

**POLSC331: Unit 4 Assessment**  
**Analyzing Political Cartoons**  
**Guide to Responding**

1. [“Town Hall Meeting”](#)

The cartoon concerns how members of Congress have been avoiding town hall meetings in their districts due to the fact that, in recent years, these meetings have become unmanageable and often “hijacked” by angry and vocal constituents concerned about the economy. (This occurred most notably during town hall meetings in 2009 and 2010, which were flooded by anti-health-care advocates and seniors frightened about Medicare cuts.) The cartoonist is commenting on the type of town hall meeting that would be “ideal” for a member of Congress. The technique utilized is **exaggeration**, as evidenced by an empty meeting hall save for the congressman’s mother singing his praises. The cartoonist does not appear to be advocating any particular political ideology.

2. [“Negotiating Table”](#)

The subject of the cartoon is President Obama’s policy negotiations with Republican leaders in Congress. The cartoonist is commenting on how GOP leaders in Congress have criticized Obama for not negotiating with them in good faith, while at the same time “tying his hands” by rejecting his proposals. The cartoonist is using **symbolism** as evidenced by the use of an elephant—the long-standing political symbol of the Republican Party. The cartoon seems to reflect a liberal tone by pointing out the hypocrisy of Republicans in Congress.

3. [“Debt Crisis and Politics”](#)

The focus of the cartoon is the political infighting between Republicans and Democrats in Congress. The cartoonist is commenting on the fact that the parties are so busy attacking each other that they are ignoring the real issue, which is the national debt. The cartoonist is using **irony**—the difference between the way things are (needless political bickering) and the way things should be (tackling the real policy issues facing America). The cartoonist does not appear to be advocating any particular political ideology as the cartoon is critical of both parties.

4. [“Do Nothing Politicians”](#)

The cartoonist is commenting on the criticism of Congress as a “do nothing” institution, incapable of doing any meaningful or impactful work. The cartoonist uses a **stereotype** of a lazy politician in a hammock reading about “how to do nothing.” The cartoonist does not advocate any political ideology—he is critical of politicians of both stripes.

