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In deference to David Letterman, 10 questions for the JOMC 144 (Censorship) Final Paper

1.) Is the premise or issue of the paper clearly stated?

2.) Does student present at least two sides of the issue?

3.) Are both sides of the issue authoritatively documented with data-based arguments?

4.) Are the arguments reasoned logically?

5.) Does the paper present major points of its argument?

6.) Does the paper cite the strongest or most scholarly or most well-known authiorities for its arguments?

7.) Is the paper written in good English? (points should be taken off for grammatical errors or poor construction).

8.) Does the paper avoid becoming an editorial? (This is critical because some of the students who feel strongly about an issue (pornography, religion in the public schools, high school students' right to freedom of speech). may tend to rhapsodize in favor of their position.

9.) Does the paper discuss positions or authorities on an issue that were not covered in class? For example I've noticed that a couple of times in class when students were not able to cite an argument against pornography, they fell back on the purveyor's "intention."

"Intention" is not discussed in major Supreme Court cases on obscenity, except in Ginzburg v. U.S. (1966) where Brennan used the phrase, "...sold as stock in trade in the sordid business of pandering." I did allude to this case in a brief discussion of whether "intention" was one of the criteria in deciding that a person was guilty of publishing pornography.

10.) Is the sum total of the paper persuasive, i.e., does it irrefutably convince you that its position has been presented convincingly, authoritatively, stylistically and can meet the test of a final paper?