

Dr. Joanna Vecchiarelli Scott

PLSC #112 [CRN 17295] INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN POLITICS –Fall Term, 2013



You may contact me via email: preferred email address is jscott@emich.edu . Subject line for emails to me should include: your name, the course name and number + the section number. I will try to respond within 24-48 hours, excluding weekends and holidays: I will be online via iPhone, iPad, and laptop. This course is entirely online, and there are no on-campus office hours. *But I urge you to ask any questions you have as soon as possible: no question is a 'dumb' question.*

I. INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE: This course will take you on a guided tour through the inner 'workings of American political institutions and the distinctively American values and processes that make them run. So this is a course about 1) political ideas, 2) institutions, and 3) processes of government and politics. **There are two goals for this course:** 1) to have you think critically, with evidence, about current political issues **in contrast to** simply accepting 'cable TV' or 'talk show' versions of political discourse, and 2) to make you an informed and involved American citizen who is aware of America's exceptional history, current politics, and the successes and challenges of its role in the world. I hope it will also lead you to further exploration of the art and science of politics through the Department of Political Science.

II. MY THEMES FOR THE COURSE

1) The American "Creed": Liberty, Equality, Democracy and the Role of Government Post both 9/11, in the "Great Recession"(2008-09), and bombs at the Boston Marathon in April 2013. In the early 21st century, American citizens want the government to protect the nation from terrorism but --especially after the Presidential Election of 2008, the Great Recession, the 2010 Congressional elections, and the Presidential Election of 2012 -- also want it to provide for basic quality of life (which some call "rights") such as jobs, quality K-12 and university education, medical insurance for all, adequate police, firefighters and environmental protection. We now have to add to the list Federal relief when disaster strikes as it has

repeatedly in Louisiana (the Gulf Coast BP oil spill) and Hurricane Sandy in NY, NJ, and Connecticut...

But...Americans definitely have a love-hate relationship with the Federal Government. In the same way in which Americans expect the government to help them out with things they cannot do for themselves (like fix the economy or get affordable medical coverage, or force BP to pay for the mess in the Gulf) they also fear the growth in governmental power that comes along with doing all these things. For example, some Americans (a small minority, but a loud one) don't even want Medicare to continue, or to pay taxes at all, or to have any Federal regulation of the environment, of health and safety standards, or of any business practices. Another group of Americans (also small and loud) want laws and regulations to be made at the State legislative level only, including returning to the 19th century practice of State Legislatures electing U.S. Senators (instead of by a majority vote of the State's population). You heard some of these ideas articulated at the early stages of the 2012 Republican primaries, when there were seven candidates. All of these examples are displayed in very extreme form in the position of the "Tea Party" which is now organized nationwide as a conservative "populist" adjunct to the Republican...and a firm opponent to the Democrats. (The Tea Party is typically aligned with Republicans but threatens sitting Republican legislators and other politicians with primary opponents, if they 'stray' from very conservative principles and actions.)

Of course there are some things that all Americans insist upon -- Tea Partiers especially...

One is that the Federal Government takes care of our national defense, and that includes policing the borders of the United States. Particularly in the Southwestern US, there is a growing resentment and fear of Mexican, Central and South American immigrants. Anti-immigrant political leaders, especially those in Arizona, Georgia, Alabama and many other states – (not on borders), mostly Republican, argue that the borders have broken down, that drug traffickers and terrorists are swarming into the US and the Federal government has done nothing to stop them. In this course we will ask whether the evidence bears that out. Other leaders, mostly Democrat, argue that illegal immigrants are taking jobs away from American workers, many of them labor union members. Is that borne out by the evidence? ***(I expect you to have an 'open mind' on these issues (e.g., critically evaluate evidence), while a member of this course. Weigh multiple viewpoints: don't just adopt a Fox Cable or MSNBC viewpoint uncritically!! I'm arguing for 'critical thinking' before taking a stand. The late Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan said -- and I paraphrase: ...we can all have our own opinions, but we can't all have our own facts.)***

In our Discussion segment of the course (postings online around a set of questions), we start with the issue of "Immigration." (**Discussion Unit 1a**) It is a particularly American concern, since everyone who now calls themselves an American citizen (unless they are Native Americans) are descended from immigrants who came here voluntarily (and sometimes illegally) or involuntarily in the case of African-American

descendants of slaves. In other words, virtually all of us came from somewhere else! We hear the words... 'immigrants built this country' " Yet many of us seem to forget that. It also makes this problem uniquely complicated, because we are all still committed to the basic American values of "equal opportunity" and "liberty." As children we all learned the words of the inscription on the Statue of Liberty "give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free..." In fact, immigration (or Who is an American?) involves all the other Discussion topics for this course -- Current political parties and voting, Presidential and Congressional power, and Civil Rights/Civil Liberties.

However, it is important to remember that even in the Post 9/11 world, Americans are also of two minds on the subject of the increasing power and reach of the Federal Government: that is, how to balance the need for protection of our nation from Jihadists (Islamic terrorists), but at the same time not surrender our Civil Rights of free speech, freedom of assembly, freedom of religion and all of the personal rights we celebrate as Americans. (Despite 9/11 and the recent 'Boston bombings,' Muslims in the US – be they American citizens or not – retain our basic freedoms.) The Congressionally mandated authority of the FBI, the CIA, the new Department of Homeland Security, and now we learn the NSA collecting vast amounts of telephone, texting and email to surveil, arrest and imprison citizens as well as foreign nationals alarm many Americans--conservative and liberal, Republican, Democrat and Tea Partiers (**Discussion Unit 1b = The Tea Party: Mass Populist Movements**) All of these new and continuing Federal powers reach down to all our home town libraries, universities, computers and cell phones and our private lives. These are not simple problems, and as a result there aren't simple answers – this will not be a boring course because we will discuss some these contemporary issues!

2) What Exactly Should be the Role of the Federal Government?

As we have said, Americans are of two minds on the increasing power of the Federal Government over national life. President Obama has raised hopes and expectations that the Government will be a positive, supportive power in the lives of Americans, and has promised resurgence in government support for State finances, infrastructure construction, medical care, and education. He is roundly opposed by Republican members of Congress. (**Discussion Unit 2 = A Presidential Election Cycle: 2008 Election, President Obama's Scorecard with Congress from 2009-2010, then in the 'lame duck' session immediately after the November 2010, and finally the 2012 presidential Election**) The Federally funded "bailouts" for the banking, financial and auto industries, the Stimulus Package and Congressional passage of legislation to guarantee every American affordable medical insurance by 2013-14 -- all were President Obama's response to the political "mandate" *he felt he got* after the Nov. 2008 General Election, and the dire needs of the country. Add to these the Military and National Security policies put in place by the previous George W. Bush Administration after 9/11/01 (The Department of Homeland Security, The Patriot Act, The Afghanistan and Iraq Wars), and we daily see the Federal government's power to assist, to watch over, and to regulate individual lives and the economy.

People were (and to some extent still are) losing their jobs and their homes to foreclosure or to hurricanes and oil spills. Their savings and their property values plummeted. Many Americans lost their jobs and have no health insurance, or they have new college degrees and can't get work at all. All of our fellow Americans in these hard times need and want help, and they expect Washington to deliver -- but to them and not to the banks and automobile industry; to "main street" and not "wall street." Of course, if banks collapsed and businesses large and small followed suit, then there will not be new jobs, or mortgages or health insurance, or college education, etc. That's a complicated thing to explain to the average American citizen--but you will understand it all, by the end of this course!!!

3. Who is "The Government?"

Remember, the "government" means the President, both Houses of Congress and the Federal Courts acting together. It means all publicly funded service and employees, from Washington to Ypsilanti. The firefighters and policemen rushing up the stairs of the Twin Towers to save private citizens on 9/11 were in fact "the government"—in this case the government of the City of New York. Your teachers here at EMU, employed by the State of Michigan at this public institution, represent the government. And, for example, if you become a public school teacher, a county social worker, an FDA Food Inspector you, too, will be a part of 'the government.' The automobile industry, whose near-collapse touches more than half of the workforce in Michigan, and at least 1 in 8 jobs nationwide, was officially tied to the Federal Government through the "bailout" packages (even though many of these loans are paid off) approved by the President and Congress. Think about what all our lives would be like without the Federal government -- some would argue that it is a scary thought; others want it very restricted; but still others want it gone.

III. SUMMARY:

America still sees itself as an open, inclusive nation of newcomers, where anyone who works hard and 'plays by the rules' can thrive without too much government assistance. Our basic Founding values of: Liberty, Equality and Democracy are still taught in our schools (K-College) and, opinion polls tell us, are firmly held by Americans (**Discussion Unit 3 = Civil Liberties/Rights Redefined in the 21st Century**). However, in the aftermath of the "Great Recession" and the continuing wars in (Iraq) and Afghanistan, the way we put those values into practice through legislation and regulation at the Federal level has become a subject of intense debate right now: during the Congressional "off year" (non-Presidential) election of November, 2010 and the Presidential election of 2012. As a consequence, we have a new 'gridlock' in Washington between Democrats and Republicans in Congress as well as between Republicans and President Obama.

The evidence seems to suggest that the Tea Party and all those who believe the Federal government can simply shrink its role are wrong. Indeed, staunch Conservatives such as Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush found out -- there is no such thing in America as "small government." In fact, there hasn't been since

1932, when President Franklin Roosevelt re-imagined and expanded the size of government in response to The Great Depression, the effects of World War I and the coming of World War II. Even when they tried, Presidents of both Parties (Carter, Reagan, G.H.W. Bush, Clinton, G. W. Bush) could not substantially shrink government because the need for its services and protections expands yearly. This is especially the case in major crises such as 9/11, the Boston Marathon Bombing, Hurricanes Katrina and Sandy, the near collapse of the American banking system and automobile industry, the BP oil spill, and the wide ranging effects of the recent Great Recession.

IV. REQUIREMENTS: READINGS, DISCUSSIONS, EXAMS--RULES OF THE GAME

Rules of the game: In taking this course you agree to the following.....

DO NOT USE/CITE ONLINE SOURCES WITHOUT INDICATING THE NAME AND URL.

DO NOT COPY OTHER PEOPLE'S IDEAS AS YOUR OWN WITHOUT A FOOTNOTE OR CITATION – THAT IS ACCEPTABLE PRACTICE.

DO NOT COPY OTHER PEOPLES' EXAM ANSWERS AS YOUR OWN.

DO NOT MISS AN EXAM OR FAIL TO FULLY PARTICIPATE IN DISCUSSION: NO EXCEPTIONS UNLESS PRIOR PERMISSION IS OBTAINED FROM ME VIA EMAIL.

IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO COMPLY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE COURSE.

IF YOU DO NOT TAKE EXAMS OR POST IN THE DISCUSSIONS, AN AUTOMATIC "0" IS ENTERED FOR YOUR GRADE.

Books and Assignments:

Each of the books listed below must be bought (or virtually rented) and read; all discussion topics must be addressed online. All assignments and on-line discussion postings for each Unit must be done by the closing date of each Unit.

Exams are open for any entire day but once you' log on' you only have 1 hr 15 minutes. The exams are given on the first day of each new unit and on the final day of the course – December 19. There are three exams.

As you open up each course unit inside the Course Shell (beginning on September 4), you will note that I have provided lectures and outlines that accompany each chapter of the Ginsberg textbook (note new edition: **Essentials 9th Edition**) below. These are to facilitate your understanding of the book chapters, give you another source of information on the unit, are helpful in the Discussion postings, and very useful, if not critical, for studying for each exam. You should read them. They are somewhat akin to 'being in class' and taking notes.

A. [Primary Textbooks to be used for the Exams and for Online Discussion assignments:](#)

- 1): [*We The People: An Introduction to American Politics. Essentials 9th Edition.*](#) Ginsberg, Lowi, Weir, Tolbert, Spitzer. 2013. W.W. Norton & Co., paperback
- 2) Howard Fineman, [*Thirteen American Arguments: Enduring Debates That Define and Inspire Our Country.*](#) 2009 paperback or Kindle-type edition. Random House

B. Getting the news to use in Online Discussions: We use the Fineman book and the Web for 'frameworks' for our Discussion Positioning threads. When I ask you to go to the Web for additional or recent information, use sources that are credible, balanced and whose editorial statements are verifiable--that is, not based on conspiracy theories, political or religious ideology. For example, that means using *The Wall Street Journal*, not *Fox Cable News as a critical source*. Reading news with a particular slant is fine, but only after you've gotten as unbiased information as possible. In your online discussions, you will be expected to base your statements on facts and reasoned opinion (critical thinking -- that is what college courses are about). No ranting ...or dissing classmates allowed! Challenging fellow students on how they array 'the facts' or are substituting 'opinion' for 'facts' a -- yes -- dissing them --no!

Using Wikipedia: My preference is that you don't use Wikipedia exclusively. If you do use it, **you must use a second source of information** for the Posting/Discussion Threads. If you post with Wikipedia alone, you won't get credit for the post.

1. News articles: Occasionally uploaded or a URL and sent by me (via email to you) as important events occur in Washington, Michigan and the world. (See section below on 'Building Your own Newspaper'.)
2. Videos of current events that we are discussing may be of interest: films, video clips, C-Span programs (such as a Presidential or lobbyist Speech, Debate on the House of Representative floor... This will likely be facilitated by YouTube or other internet sources such as blogs, etc.
3. In addition to specific issues/articles I specify, you should read (online, and listen to, politically balanced American national and world coverage.
 - a) Radio: *National Public Radio*: WUOM (91.7), WEMU (89.1), WDET (109.1) and the national public radio web site: www.npr.org. NPR stations are also available online from all major cities (Chicago, NYC, etc.) towns with universities. Satellite radio: *Sirius/XM*: POTUS 2012 (channel 124).
 - b) Printed/online newspapers: *The New York Times* is the best comprehensive news source in America (www.nytimes.com). Any major City paper is good too, such as: *The Detroit Free Press*, *The Chicago Tribune*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *The Boston Globe*, *The Wall Street Journal*, etc. More focused on politics exclusively, and also an excellent source, is *The Washington Post* (washingtonpost.com). Online specialized news sources include: *Politico*, *The Huffington Post*, *The Daily Beast*, *Salon*, *Slate*. For past and future election analysis: *fivethirtyeight.com* which was published by Nate Silver but now may be continued by others because Silver has gone to ESPN. For Middle East, Aljazeera (English.aljazeera.net; it is

definitely a point of view!); Al Arabiya (alarabiya.net); for world-wide and British coverage of the US: the BBC (BBC.co.uk), the *Guardian* newspaper (guardian.co.uk) and Reuters news service (reuters.com).

V: Course Dates: September 4-December 19; Final Exam is December 19 (or last class day)

Readings and Course Schedule:

Important: (Re) Read or Listen to the following, as background for the entire course.....

1) *In the Ginsberg textbook: The Constitution of the United States (pp. A11-A30) and The Declaration of Independence (pp. A1-A4); also Federalist Paper #10 (pp. A31-A35).*

2) *Pres. Obama's Speech at the University of Michigan Commencement, April, 2010 --Theme: The Importance of the Government --Federal, State and local--to the quality of life of individual citizens and communities. **cut and paste into your URL...** <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-university-michigan-spring-2010-commencement>*

Unit #1: September 4-October 13: The American Founding and American Political Culture:

A) *Online Discussion: Immigration and Political Participation (= Discussion Unit 1a or 1st week; and Democrats, Republicans and Tea Partiers 1b or 2nd week)*
Online News, Information, and Podcasts

B) (1st textbook), Ginsberg, *We The People...Essentials 9th Edition, 2013*

Review of: *U.S. Constitution; The Declaration of Independence; Federalist #10*

Chapter 1: Introduction: The Citizen and Government. pp. 2-25;

Chapter 2: The Founding and the Constitution. pp. 26-59

Chapter 3: Federalism, pp. 60-89

C) (2nd textbook), Fineman *Thirteen American Arguments...*

Introduction: For the Sake of Argument...

Chapter 1: Who Is A Person;

Chapter 2: Who is An American;

Chapter 3: The Role of Faith

Chapter 8: Local v. National Authority

EXAM 1: Monday, October 14: UNIT ONE MULTIPLE-CHOICE EXAMINATION (opens for entire day; you have only 1 Hour and 15 minutes once you log on)

Unit #2: October 14-November 10: Making the Law -- Congress and the Presidency; Political Parties and Elections

A) *Online Discussion (Unit 2): The Obama Election Cycle – 2008-2012...The Administration: Economic Stimulus/Bailouts; Health Care Reform; the Expanded role of the Government in Domestic Policy; the November 2010 election; the 2012 Presidential election (See inside the course shell for some Information)*

B) (textbook): Ginsberg, *We The People...*

Chapter 7: Political Parties, Participation and Elections, pp. 196-239
Chapter 9: Congress: pp. 268-305
Chapter 10: The Presidency pp. 306-333

C) (textbook): Fineman, *Thirteen...*

Chapter 9: Presidential Power
Chapter 11: War and Diplomacy

EXAM 2: Monday November 11 -- UNIT 2 MULTIPLE-CHOICE EXAMINATION (opens for entire day; you have only 1 hour and 15 minutes only)

Unit #3: November 11-December 19: The Federal Courts, Public Opinion, Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, The Media

A) *Online Discussion (Unit 3):* Freedoms: Gay Rights, Gun Ownership, Government surveillance

B) (textbook) *We The People...* Read in this order...

Chapter 12: The Federal Courts. pp. 364-393
Chapter 5: Public Opinion. pp. 138-165
Chapter 4: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights. pp. 90-137
Chapter 6: The Media

C) (textbook) Fineman, *Thirteen...*

Chapter 4: What We Can Know and Say
Chapter 5: The Limits of Individualism

EXAM 3: Wednesday December 19, 2013: MULTIPLE-CHOICE EXAMINATION: Covers Unit 3 readings and discussions only (opens all day but you have only 1 hour and 15 minutes)

My Grading Policy: Exams count 50% and Discussion postings count 50%. In an on-line course discussion matters! The number of postings and the quality of postings are vital. Postings are *written pieces* by you with added discussion by me and your classmates. You will be asked/required to react with posts to your classmates as a part of the discussion. So, simply 'cutting' and 'pasting' (especially from Wikipedia) does not get you full discussion credit.

You will be asked to react to discussion questions or topics at the outset of each of the three units (therefore each unit = 33.34 points; or 3 units X 33.34 = 100% OK really 100.02%). I want you to bring 'information to the table' by using the texts + other internet sources + your own viewpoint once having thought about all the information.

Deconstructing the grading even further: If each unit is worth 33.34 points, then the Unit exam = 16.67 points and the Unit discussion = 16.67 points.

So you can see how important the Posting Discussion is: points for each discussion module are equal to the exam score. You can't pass the course, if you don't participate in

the Discussion Postings Threads in each of the Three units because that equals 50% of your Total Grade. (Do the Math!)

In other words, you have complete control over 50% of your grade by simply 'participating in class' (or as Woody Allen said: 'showing up.') – that is by posting your discussion entries for each unit. It should be a 'slam dunk' to get those 50 points. **I want all of you to get the maximum discussion points.** That tells me you have 'all shown up!!'

Discussions/Postings on-line

Unit #1: Sept. 4-October 13: American Political Culture; Who is an American -- Immigration in America: Historical Roots and Today

A) Online Discussion:

For ALL Online Discussions: Provide proper citations and a live link for others to view your source (copy and paste the internet URL), including page numbers from Fineman and Ginsberg textbooks (just Author, page no.). Be sure to use quotation marks if you use info. directly from the text or internet source

The theme for this discussion is Howard Fineman's statement in Ch. 2 ("Who Is An American") that "Only a nation of immigrants could argue so earnestly and endlessly (and sometimes violently) about who can become one of its own...America never has had "open" borders, at least not intentionally. Sometimes the door slams shut...The result is an enduring American Argument."

*****Post 1) Within the first week (Sept 4-15) of the course/module:**

Give an **historical example** (from the text's or from the Web) of 'exclusionary immigration legislation' and relate it to what both the Fineman and Ginsberg texts say about the issue of immigration.

*****Post 2) Within the Second/Third Week (Sept. 16-29) of the course/module:**

The US Senate has recently passed a Comprehensive Immigration Reform bill and sent it to the US House of Representatives where it has received a very, very ‘frosty’ response. What is the importance of Immigration reform as an issue in current American politics? Give some broad examples; then see recent legislation (you can briefly summarize it) in at least one state such as Arizona, Alabama, Georgia, Utah, etc... What are the political stakes in 2013 and beyond? Who is affected? What are the positions of Democrats and Republicans? Why is this an active issue today, when it 2007 under President Bush – no Congressperson would touch it? And the Supreme Court in 2012 ruled that parts of an Arizona Law were unconstitutional, while others constitutional. What does this say about what it means to be an American? Who can become an American?

*****Post 3) Post within the 4th week (September 30-October 6) of the module/course:**

What do you think the role of the Federal Government should be in Immigration Policy? How does this differ from what the States should do? Do you think Immigration policy is currently working? If not, why not? What sort of new Legislation at the Federal level should the President and Congress enact? (As stated above, in the US Senate, a bipartisan ‘gang of eight’ Senators has formulated and gotten passed legislation.) In June, 2012 the US Supreme ruled on the Arizona Immigration Law. So it has gone from the state legislature, signed by the Governor, through the Federal District Court, up to the Supreme Court.)

Be sure to: Give your rationale, including your logic and connections that lead you to this conclusion.

Remember to demonstrate that you've read and understand the textbook(s).

*****Post 4) Within the 5th week of the course (October 7-Oct. 13). (October is the close date for posting):**

Engage at least two or more other students, by 'replying' to their analysis posts in any discussion period. You may agree or disagree, but keep it clean and respectful, and use what **you've** learned (text, webquest lit. search) to make your point. Check back and see how **they've** responded to your posts. Use data and logic (critical thinking) in your attempt to convince them (and me) of the value of your perspective. *Please be sure to 'respond' to the correct thread by inserting "Post 1, Post 2' etc.") that I provided.*
Thanks.

Note: Unit 1 Exam Date = Monday, October 14

Unit #2: President Obama and the Congress—Articles may be added

Using your assigned Chapters in "We..." and in Fineman as your base, **AND USING BOTH OF THE ARTICLES (you will see them inside the course shell) post on this schedule:**

Post 1) Oct. 14-Oct. 20: What is the "scorecard" for Obama (= successes and failures) with respect to Congress: From his election in 2008 to the Congressional Election of Nov. 2010 ? What were the key items he proposed and what were the Congressional reactions?

Post 2) Oct. 21-Oct. 27: How was the "scorecard" affected by the November 2010 election outcome; what happened in the 'lame duck' session in November/December 2010?

Post 3) Oct. 28-Nov. 3: Comment on the Congressional Election of Nov. 2, 2010; How did President Obama's fortune change? Then comment on the Presidential Election of 2012. Again, how did President Obama's 'fortune change?'"

Post 4) Nov.4-Nov. 10: Post/comment among yourselves (that is respond to at least 2-3 classmates' posts) on the question of whether Obama has/had done a good, not so good, or bad job in making good on his key campaign promises, and getting the country out of the worst economic crisis since 1932 (despite the outcome of the Nov. 2010 election.)

Note: Unit 2 Exam Date = Monday November 11

Unit #3 Discussion: ---Civil Rights and Civil Liberties

Read the Articles inside the course shell : They concern 2 very current issues in the civil rights law today -- 1) Same-sex Marriage What is its legislative and Court history in California from about 2000 including Proposition 8 -- struck down by the California Supreme Court; appealed to the US Federal District Court; then appealed to the US Supreme Court and recently heard by them in 2013;

2) The Arizona Immigration law: struck down in part by a Federal District Judge but sections declared both constitutional and unconstitutional by the US Supreme Court.

3) Gun Control and the 2nd Amendment

Also: 2) Read all the parts of the 14th Amendment; Read the Civil Rights/Liberties chapter in your textbook (Ginsberg) as background to what rights and liberties mean in America and Chapters 4 and 5 in Fineman.

Unit #3 Discussion Questions:

Post 1) Nov. 11-Nov. 17: Discuss the Constitutional Civil Rights issues on both sides of the controversy in California over Proposition 8 (which banned Same-Sex Marriage) and the Calif. Supreme Court's decision to strike it down as unconstitutional. What "rights" are involved in the debate? By what process did it become law and why is this an issue? What does the 14th Amendment have to do with it?

Post 2) Nov. 18-Dec. 1: Discuss the Constitutional Civil Rights issues on both sides of the Arizona (or recent Georgia, Alabama...) Immigration laws. In Arizona or Alabama, etc., what parts did the Federal judge strike down, and why? What "rights" are involved in the debate? What does the 14th Amendment have to do with it? What was eventually upheld by the US Supreme Court?

Posts 3) Dec. 2-8: Gun Control. Read the 2nd Amendment to the Constitutional. Briefly: Why did 'background checks' for gun purchases at Gun Shows and on the Internet fail in the US Senate?

Post 4) Dec. 9-19: Engage with each other (at least two other students) (if you haven't already) and examine what these three very "hot" topics have in common and what is different about them with respect to "rights" issues. Where do you stand and why? No ranting; rather a reasoned pro or con position with evidence.

Note: Unit 3 Exam Date = Wednesday December 19

Good Luck.