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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2016 Volume III: Citizenship, Identity, and Democracy

Know Your Rights: Citizenship, Surveillance and Democracy in Post 9/11 America

Guide for Curriculum Unit 16.03.06
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This unit focuses on the surveillance culture and lost liberties in post 9/11 America and in the wake of hurricane Katrina. An increasing number of my students display interests in social justice and activism, two areas that should be at the heart of “Citizenship, Identity, and Democracy.” Initial research questions revolve around surveillance culture (SC): is today’s SC a byproduct of the post-9/11 era or a carryover from the Cold War? How much further back in time do its roots go?

What rights and privileges are guaranteed to citizens under the constitution? If times of ‘emergency’ require a suspension, a limitation, or alteration of these rights and privileges, how do we know what an “emergency” is during a period in which we wage wars on drugs as well as terror, and in which the “War on Terror” has lasted for more than a decade? Does the requirement need amending in times of seemingly endless conflict/war, or is a state of emergency temporary by definition?

(Developed for English, Film Studies, grade 12; recommended for English, Film, grades 11-12)

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