

## **APPENDIX C**

### **Student Assessment**

In addition to being informed by the teaching literature, this assignment evolved based on feedback from students' written critiques of their projects and their end-of-semester course evaluations.

#### **Written Project Critiques**

Since not all discuss the debate project on course evaluations, I ask them to address the following in written critiques: "Include a brief paragraph describing your experience working on the group project. You may comment about whether you feel that the work was equitably divided among group members." The following excerpts are representative comments:

This group project is an excellent way to get students to learn and research studies of crime and society. The ability to stand and speak on a topic is a direct reflection of your knowledge on that topic. I also believe that working and speaking in groups is a great way to learn from others.

Working on a group project was once again a rewarding task. It added to my growing knowledge of such a controversial topic. I have never done a group debate like this one before, and I am glad I will be graduating college having the experience of doing so this semester.

I am happy and satisfied with the way this project turned out. In past years, I usually have problems working with group members outside of class due to conflicts in my group's schedule. However, with the mandatory group meetings, I felt that this helped considerably.

The rules regarding lateness, not showing up, or dropping the course are very reasonable and necessary. The project was designed to allow for a person to focus on his or her tasks rather than the tasks of the others in the group. Overall I think that the idea of a group debate is a profitable one.

#### **End-of-Semester Evaluations**

While it is possible that students provide favorable feedback since their names are attached to the written assignment, they express similar views on anonymous end-of-semester course evaluations. In response to the open-ended question "Apart from the instructor, what were the course's strongest qualities, its most appealing and/or helpful characteristics?" approximately one-third of students identify the group debate project. The following are representative comments:

She [the professor] made the course challenging academically by using a variety of assignments. Projects like the group debate helped us to delve deeper into particular topics and to develop skills, such as public presentation, that will be useful for work and graduate school. All these factors served to deepen my knowledge about crime in society and to increase my overall abilities as a student.

The professor's teaching style brought the class together as a whole and created a pool of shared information between students and professor. One of the ways that this was accomplished was by creating small teams of students to work on selected presentation topics relevant to the *Crime and Society* course. These teams lent themselves to academic comradeship and interactive learning.

Thank you for giving your students a chance to express themselves in your classes through the group debate presentations. Having you as a teacher was a challenging experience in my college career and greatly appreciated.