

0882 Group Discussion Topics:

Directions:

Choose a discussion topic from the ones described below. You and the people in your group will need to research the topic. Each topic description is followed by a question or statement that participants either agree or disagree with, or take a neutral position on. There is a short list of Internet links for information and viewpoints on each topic. However, you are encouraged to also do some background research of your own. Your group will be given a date for the discussion during the week of November 24. You will be told whether you have to take the pro/con or neutral position on the date of your discussion. Therefore, you have to prepare for all three positions.

(1) Dogs in public places

Dog ownership is on the increase in Vancouver. In city neighbourhoods one more commonly sees "pet boutiques" and "doggy day care centers" along with the pampered dogs and devoted masters who patronize them.

Dog owners tend to believe that Vancouver by-laws are too restrictive for their pets which, owners say, should be treated as members of their families. Dog owners often demand more access for their pets in all public places, often citing Paris as an example of a more "dog friendly" city where dogs commonly accompany their owners in restaurants without harm to other patrons. Dog owners also often point out that Vancouver city by-laws still allow some landlords to discriminate against prospective renters who have dogs.

Still, there are many other city residents, especially non-dog owners, who think that the city should be stricter in enforcing the pet by-laws. They complain that too many owners are increasingly careless about cleaning up after their animals. They say that owners are too often failing to control their noisy or aggressive pets which pose a particular danger to children when the dogs are off-leash in public parks and beaches. Some say that city officials have been too lax in ticketing for pet by-law offences. People with allergies sometimes claim that they are in fact suffering discrimination when they need to live in an apartment next door to a dog or sit in a café patio with a dog under the next table.

Should Vancouver by-laws be changed to allow dogs more access to public places?

A: Agree (dogs should be given more access)

B: Disagree: animal-control by laws should be more strictly enforced and tightened

C/D: a middle ground position

Research this topic:

<http://www.vancouversun.com/news/Should+canines+more+leash+space+Vancouver+parks/6581354/story.html>

<http://www.vancouversun.com/life/Hume+Doting+owners+overlook+behaviour+that+offensive+dangerous/6550256/story.html>

<http://vancouver.ca/bylaws/9150c.pdf>

<http://ca.answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid=20090830121825AA0C9aH>

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/story/2012/02/23/bc-vancouver-dog-tickets.html>

<http://vancouver.ca/parks/info/dogparks/education.htm>

<http://www.vancouverobserver.com/blogs/outside/2011/01/28/please-keep-your-dogs-beach-my-children-are-playing>

<http://www.helium.com/debates/66103-should-restaurants-allow-dogs-in-with-their-owners>

http://www.bringfido.com/destination/city/vancouver_bc_ca/

Topic # 2 Volunteer Requirement for CPE Grade 12 Equivalency

The BC Program Guide for Graduation Transitions states that in order to graduate from high school, students need to “gain employability skills through participation in at least 30 hours of work experience and/or community service.”

Some instructors are calling for the same requirement for CPE students in order to get grade 12 English equivalency. They argue that immigrant students would also benefit from volunteer experience as it would provide them with opportunities to practice their English and gain Canadian experience. While some students agree that there are benefits to volunteering, others feel it should not be a mandatory requirement to complete English 099. Their argument is that CPE students already carry a heavy course load, work and have to look after their families. Requiring them to volunteer would therefore put an undue burden on them.

Students should be required to complete a volunteer placement before completing 099.

Strongly Agree: You believe there should be a 30 hour minimum volunteer requirement for the completion of 099

Strongly Disagree: You feel there should be NO volunteer requirement for the completion of English 099

Online resources to help you prepare for the discussion:

http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/graduation/docs/prog_guide_grad_trans.pdf

http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/policy/policies/work_experience_req.htm

<http://govolunteer.ca/>

<http://www.ajc.com/news/business/working-strategies-the-pitfalls-of-volunteering/nQRjm/>

<https://www.energizeinc.com/art/atimevalue.html>

<http://volunteer.ca/content/assigning-economic-value-volunteering>

<http://jakeseliger.com/2014/06/19/most-volunteering-is-a-waste-of-time-for-anyone-except-the-volunteer/>

<http://www.debate.org/opinions/is-volunteering-a-waste-of-time>

Topic # 3 **Stop using Facebook and Hotmail?**

Many Canadians were shocked to recently discover that the US National Security Agency (NSA) has been collecting information about anyone from anywhere who uses popular American-based social media such as Facebook, Hotmail or Gmail. According to R. Deibert, director of University of Toronto's Citizen Lab: "There is no border since at least 90 per cent of Canada's digital activity, from Facebook... to basic email, is routed through the United States..."

The US government has insisted that the general public has no cause for alarm since the gathering of "metadata", or general usage statistics, are only used to track potential threats to public safety. However, many people are still uneasy about what they see as a disturbing intrusion of big government into private lives. Even Google has been echoing the public unease by recently posting on its main page the message: *Stand with a broad coalition to demand that the NSA stop watching us*"

At the same time, the intrusion of privacy on the internet does not stop with the surveillance of the NSA. According to a CTV news survey: "many Canadians don't realize that the way we spend our money, the things we look at online or share via email... is being tracked, compiled and catalogued by private companies."

While the internet itself hosts many sites which provide users with tips for minimizing the risks to privacy, some bloggers suggest that the only sure way of avoiding being spied upon is to "stay off the grid"-- that to stay entirely off the internet. Other commentators say it is more realistic to just be more careful on the internet. Being careful in this sense would mean staying away from Facebook, Hotmail and other popular US-based social media.

The use of Facebook and other popular media sites is not worth the risk of being spied upon.

A: Strongly Agree

B: Strongly disagree

C/D: Middle ground position:

The following websites can help you in your research of this topic:

<http://www.npr.org/2013/06/21/193578367/calling-it-metadata-doesnt-make-surveillance-less-intrusive>

<http://www.wired.com/opinion/2013/06/phew-it-was-just-metadata-not-think-again/>

<http://www.thespec.com/news-story/3414136-canadians-data-exposed-to-u-s-government-surveillance/>

<http://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/data-collection-program-not-targeting-canadians-mackay-1.1319096>

<http://www.ottawacitizen.com/opinion/op-ed/metadata+spying+deal/8544807/story.html>

<http://www.ctvnews.ca/sci-tech/surveillance-society-7-ways-you-re-being-watched-and-didn-t-know-it-1.1337075>

<http://www.theepochtimes.com/n3/109608-how-to-keep-your-data-safe/>

<http://ca.news.yahoo.com/blogs/dailybrew/canadians-pay-attention-u-surveillance-story-194238745.html>

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/story/2013/06/10/surveillance-canadians-target-data-collect.html>

<http://www.asianpacificpost.com/article/5609-canadian-government-keeping-tabs-your-internet-use.html>

http://www.twincities.com/ci_23473907/avoiding-surveillance-staying-off-grid-is-hard-but

<http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2376023,00.asp>

http://www.dpl-surveillance-equipment.com/articles/article_36.html

http://www.reddit.com/r/Cyberpunk/comments/15gwws/how_do_you_stay_off_the_grid_cover_your_tracks/

Topic # 4 Compulsory vaccinations?

Vaccinations have been a key pillar of public health policy since the 1860s when smallpox vaccination programs were first carried out. Through widespread vaccination over many decades, smallpox has been nearly wiped out and other communicable diseases such as diphtheria, tetanus, polio, measles, and mumps have nearly disappeared. Unfortunately, some of those diseases are making a comeback.

In most countries vaccinations are usually not compulsory. In Canada, childhood vaccination is routine but exemptions may be made due to parents' strongly held religious objections or for health concerns.

However, in recent year, concerns about the safety of some vaccinations have mounted. Some parents withdrew their children from school vaccination programs after hearing a report that one kind of vaccination was linked to autism. Also, programs to inoculate young girls against HPV have been strongly opposed by some conservative groups in the USA. There was even a recent controversy linking flu vaccinations to Alzheimer's disease.

Still, many say that the dangers of vaccinations are greatly exaggerated, if not unfounded, and believe that compulsory vaccination programs are needed to eradicate those diseases which are evolving in newer and more dangerous forms. It is argued that such vaccination programs must begin with children and those who work with the most vulnerable populations.

Should vaccinations for communicable disease be mandatory for children and caregivers?

- A. Strongly support the mandating of vaccinations
- B. Strongly opposed to compulsory vaccinations
- C/D. Middle ground position or alternative solution.

The following websites will help you in your research of this topic:

<http://group.bmj.com/group/media/latest-news/should-childhood-vaccination-be-mandatory>

<http://www.sciencebasedmedicine.org/should-vaccines-be-compulsory/>

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-186604/Doctors-say-compulsory-vaccines.html>

<http://www.debate.org/opinions/should-vaccines-be-mandatory-for-all-children>

<http://www.vaccinestoday.eu/vaccines/should-childhood-vaccination-be-mandatory/>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vaccination_policy

<http://group.bmj.com/group/media/latest-news/should-childhood-vaccination-be-mandatory>

<http://vran.org/exemptions/immunization-is-not-mandatory-in-canada/>

<http://www.ctvnews.ca/health/b-c-arbitrator-upholds-mandatory-flu-shot-policy-for-health-care-workers-1.1511395>

<http://www.undergroundhealth.com/10-reasons-why-flu-shots-are-more-dangerous-than-the-flu/>

<http://gardasil.ca/hpv/hpv-types.html?gclid=CLmj4fyU8roCFUlyQgodKnYA7Q>

Topic # 5 International ban on prenatal sex selection?

In Canada, a woman's "right to choose" is strongly supported by our legal system and medical services. However, obtaining abortions for the purpose of choosing the sex of a baby is strongly condemned and there are no private clinics in Canada which openly advertize these procedures.

However, there are private clinics in the US and in many other countries which advertize the procedure of sex selection to a Canadian market. The websites for these clinics often use euphemisms such as "family balancing" service to disguise what amounts to giving patients the opportunity to choose the "perfect baby" or making sure that a pregnancy will result in the birth of a boy, rather than a girl.

Many Canadians strongly feel that the practice perpetuates an age-old discrimination against girls and that there should be an international ban on the procedure. Others feel that the opportunity to select a wanted child is not unethical and that restricting gender selection interferes with a woman's fundamental "right to choose".

Should there be an international ban on gender selection clinics?

A Strongly support a ban on gender selection

B Argue that a ban would be unfeasible

C/D: Take a middle ground position

Research this topic:

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/sex-selection-is-a-complex-issue-with-many-nuances/article2306066/>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sex_selection

<http://www.loc.gov/law/help/sex-selection/canada.php>

<http://www.givf.com/familybalancing/?gclid=COOMkZvBv64CFQZchwodXyRhKQ>

<http://www.americanreproductivecenters.com/gender-selection/how-gender-selection-is-done>

<http://ieet.org/index.php/IEET/more/1912>

<http://news.nationalpost.com/2012/01/16/canada-is-haven-for-parents-seeking-sex-selective-abortions-medical-journal/>

<http://www.preimplantationgenetictesting.com/?gclid=CJ-S8NKdwa4CFUcHRQodNkbOFA>

<http://www.vancouversun.com/news/selective+abortions+fairly+widespread/6209395/story.html>

http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/opinions/margaret-wente/is-it-okay-to-abort-girls/article2328723/?utm_medium=Feeds%3A%20RSS%2FAtom&utm_source=Opinions&utm_content=2328723

<http://ordinary-gentlemen.com/canada/2012/02/02/defending-sex-selective-abortion/>

http://www.law.ualberta.ca/centres/hli/userfiles/4_Long.pdf

<http://www.peacearchnews.com/news/139027474.html>