provide the monthly cost of cable/internet, to include hookup fees.
 - e. Insurance - You must maintain renters insurance and provide proof of cost.
3. Food
 - a. I will determine and provide your monthly budget for food. This includes fast food and all meals cooked in your apartment.

4. Transportation
 - a. Car – you must purchase a car. Your choice, but keep in mind such things as monthly payments, gas, repairs and insurance. You must provide proof of cost.
 - b. Sales tax – you must pay sales tax on the car you buy. Sales tax is 7%.
 - c. Car tags – you must also pay for the tags and ad valorem tax. Your tags and taxes will be 2% of the value of the car.
 - d. Insurance – you must provide insurance coverage based on the car you purchase. If you are financing, the finance company requires you to carry full coverage on the car. If you buy without financing, then you must carry the minimum coverage required by the state. You will need to provide proof of the costs.
 - e. Financing your car. The bank will allow you to finance your car for up to four years. Monthly payments will be based on the amount financed and the length of the loan.
 - f. Gasoline costs – research and provide the estimated MPG for your vehicle. I will provide you with the total miles driven to work each day and estimated mileage driven for “pleasure.” You will use this to determine your weekly gasoline costs based on current gas costs.
5. Checkbook register – Your checkbook register must be complete, up to date, and accurate. I have provided an example.
6. Savings account register – You must have a savings account and make monthly deposits. (Pay yourself first.) Your register must be complete, up to date, and accurate.
7. Taxes: Federal and State
 - a. Complete a Form1040EZ based on your annual income.
 - b. Complete a Mississippi Resident Individual Income Tax Return.
8. Misc.
 - a. Cell phone – research and provide cell phone plan and payments.
 - b. Tithe
 - c. Entertainment expenses (movies, sporting events, concerts)
 - d. Gifts (Christmas, birthdays)
 - e. Unexpected expenses
9. Credit card and loans - I discourage the use of credit and credit cards. If you must use credit to make ends meet then you must provide to me:
 - a. Copy of your credit card application.
 - b. Minimum monthly payments

At the end of this simulation you will turn in your binder for a final grade. All items listed must be present, tabbed and neatly displayed. All info must be correct and up to date. You must make any necessary corrections to assignments prior to final turn in.

NOTE!! Protect your personal information. At no time should you provide information such as your SSN, phone # or home address on any form. Use the following

SSN: 123-456-7890
Address: 123 Main St, Hattiesburg, MS 39401
Phone: 601-123-4567

Appendix F

**Senate Agenda
Regular Session
September 19-September 21**

1. Drug testing and Medicaid benefits

2. Smoking in car bill
3. Benefits in U.S. Citizens bill
4. Seatbelt bill
5. Plaintiff responsible for defendants costs
6. Buses and seatbelts
7. Internet policy for K-12 public schools
8. Governor pardon bill
9. Move over left lane bill
10. Medicaid deductible bill
11. Testing portable classrooms
12. Grandparent visitation rights
13. Breast Reconstruction Bill
14. Bullet Bill
15. Animal Cruelty
16. Welfare Drug Test
17. Medicaid

Appendix G

**House Agenda
Regular Session
September 19-21**

1. Smoking in all public restaurants
2. Testing of applicants of Medicaid

3. Shorten school days
4. Marriage license
5. Animal cruelty
6. OMIT
7. Eliminate state proficiency exams
8. Animal Cruelty
9. Elderly driving safety bill
10. Texting and driving
11. 3 foot biker's bill
12. Scholarship incentive for early high school graduates
13. Small business discount
14. Home school students in public school activities
15. Random drug tests public
16. Tobacco use by minors
17. Ignition interlock
18. Fishing privileges
19. Exempting non-profit organizations from sales tax
20. Bullying
21. Death Row
22. Voter picture ID
23. Smoking in vehicle
24. Youth custody
25. Abortion
26. Election Speaker of the House
27. Food Stamps

Appendix H

LOBBYING PROJECT IDEA/ROUGH DRAFT

How does my idea benefit the school?

What are the pros and cons to my idea?

What can be done to counteract the cons?

What research can I do for this project?

What kind of visual aids do I have at this point?

Appendix I

**American Government
Lobbying Project
Grading Sheet**

Idea Benefits School (20 points)

-

3 Pros Lister and Discusses (10 points)

Cons addressed and discussed (10 points)

Partner participation (10 points)

-

Visual promotes ideas (10 points)

Research can be seen (20 points)

Presented persuasively (10 points)

Time 4-5 minutes (10 points)

OVERALL GRADE

Comments:

Appendix J

Short Consent Form

**The University of Southern Mississippi
Authorization to Participate In Research Project**

Participant's name _____

Consent is hereby given to participate in the research project entitled *South Mississippi Senior Civic Duty and Responsibility Survey*. All procedures and/or investigations to be

followed and their purpose, including any experimental procedures were explained by _____
Information was given about all benefits, risks, inconveniences, or discomforts that might be expected.

The opportunity to ask questions regarding the research and procedures was given. Participations in the project are completely voluntary, and participants may withdraw at any time without penalty, prejudice, or loss of benefits. All personal information is strictly confidential, and no names will be disclosed. Any new information that develops during this project will be provided if that information may affect the willingness to continue participation in the project.

Questions concerning the research, at any time during or after the project, should be directed to Chelsea Lewis at 601-467-7296. This project and this consent form have been reviewed by the Human Subjects Protection Review Committee, which ensures that research projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations. Any questions or concerns about rights as a research participant should be directed to the Chair of the Institutional Review Board, The University of Southern Mississippi, 118 College Drive #5147, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001, (601) 266-6820.

Signature of participant

Date

Signature of person explaining the study

Date