

Welcome to **CIVICS**

What is civics?

Civics is the study of citizenship and government with particular attention given to the role of citizens—as opposed to external factors—in the operation and oversight of government.

Within a given political or ethical tradition, civics refers to educating the citizens. The history of civics dates back to the earliest theories of these by Plato in ancient Greece and Confucius in ancient China. These in general have led to modern distinctions between the West and the East, and two very different concepts of right and justice and ethics in public life.

(<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civics>)

a social science dealing with the rights and duties of citizens

(<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/civics>)

1. connected with city administration: relating to the government of a town or city

- civic reception

2. relating to community: connected with the duties and obligations of belonging to a community

- civic pride

[Mid-17th century. < Latin *civicus* < *civis* “citizen”]

(http://encarta.msn.com/dictionary_1861597515/civic.html)

Why should I learn about this stuff?

Because you live here! At home, you probably know the history of your family and maybe some of the history of your house. You may know why you have certain rules or expectations, how your family gets along with neighbors, and why a certain aunt never visits any more. You help out without being asked, and may even take joy in it. When there’s a problem, you know who to go to for help and the best way to get that problem fixed. All these things happen within your country as well, and it’s important as a citizen to know the why and how of things in this vast nation we call home. Having a better understanding of our history, laws, expectations, procedures and values help you make the best of your potential, your abilities and your rights as an American.

Where can I find more information on civics?

Here are a few web sites to get you started:

<http://www.civiced.org/>

<http://www.americancivilliteracy.org/>

<http://www.civics-online.org/>

What will I learn this semester?

Throughout the semester, we will cover not only the founding of our government and the skills and activities we must experience to become a productive and active citizen, but we will also examine how our government’s founding and how citizens in America interact with and compare to governments and citizens across the globe. Additionally, we will participate in community action, read about current world events, and examine issues that affect people globally. This class will encourage critical thinking skills, inquiry-based learning and cooperative scholarship.

What semester-long projects will we do?

Community service hours

Between now and the end of the semester, you will need to complete 10 hours of community service. With your hours log, you will need to turn in a typed explanation of what you did and how the work you did has benefitted the community. Your log should include where you completed your hours, how long you spent doing any particular activity, the dates you worked, and an adult signature (this could be a parent, grandparent, etc., or it could be the person who coordinated your service, like a Girl Scout leader or someone you worked with at the Food Bank). Your typed explanation should be no less than three-quarters of a page and should be in MLA format. Your log and typed explanation are due by May 21, although you may turn it in any time before that. Your hours and log are worth a combined 50 points.

Current events articles

Each Monday, you will bring in a current events article to discuss. Your article may be from a local paper or a reputable on-line news source and should be an event with *impact* (not simply a concert announcement or a book review). Each article (one per week) is worth five points. Your first article is due February 1; your final article is due May 17.

Civics book reading

This semester, you will choose a book relating to this course to read on your own. Your choice of books is open to any topic that interests you, but it must be non-fiction and should be no less than 200 pages. Ideas include (but are not limited to) a book on . . . the history of the United States Constitution, how to live "green" in the 21st century, America's foreign relations with China, managing government economic policies, saving rain forests, commercialization, or sweat-shop labor. After you finish your book, you will write a two-page paper in MLA format that contains a *brief* summary of your book and explains what you learned from your book, how your book relates to topics we've learned about in class, whether or not you would recommend this book to someone else and how you plan to use the information from your book in your daily life. There will be four presentation days throughout the semester where you will share pertinent information from your book with your classmates (aim for about five minutes). Your paper is due on the day you sign up to do your presentation. This project is worth 100 points. (To account for this book there will be only two required books during fourth quarter.)