

## Structured Academic Conversation Notes

**Instructions:** After listening to Tobias Smith's lecture and answering the focus questions on his talk, you and your partner will need to decide the answers to the following central questions:

- Are rights culturally universal or culturally relative?
- What is a constitution?
- How does the U.S. Constitution and the Chinese Constitution differ?
- Is illegal dissent ever justified?

### 1. Partner Preparation (20 minutes)

- a. Review the background lecture and your focus questions.
- b. Answer the questions above. Decide what evidence and arguments you could use to convince other members of the class of your position. You should be able to explain your ideas to the whole class.
- c. List your arguments below:

**2. Position Presentation (10 minutes total)**

Meet with another partner group (4 people total). Each side should present its answers to the questions using supporting information and evidence from the lecture. Use your active listening skills to take notes on each partners' presentation.

Write notes about the important information and evidence here:

**3. Open class discussion (30 minutes or more)**

Meet as a class. Have an open discussion with your classmates about the similarities and differences between the U.S. and China's legal system, cultural relevance, ideas about dissent, and constitution. Feel free to share your personal opinions and ask your classmates' questions. Take notes on your classmates' ideas.

Be sure to keep in mind these expectations:

- Be respectful of one another.
- Listen carefully to everyone's ideas, even if you don't agree with them.
- Try to understand different sides of the argument.
- Be open to new ideas.
- If someone disagrees with you, don't take it as a personal attack.

**4. Summative Assessment (for homework).**

Choose one of the following prompts to answer in an essay format using the information from Tobias Smith's lecture, the class discussion, and the other sources.

- How is the United States and the Chinese Constitutions similar and/or different?
- Are legal rights culturally universal or does culture affect people's fundamental legal rights?
- Is dissent ever justified? Under what circumstances?

Be sure to use specific evidence in the lecture and other sources to support your answer to the prompt you choose.