



## Introduction

Our seminar used citizenship as a lens to examine questions of identity, membership, and belonging. We discussed how citizenship marks those inside and outside of the community and explored the ways in which the fight for equality is often waged under citizenship's banner. Those discussions naturally segued into conversations about democratic participation and equality.

We began the seminar by studying the conceptions of citizenship held by the Founders and puzzling over how they could maintain deeply egalitarian commitments and still exclude so many from voting. Danielle Allen's *Our Declaration: A Reading of the Declaration of Independence in Defense of Equality* served as our guiding text. Focusing on the seminal work of Ed Rubin and Ernie Young, we also explored the ways in which identity issues were worked out in debates over federalism and state citizenship. Next we traced the quest for inclusion undertaken by different groups, including African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans, and women. We often grounded these discussions in Supreme Court cases, including *Hernández v. Texas*, *Brown v. Board of Education*, and *Korematsu v. United States*. The remainder of the sessions were preoccupied with the benefits and burdens of citizenship. We covered such topics as felon disenfranchisement, constitutional rights in times of emergency, and political participation. One of the highlights of the seminar was reading the work of Dwayne Betts, who wrote a searing book on imprisonment as well as several volumes of poetry. Betts spoke to the Fellows in a joint session attended also by Jill Campbell's seminar participants. He read from his book and discussed the role of race, policing, felon disenfranchisement, and sentencing in the U.S. today.

Over the course of the seminar, a number of common themes emerged, many of which are canvassed by the units prepared by the Fellows. We spent a great deal of time talking about the relationship between law and politics. Many think that constitutional rights are handed down from on high, but in fact rights are merely "parchment barriers" if they are not backed by strong social norms. That is why social movements like the civil rights movement have always been necessary to breathe life into constitutional rights and turn those parchment barriers into robust shields. Because citizenship is both a legal concept and a normative ideal, fights for equality and inclusion are often waged within the framework of constitutional law. And because citizenship is so deeply tied to membership in a community, it brings with it both benefits and burdens.

Many of the units in this seminar examine the relationship between citizenship and identity. Because the events of the last, tumultuous year loomed large over our discussions, these units all examine the relationship between the past and present. Medea Lamberti-Sanchez uses the presidential election as a frame for exploring questions of racial, gender, and partisan identity. The drama of the election provides an excellent means of grounding abstract questions of citizenship and participation for her young students. She looks to history, particular the suffrage movement, to help students understand our election system and Hillary

Clinton's historic run for the presidency.

Racial and ethnic identity were central to the units offered by Vancardi Foster and Valbona Karanxha. Foster's unit examines the path to civic inclusion in the hope of teaching his students to care for other members of their community. Focusing on the discrimination experienced by African Americans, women, and Asian Americans, he hopes to teach his students about the relationship between communities and outsiders. Foster's unit is very much animated by the searing events of the last year. He argues that by teaching students about what he terms the "Citizenship Complex" – the process by which groups achieve full inclusion in our national community – he will build their sympathy for those who have yet to achieve the recognition we should accord to all citizens.

Karanxha finds an evocative parallel between Puerto Rico's legal status and Puerto Rican identity. Offering an in-depth exploration of the island's history, she suggests that Puerto Rico's liminal status poses dilemmas for U.S. citizens of Puerto Rican descent as they negotiate their relationships to the island and to the United States. In doing so, she illuminates the historical roots of Puerto Rican identity and sympathetically explores the dilemmas they face as they move from the island to the continental U.S.

Other Fellows explored the connections between the benefits and burdens of citizenship. Gwen Ferguson-McLean and Rachel Leibiger designed units to teach young children about the rights and duties of citizens in the hope that their students will understand that the benefits of community membership are paired with duties to that community. Ferguson-McLean explores ways of connecting these abstract notions to the day-to-day concerns of young children. She builds on the community values children already understand – the ties they have to their family, the way they act in class and treat their friends – to draw broader lessons about citizenship and membership in a national community. Beginning with communities writ small, she opens her students' minds to the values of our community writ large.

Leibiger, too, seeks to make the abstract ideals of citizenship concrete for her students. She emphasizes two stories that are sure to matter to her students' own identities – the suffrage movement and the school desegregation movement – in order to ground lessons about the right to vote and the right to a public education. Deploying stories about striking moments in history and compelling group exercises, Leibiger's aim is to help her students understand not just their duties as citizens, but the possibilities that come with citizenship.

Finally, Matt Monahan looks to where the rights of a citizen end, examining the limits of the protections citizenship affords. He analyzes the scope of constitutional rights during wartime, with a focus on the post 9/11 era and modern-day surveillance. He seeks to bring abstract questions about privacy and government power to life using literature and film. The ideas he raises are rich and evocative, and he pairs them with astute advice about teaching students through film and blogging.

Taken together, these units provide a kaleidoscopic view of some of the most important questions of the day. While these units are deeply connected to contemporary events, they touch on issues of identity and belonging that are profound and enduring.

Heather K. Gerken

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