

Title: “Discipline and Punishment: Due Process and the 8th Amendment,” Judith I. Jones
Lake Clifton Eastern High School, Baltimore City

Grade Level: 8-9

Duration: 2 class periods

Content Area/ Subject: Government

MSDE Goal: Political Systems

Core Learning Goals:

Students will demonstrate an understanding of the organization and function of the national, state and local governments under a federal system.

Students will be able to compare and contrast elements, proceedings, and decisions related to criminal and civil law in Maryland and describe alternatives to litigation within the U.S. legal system for maintaining order and resolving conflicts.

Objectives:

By the end of the unit, the student will be able to:

1. Define terms *capital punishment*, *aggravating circumstances*, and *mitigating circumstances*
2. Weigh arguments for and against the use of the death penalty.
3. Interpret political cartoons.

Materials Needed/ Resources for Teacher Preparation

- Overhead
- Transparencies of vocabulary, three political cartoons,
- Text of Maryland and/or Federal statutes regarding death penalty
- Signs for continuum

Lesson Development

(Day 1)

1. Students will take a stand along a continuum that has signs posted at opposite ends of the room: “The Death Penalty is Right!” and “The Death Penalty is Wrong!” (5 minutes)
2. Each student will explain why he or she is standing where they are. (15 minutes)
3. The students will engage in a discussion about when the death penalty should/could/ought to be applied by posing hypothetical circumstances.

What if the person convicted:

- Murdered a person?
- Has been convicted of multiple murders?
- Was found guilty of assault and battery?
- Blew up a federal buildings; killing over 180 people, including small children in a daycare?
- Committed multiple rapes?
- Has murdered a person and is mentally retarded?
- Molested 40 children?

- Murdered, dismembered, and buried victims – and then fled the country?
- Had six previous DWI convictions before causing an accident that killed two parents – leaving two children orphaned?
- Euthanized a terminally ill relative who was in agonizing pain and begged for help to end his/her life?
- Was twelve at the time he/she committed a murder?

(Time allotted: 35 to 45 minutes)

(Day Two)

1. Students will be asked what factors they considered when making a decision for death or against the death penalty in the previous class.
(15 minutes)
2. Students will observe and study three political cartoons relating to the death penalty, on the overhead projector. Students will be asked to write the meaning of the cartoon in their own words. (Time allotted: 15 min. Teacher chooses pertinent cartoons)
3. Create at least ten questions you would like to know about the death penalty.