

PLAP 2500: POLITICS OF AMERICAN CITIZENSHIP

University of Virginia

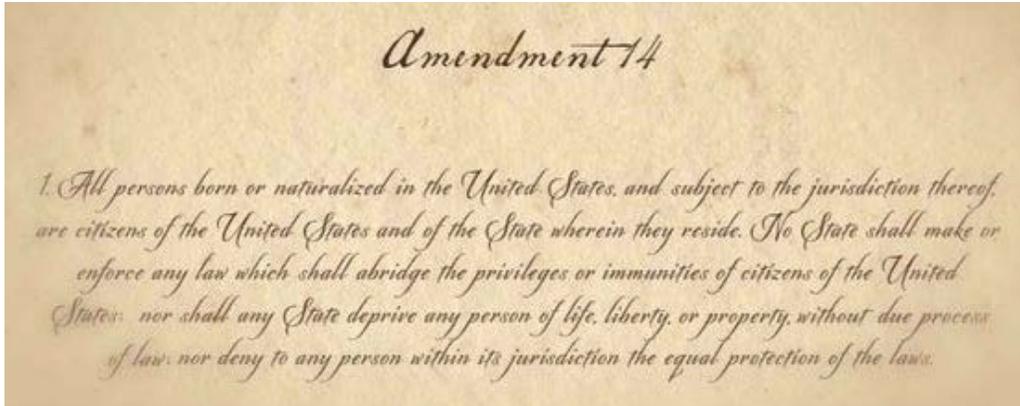
Monday 6:00-8:30pm | Nau 141

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Office Hours: Mondays 8:30-9:30pm, Tuesdays 7:00-9:00pm, or by appointment.



COURSE DESCRIPTION

Whose lives matter (and how can we tell)? Should welfare recipients be required to take drug tests? Is it unconstitutional to force a mentally ill person into treatment? Is preventing prison sexual assault the responsibility of the government? Should same-sex couples have the same rights as heterosexual couples? Why didn't the Equal Rights Amendment pass? Is Barack Obama a secret Muslim?

Gunnar Myrdal, in his landmark 1944 book *The American Dilemma*, noted the presence of an "American Creed"; that is, the idea that all Americans are entitled to liberty, equality, justice, and fairness. We will use the American Creed to frame our discussion of American citizenship, addressing broader questions such as:

- What does "citizenship" actually mean in the American context?
- Should different citizens have different rights? Should race, gender, sexual identity, religion, and other factors play a part in the allocation of rights?
- What are the public policy implications of Americans' perceptions of citizenship?
- How are we complicit in the restriction of rights for certain citizens, and how can we effect change?
- What can we do as a group to broaden the discussion of rights to your undergraduate studies, your life outside academia, and to the world in general?

****syllabus is subject to change****

version 1.0

updated July 9, 2015

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This course meets once a week for 2.5 hours. Note, however, that this is *not* a lecture course! We will work together on a variety of activities and projects to help you reach your learning goals. I have taken care to break up each class into manageable pieces, with ample break time, to make sure that you and I are as engaged at the end of class as we are at the beginning.

By the time you finish this course, you will possess the competence and confidence to do the following:

- know where to find and identify resources, authors, and studies on the topic of American citizenship, and be able to cite past and present examples of different views of American citizenship
- articulate the complexity of American citizenship and rights, moving beyond a binary idea of citizenship (i.e., one is or is not a citizen) to one that recognizes stratifications within American citizenship and the accompanying allocation of rights
- be able to look at current events through the lens of citizenship and rights to identify instances of inequality among citizens that arise as the result of race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, class, or other factors
- look critically at government, media, academia, and other sources of power and information to reveal the social constructions behind citizenship and rights
- reflect on your own understandings of and experiences with American citizenship and constitutional rights



COURSE POLICIES

I have found that, based on their experience, students are the best resource for establishing course policies. I will send each of you an anonymous survey the first week of class regarding preferences for course policies. After I receive the completed surveys, we will discuss the responses with the goal of coming to a consensus, as a group, regarding the course policies.

I have outlined the policies I'll be asking about below, along with a few notes about what you might want to think about when considering your preferences.

attendance

how many absences (if any) should be allowed? what should the penalty for absences be? should students be required to notify the instructor ahead of time if they're going to miss class? note: do not come to class if you are sick! take care of yourself and be considerate of your fellow students.

participation

what differentiates a good class participant? quality? quantity? engagement and attentiveness? something else? should there be a make-up policy for students who miss an in-class activity/assignment?

technology

should we allow technology (laptops, tablets, or phones) in the classroom? should there be limits on the use of technology? should there be a policy regarding students who are distracted or who distract others through their use of technology?

late papers

should there be a penalty for late papers? if so, what should it be? and how late is "late"?

grade appeals

what should students be required to do to appeal their grade? should unlimited appeals be allowed, or should students only be able to appeal grades a certain number of times?

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

First Week Assessment (5%):

[SEE BELOW] To get you started and to provide a launching point for our discussions, you will be asked to complete a brief assignment the first week of class. [maybe in-class, out-of-class, groups...]

Five In-Class Assessments (20% total):

You and I will assess your learning throughout the course via five in-class assessment projects designed to check progress and comprehension.

Five Out-of-Class Assessments (20% total):

We will use five out-of-class assessment projects to further assess your learning. Details will be provided prior to each due date.

Attendance and Participation (15%):

Twice during the semester I will provide you with a rubric to self-assess your participation in the class. At the end of the semester I will assess attendance and participation using the same rubric.

Research Paper (15%):

The research paper is an opportunity for you to apply what you are learning in class to a current issue involving citizenship and rights. We will do several short in-class projects throughout the semester to prepare you for this assignment.

Capstone Project (25%):

[SEE BELOW] The final project for this class asks you to reflect on your own learning, using your choice of course resources to guide your summary of learning. The details, and the grading rubric, will be provided after our [spring, fall] break.

Unusual Circumstances:

Do not hesitate to contact your Association Dean if you have *any* issue that affects your attendance, participation, or performance in this or any other class. Your Dean can offer advice, connect you to the resources you need, and work with your instructors to keep you from getting too far behind. I cannot stress enough what a wonderful resource the Association Deans are!

TIPS FOR SUCCEEDING IN THIS COURSE

Know your expectations. What are you hoping to get out of this course? What are you prepared to do to make that happen? How will you contribute to your own learning and to your classmates' learning? What risks are you willing to take?

Participate. You are expected to participate actively in the course in pursuit of your own learning goals. We will regularly work in collaborative groups to facilitate your learning. Your peers are valuable resources for learning – don't shortchange them and yourself by coming to class unprepared or by sitting quietly during discussion.

Communicate. I am committed to helping you achieve your learning goals in this course. To do this I will provide feedback as quickly as possible. I also have an open-door policy in addition to class and office hours, and I will respond to e-mail within 24 hours unless I notify you otherwise. Let me know what you're struggling with so I can address any challenges before they become significant stumbling blocks. If you're not comfortable contacting me directly, post your comment or question in the Anonymous Feedback section of the course collab site.

Take risks. This is not a course in which there are "right" answers – sometimes there is no answer at all. Be prepared to ask bold, challenging questions in discussion and in your assignments. My goal is to create a safe space in which you will be rewarded for going out on a limb – this can mean arguing a side you don't believe in, making a case for your own point of view, or posing a provocative question to the class. This course is about exploring ideas. Take advantage of the opportunity.

Have fun. We will be studying difficult and sometimes depressing topics. To provide a mental break, we will occasionally take a one-minute dance break (with music chosen by the students). You will not be graded on your dancing ability, but don't let that keep you from busting out your best moves.

PROFESSIONAL AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

As you are aware, University of Virginia students are trusted to maintain the highest standards of ethics, integrity, and personal responsibility. Because you have joined this community of trust to prepare for your future career, I expect you to fully comply with all of the provisions of the UVa Honor System. In addition to pledging that you have neither received nor given aid on an assignment, your signature also affirms that you have not knowingly represented as your own any opinions or ideas that are attributable to another author in published or unpublished notes, study outlines, abstracts, articles, textbooks, or web pages. In other words, I expect that all assignments and reports are your original work and that references are cited appropriately. Breaking this trust agreement will not only result in zero credit for the assignment in question and referral to the Honor Committee, but will also jeopardize your professional career. Don't let yourself down.

If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, refer to this document created by the UVa Honor Committee: <http://bit.ly/1IMq4WT>

COURSE CALENDAR

<i>Week</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Readings</i>	<i>Activities and Assessment</i>
1	What does it mean to be an American citizen? (I) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · what the founding documents say · what the naturalization process tells us · the concept of “volitional” citizenship 	Magna Carta Declaration of Independence U.S. Constitution Bill of Rights	first week assessment due background knowledge probe
2	What does it mean to be an American citizen? (II) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · an in-depth look at historical understandings · current public opinion research on citizenship · setting up a framework for exploration 	Schildkraut (excerpts) Theiss-Morse (excerpts) [historical literature]	in-class assessment 1: jigsaw
3	What does an “ideal” American citizen look like? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · exploring rights and responsibilities · the role of the citizen in a democracy · expectations and aspirations of citizenship 	Schattschneider Lipmann Entman	out-of-class assessment 1: response paper thinking out loud
4	Why do some American citizens have fewer rights? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · the social construction of target populations · how and why populations are constructed · policy implications of social constructions 	Schneider and Ingram Taibbi	in-class assessment 2: concept mapping
5	Who gets heard? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · media coverage of protest groups · “repertoires” of public opinion expression · the trouble with deliberation 	McLeod and Hertog Tilly Sanders (summary)	participation self-assessment 1 class debate
6	What’s love got to do with it? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · the state’s role in creating “homosexuality” · attempts to regulate same-sex behavior · from Stonewall to <i>Obergefell vs. Hodges</i> (2015) 	Canaday Justice Kennedy’s <i>Obergefell</i> decision	out-of-class assessment 2: group research analysis of <i>Obergefell</i>
7	Do black lives really matter? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · blacks’ struggle for recognition · from slavery to the “carceral state” · policing black lives 	Lerman and Weaver (excerpts)	in-class assessment 3: structured academic controversy
8	What happened to the Equal Rights Amendment? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · from “coverture” to suffrage to representation · changes in women’s reproductive rights · other contemporary issues of women’s citizenship 	[ERA chapter] [<i>Roe v. Wade</i>] [<i>Hobby Lobby</i>]	out-of-class assessment 3: reflection paper arguing the “other” side
9	There’s more? Really? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · forced treatment of the mentally ill · Sharia Law and Barack Obama’s “secret” religion · crime victims vs. terrorism victims 	Failer [Islam] [race and crime]	out-of-class assessment 4: research task conducting academic research

10	<p>Are there citizens who don't deserve rights?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · civil commitment of sex offenders · [Kateb] [prisons?] [can one give up all rights?] · [domestic terrorists] 	<p>[civil commitment piece] Kunzel [terrorism – drones?]</p>	<p>research paper due stand where you stand</p>
11	<p>What's wrong with the Confederate flag, anyway?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · American citizenship after the Civil War · state loyalty and national citizenship · the Confederate flag and American citizenship 	<p>[civil war cit book] [Ford's pardon of Lee] [Emily P. dissertation excerpt]</p>	<p>in-class assessment 4: invented dialogues</p>
12	<p>What is a life worth?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · media coverage of mass casualties · compensating victims and their families · the "grievable life" 	<p>Feinberg Butler</p>	<p>participation self- assessment 2 problem-solving exercise</p>
13	<p>The courts: protectors or destroyers of rights?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · the "dynamic" vs. the "constrained" court · "rights talk" and social change · [Korematsu etc – disastrous decisions] 	<p><i>Hollow Hope</i> chapters "Civil Rights in Wartime"</p>	<p>out-of-class assessment 5: group writing task SCOTUS role-play</p>
14	<p>Is Edward Snowden the ideal American citizen?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · the right to privacy in the digital age · citizenship under the Patriot Act · the legality of drone strikes against Americans 	<p>Orwell, <i>1984</i></p>	<p>in-class assessment 5: harnessing media for learning (with reflective essay)</p>
15	<p>What does it mean to be an American citizen? (III)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · revisiting our opening discussions · reflecting on what you've learned · challenging your own preconceptions 	<p>review first-week assessment</p>	<p>capstone project due one-minute paper</p>

FIRST WEEK ASSESSMENT

To help you prepare for this class, answer the following questions. You do not have to write an essay; just answer each question individually. Please work on your own for this project; you will have an opportunity to discuss your answers in class.

1. Look up how many times is the word “citizenship” mentioned in the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights. Where, specifically, is it mentioned?
2. Find the definition of “citizenship” in the Constitution and/or Bill of Rights. Where is it defined? What is the definition?
3. Look up the requirements for becoming a naturalized citizen of the United States. Include in your answer the search term or terms you used and the name of the website or other resource where you found the information. Which requirements are most surprising to you? Least surprising?
4. Using the databases provided by the UVa libraries, find a scholarly article on American citizenship. Include in your answer the search term or terms you used, the name of the database where you found the article, and a complete citation for the article (no specific citation style is required).
5. Using the databases provided by the UVa libraries, find a scholarly article on constitutional rights (specific to the United States). Include in your answer the search term or terms you used, the name of the database where you found the article, and a complete citation for the article (no specific citation style is required).
6. Based on your current knowledge, list four issues (within the U.S.) that you believe involve questions about American citizenship and rights. These might be political issues, news stories, ongoing controversies, or something else. Explain, in a few sentences, how each issue is relevant to the topic of citizenship and rights in the United States.

CAPSTONE PROJECT

Your final assignment for this course is to create a learning portfolio that represents how your thinking has (or has not) changed on the issues of citizenship and rights. First, choose five [authors? readings? pieces of lecture or discussion?] that inspired you to think more deeply about citizenship and rights. Be sure to identify the source of each [thing] you choose.

Second, write a double-spaced reflective essay of *at least* five (5) pages explaining what your collection of [things] means to you and how it reflects changes in your thinking, your writing, connections between disciplines, your education as a whole, you as a learner, your understanding of yourself and others, and other changes you want to highlight.

Your essay should contain a clear and compelling thesis statement that makes an argument about your experience in this course. (Look back to our earlier activity on thesis statements for additional guidance on constructing a good thesis statement.) The entire essay should build on and be closely connected to that argument.

To guide your reflection, consider your thoughts about the following questions. An answer to each question should be included in your essay.

- Which assignment was the easiest or hardest (including class participation)? Why?
- How has your writing evolved this semester? What have you learned from reading the writing of your peers? From sharing your own writing? From reading academic writing?
- Did you notice any changes in how you sought and accessed information during the semester? If so, how would you describe them? How do you make sense of them? How are you likely to continue to use your new knowledge of information-seeking?
- What major ideas, themes, and threads show up repeatedly in your coursework for this class? How have you developed these ideas over the course of the semester? What does this development mean to you as a student? As a citizen?
- How does your work in this course connect to other courses you have taken? To your undergraduate education as a whole? To your life as a citizen or non-citizen?
- How does what you learned this semester connect to your preconceptions about the topic, your personal values, and your deeply-held convictions? How might these connections affect your future learning?

Use your selected [things] as evidence for the arguments you want to make.

Use the attached rubric to guide your work on this project. Note the emphasis on deep reflection and strong arguments. This is not the place to praise the instructor or make false statements about growth and change. Be honest with yourself and your readers about what you put into this course and what you got out of it.

[will attach rubric]