

LESSON PLAN CIVIC DISCOURSE CATO INSTITUTE JULY 15, 2019

PURPOSE:

To engage students in a better understanding of basic ideology terms and how they align on a basic linear spectrum.

For students to self-identify (liberal v. conservative) and then take a political test to set where they would be plotted on a grid system based on answers to the test.

Gain a more nuanced understanding of political labels.

Compare/contrast student points.

PROCEDURE:

- (1) create a basic linear political spectrum (degree of change): left v. right, radical v. reaction, liberal v. conservative
- (2) students anonymously identify themselves as liberal or conservative (or however they want to identify themselves); use slips of paper
- (3) collect slips of paper and record the results on a basic linear political spectrum written on the classroom board
- (4) direct students to [**politicalcompass.org**](http://politicalcompass.org)
- (5) students take the test; record their results on a blank slip of paper
- (6) student positions are plotted on a blank political compass grid projected on the classroom board

DEBRIEFING QUESTIONS:

- (1) how much difference is there between the original alignment and the plotting generated from taking the political compass test?
- (2) is the class closer together or more spread out than initially thought?
- (3) where are the extremes? is the class extreme or moderate?
- (4) what is the difference between economic issues v. social issues (examples from the test); how can you be “liberal” considering one type of issue and “conservative” considering another type of issue?
- (5) how much better do you understand yourself? After taking the test were you where you thought you were?

submitted by David Kelly