

Civic Spirit Course: Spring 2019

Instructor: Audi Hecht

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Syllabus

Course Description:

As US and global citizens, we have the ability to influence the societies and communities we live within. How does one access the channels of civic participation and leadership? This course is part think-tank and part field experience. Students will have the opportunity to explore big questions such as “What does it mean to be a citizen? What is civic virtue?, What power and responsibility does one have as a citizen of the democratized world? How does one effectuate positive change for the greater good? As Civic Spirit Scholars, students in this course will posit these expansive ideas from a theoretical lens, while simultaneously exploring pursuing personal fields of interest and designing an action plan for political and community engagement.

Weekly Schedule:

- **Class Meetings: Monday 9th period, A Day 10th Period, B Day 7th period, C day 9th period, Friday - 4th period.**

Monday: Civic Spirit Scholars

Tuesday: Project Workshop/ Creative Arts

Wednesday: Civic Spirit Think Tank

Friday: Civic Spirit Journalists

Required Texts

Abrams, Floyd, *The Soul of the First Amendment*, (Yale University Press 2018).

Putnam, Robert, *Bowling Alone*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000).

Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Harvey Mansfield and Delba Winthrop, eds. (Chicago:

University of Chicago Press, 2000).

Additional readings will be assigned and posted on Schoology.

Essential Questions & Unit Topics:

Unit I: American Character and Ideals

- ❖ How have our nation's founding documents provided a model for our national values and for citizenry?
- ❖ Perspectives on American Exceptionalism

Unit II: Civic Virtue & Religion: What are the qualities of a good citizen?

How has religion played a role in our nation's history and legal structure?
How does it influence good citizenship?

Unit III: Global Citizenship: America as an arsenal of democracy

- How does one balance nationalistic and global civic responsibilities?

Unit IV: American Pride: Proud Moments in American History

- Moments in American History that foster civic pride

Unit V: Civil Discourse: Engaging in respectful conversation with others

Unit VI: How does Judaism inform good citizenship?

Unit VII: Voice to Power: The power of grassroots mobilization

Unit VIII: Linking the Citizen and The Political Process

Unit IX: The Road toward Equality for All Citizens

Grading and Course Expectations:

- Participation in all class activities and attendance is essential for success in this course.
- Reading assignments are expected to be completed when assigned and students should be ready to engage in class discussion on a daily basis.
- Project based learning is a core component of this course.
- This is a student generated course. Ideas and suggestions are welcome and encouraged.