

USING COMPUTERIZED OUTLINES IN TEACHING AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

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Everyone has his or her own style of lecturing to a large class. Mine is to talk from a detailed outline of my extemporaneous remarks. A few years ago, I started to write the major topic sentences of my outlines on the blackboard before I began my lecture. The students reported that they liked seeing the topics and the lecture's logical development, and I have kept it up in my two regular lecture courses: American Government with about 250 students and Elementary Statistics with about 80.

One problem with this method is that it often consumes about ten minutes of time that I don't always have before the class begins. Another problem is that I use up a good deal of board space with the outline, leaving little for my lecture proper. This year, I will be using a microcomputer outlining program -- PC-OUTLINE -- and a videoprojector (made by Electrohome) to display my outlines on a standard motion picture screen mounted at the front of the room. The videoprojector displays a green-on-black image that is easily read from any seat in the room, and -- with use of a light dimmer -- I can still write on the blackboard below the screen when I depart from the outline.

PC-OUTLINE is an outline processing program for IBM-compatible microcomputers. In essence, PC-OUTLINE aids in processing outlines by inserting Roman numerals, letters, Arabic numbers, and so on automatically. For me, its special advantage lies in being able to "hide" the "children" of a parent heading (e.g., the lettered headings under a Roman numeral, or the numbered headings under a letter) with a single keystroke of the gray "+" key. Another press of the "+" key (like a toggle switch) and PC-OUTLINE "shows" the children. This feature for selecting portions of a lecture outline to "hide" and "show" at will is what makes the program appealing to my style of lecturing.

Other outlining programs, most notably ThinkTank, have many of the same features as PC-OUTLINE. However, PC-OUTLINE is a "shareware" program that can be freely copied and shared, using only the documentation available on the diskette. The program is also available for \$49.95 plus \$5 for shipping with more extensive printed documentation and automatic note of updates.¹ PC-OUTLINE has Mcintosh-like pull-down menus, and it also has a nearly full-featured word processing program for editing text in the outline and for printing the outline. For a comprehensive review of PC-OUTLINE, see InfoWorld of May 12, 1986.

¹ SoftWorks Development; 750 Stierlin Road, Suite 142; Mountain View, CA 94043. Phone: (800) 538-8157.

My purpose here is to illustrate how PC-OUTLINE can be used in teaching American government. My example will be one of the "focus" outlines included in the ancillary materials to Janda, Berry, and Goldman, The Challenge of Democracy.² Please consult Figures 1 through 6.

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FILE OUTLINE EDIT DISPLAY PRINT HIDE SHOW WINDOW ADVANCED
C:\OUTLINE\DILEMMAS-14k-INS--PAGE=1 LINE=6 COL=1 6:41 PM-1
THE CHALLENGE OF DEMOCRACY CHAPTER 1: Focus Lecture 1
    GOVERNMENT, POLITICS, AND ECONOMICS
    I. The nature of government
    II. The nature of politics
    III. The interrelationship between domestic politics and government
    IV. The relationship between government and economics:
    V. Consideration of SOCIALIST and CAPITALIST perspectives
    VI. Understanding ourselves: NU students' self-placement on
        ideological survey
    R
PRESS THE INS KEY OR THE "/" KEY FOLLOWED BY A MENU LETTER FOR MENUS 213k
    
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Figure 1 displays the six major headings of my first lecture in American government. I would comment very briefly on where we were beginning and where we would end up.

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FILE OUTLINE EDIT DISPLAY PRINT HIDE SHOW WINDOW ADVANCED
C:\OUTLINE\DILEMMAS-14k-INS--PAGE=1 LINE=
THE CHALLENGE OF DEMOCRACY CHAPTER
    GOVERNMENT, POLITICS, AND EC
    I. The nature of government
    II. The nature of politics
    III. The interrelationship between domes
    IV. The relationship between government and economics:
    V. Consideration of SOCIALIST and CAPITALIST perspectives
    VI. Understanding ourselves: NU students' self-placement on
        ideological survey
    R
    A - Current Entry's Children
    B - All Children At Level
    C - Current Entry's Text
    D - All Text At Level
    E - All Text In Outline
    F - All Children in Outline
    G - All Text And Children
    H - All Family Children
    I - All Family Text
    M-1
USE THE ARROW KEYS TO POINT TO A DESIRED OPTION - RET TO SELECT 213k
    
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Figure 2 illustrates the "Mcintosh-type" menus in PC-OUTLINE under the "Show" heading at the top of the screen. By pressing the appropriate letter key, I can choose which of the "children" I wish to show. I select the default choice, A -- the Current Entry's Children.

² Kenneth Janda, Jeffrey Berry, and Jerry Goldman, The Challenge of Democracy: Government in America (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, forthcoming in 1987).

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FILE OUTLINE EDIT DISPLAY PRINT HIDE SHOW WINDOW ADVANCED
C:\OUTLINE\DILEMMAS-14k-INS-PAGE=1 LINE=11 COL=7 6:50 PM-1
THE CHALLENGE OF DEMOCRACY CHAPTER 1: Focus Lecture 1
    GOVERNMENT, POLITICS, AND ECONOMICS
    I. The nature of government
      A. ALL government diminishes individual choice and freedom.
      B. People traditionally have been willing to accept limitations
         on choice and freedom in return for major benefits:
    II. The nature of politics
    III. The interrelationship between domestic politics and government
    IV. The relationship between government and economics:
      V. Consideration of SOCIALIST and CAPITALIST perspectives
    VI. Understanding ourselves: NU students' self-placement on
    R-
PRESS THE INS KEY OR THE "/" KEY FOLLOWED BY A MENU LETTER FOR MENUS 213k
    
```

Figure 3 shows the children of the first topic, but only the "first-generation" children.

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FILE OUTLINE EDIT DISPLAY PRINT HIDE SHOW WINDOW ADVANCED
C:\OUTLINE\DILEMMAS-14k-INS-PAGE=1 LINE=13 COL=10 6:51 PM-1
THE CHALLENGE OF DEMOCRACY CHAPTER 1: Focus Lecture 1
    GOVERNMENT, POLITICS, AND ECONOMICS
    I. The nature of government
      A. ALL government diminishes individual choice and freedom.
        1. If people accept government, then such "freedom" must not
           be an absolute value to most people.
        2. Anarchists, of course, do not accept government--they favor
           voluntary cooperation among individuals and groups
        3. Anarchist thought is more active in Europe; the
           LIBERTARIAN counterpart in the U.S. would favor the
           absolute minimum level of government.
      B. People traditionally have been willing to accept limitations
         on choice and freedom in return for major benefits:
    R-
PRESS THE INS KEY OR THE "/" KEY FOLLOWED BY A MENU LETTER FOR MENUS 213k
    
```

Figure 4 reveals the second generation -- the children of A.

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FILE OUTLINE EDIT DISPLAY PRINT HIDE SHOW WINDOW ADVANCED
C:\OUTLINE\DILEMMAS-14k-INS-PAGE=1 LINE=15 COL=10 6:52 PM-1
THE CHALLENGE OF DEMOCRACY CHAPTER 1: Focus Lecture 1
    GOVERNMENT, POLITICS, AND ECONOMICS
    I. The nature of government
      A. ALL government diminishes individual choice and freedom.
      B. People traditionally have been willing to accept limitations
         on choice and freedom in return for major benefits:
        1. Maintaining SOCIAL ORDER that provides security:
          a. For LIFE: Thomas Hobbes' LEVIATHAN
          b. For PROPERTY: John Locke's TWO TREATISES OF GOVERNMENT
        2. Providing COLLECTIVE GOODS: gains for all the citizens that
           could not be obtained by voluntary actions of individuals:
    R-
PRESS THE INS KEY OR THE "/" KEY FOLLOWED BY A MENU LETTER FOR MENUS 213k
    
```

Figure 5 shows B's children (after hiding A's children).

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FILE OUTLINE EDIT DISPLAY PRINT HIDE SHOW WINDOW ADVANCED
E=15 COL=10 6:54 PM-1
S - Save Current Outline (^S) ER 1: Focus Lecture 1 >>
L - Load Existing Outline >>
N - Start New Outline ECONOMICS >>
R - Rename Current Outline >>
C - Change Current Drive or Directory -
F - File Options >>
D - Run Another Program From Dos >>
I - Input Other File Types >>
Q - Quit PC-Outline >>
vidual choice and freedom. >>
willing to accept limitations >>
on choice and freedom in return for major benefits: >>
1. Maintaining SOCIAL ORDER that provides security: >>
a. For LIFE: Thomas Hobbes' LEVIATHAN >>
b. For PROPERTY: John Locke's TWO TREATISES OF GOVERNMENT >>
2. Providing COLLECTIVE GOODS: gains for all the citizens that >>
could not be obtained by voluntary actions of individuals: >>
USE THE ARROW KEYS TO POINT TO A DESIRED OPTION - RET TO SELECT 213k
    
```

Figure 6 gives another view of the menu, this one under "File." Choosing the letters from this menu enables us to Save a file, to Quit PC-OUTLINE, and so on. We select Quit.

Students need not scramble to copy all the lecture comments that I display on the screen, for I show them how to print the ASCII files stored on our mainframe computer. But that's another topic.

For teachers who use highly structured outlines in their lectures, PC-OUTLINE is a very versatile program. And the price is certainly right.