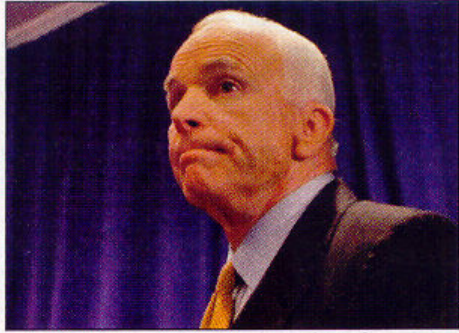


**PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT
HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS
DUE FRIDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2008**

I. McCain: Did he overplay his hand?

So much for “putting country first,” said Trudy Rubin in *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. As the financial system teetered on collapse last week, John McCain briefly suspended his campaign and made a “theatrical rush” to Washington to join negotiations on a \$700 billion bailout bill. But when it came time for Republicans to vote on the bill this week,



Trying to maintain altitude

“McCain’s leadership skills were nowhere to be seen.” Just hours after he publicly took credit for forging a deal on the bailout plan, two-thirds of his fellow Republicans rebelled, and the plan went down to defeat. McCain took a huge gamble and lost, said Democratic consultant Howard Wolfson in *The New Republic Online*. He never should have inserted himself into sensitive congressional negotiations, and he has lost “credibility and prestige” by failing to convince Republicans to back the bill he publicly supported. Now McCain is stuck “owning a defeat he could have avoided.”

“No doubt McCain has had a few rough days politically,” said Steve Huntley in the *Chicago Sun-Times*. But that’s because his “deeply held commitment” to his country impelled him to seek a solution to the crisis. The narrative that the rescue plan was on its way to passage before McCain intervened is a “fantasy, as subsequent events have proved.” Neither Republicans nor Democrats were

solidly behind it and McCain correctly saw disaster looming. Obama, meanwhile, has characteristically remained aloof, said Jonah Goldberg in the *Los Angeles Times*. He showed no leadership and took no chances during the negotiations, and jumped all over McCain for saying the fundamentals of the economy are strong. Memo to Obama:

“During a panic,” leaders try to provide reassurance, instead of exploiting the public’s alarm.

Nonetheless, the country’s all-consuming focus on the economy is a major boost for Obama—and a nightmare for McCain, said Rich Lowry in *National Review Online*. The lingering war in Iraq and President Bush’s unpopularity already make it “a toxic environment” for Republicans, and a bad economy will further help Obama sell “change” to an unhappy electorate. This explains why in recent weeks McCain has looked like “the proverbial cartoon character over the edge of the cliff, in midair, desperately flapping his arms and somehow maintaining altitude.” His only chance of beating Obama now, McCain figures, is to evoke Ross Perot—damned angry on the public’s behalf, and not taking it anymore. Will this angry populist routine work? It’s a long shot, but judging by how furiously McCain is flapping his arms, he won’t fail for lack of trying.

Answer the following questions, using the article above, on a separate sheet of loose-leaf paper.

1. What did John McCain do to make himself look presidential according to Trudy Rubin in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*?
2. Did this “theatrical rush” help him or hurt him? Why?
3. How did Obama handle the situation, according to Jonah Goldberg?
4. Why does Rich Lowry think that the failing economy will boost Obama? Explain at least three points from his commentary.
5. What do you think of the candidates’ responses to the crisis? Use this article and any other credible (believable) sources that you have used to research the topic on your own.

II. Article Analysis

An Inborn political orientation

The very different way conservatives and liberals view the world isn't just the product of experience or



He was born that way.

thought—it's also the product of biology, says a new study. Researchers at the University of Nebraska surveyed a group of 46 people on their political views, and then exposed them to a series of startling sounds and threatening images, such as a blood-covered face and a maggot-infested wound. People whose views fell on the right side of the spectrum—with expressed support for capital punishment, defense spending, and the Iraq war—had much stronger physiological responses, with greater amounts of sweat and eye-blinking. Liberals—defined by their support for gay marriage, foreign aid, abortion rights, and anti-war views—had more muted fear reactions; they simply didn't perceive the same level of threat. Researcher John Hibbing tells *The Washington Post* that the results suggest that people's political orientation is at least to some extent hard-wired, which is why conservatives and liberals often find each other mystifying. Neither side, he says, is necessarily correct in its interpretation of possible threats. "People are simply experiencing the world differently," he says.

Use the article on the left to answer the following questions. Write your answers on *loose-leaf paper*.

1. What did the researchers at the University of Nebraska discover about peoples' political views?
2. What was the difference between how conservatives and liberals responded to images of threatening situations?
3. What conclusion did John Hibbing make about political views?
4. Do you agree or disagree? Why?

Use the cartoon below to answer the following questions. Write your answers on *loose-leaf paper*.

1. Who is the candidate featured in this cartoon and what is s/he running for? Who is the other person?
2. What is the woman saying?
3. How does the man respond?
4. Why do you think that she says what she says?
5. What do you think that cartoonist thinks about the candidate in this cartoon? Explain.

III. Political Cartoon – Sarah Palin

