



Freedom & Citizenship Civic Curriculum

2022 - 2023

Why do the Civic Leadership Project?

We believe citizenship is a verb: it is a practice of engagement available to anyone in a community regardless of legal status, age, or ability. The action of citizenship goes beyond recognizing injustices or educating and “raising awareness” about societal problems: it means doing things that can lead to direct change. After spending a summer learning about the origins of freedom and citizenship, we are now embarking on a yearlong curriculum designed to help us become leaders in active citizenship.

What will we do this year?

Each group will create a “call to action” that informs young people about a civic problem and offers them a method of actively pursuing change. The foundations for this project rest on three pillars: **(1) You will become informed** by learning about the issue, its origins, and its effects in society; **(2) You will become engaged** in the broader conversation around the issue by connecting with other activists and contacting politicians; **(3) You will become active** by identifying opportunities for producing civic change. While TAs will guide their students through the three pillars of civic engagement, it is the students’ responsibility to carry out the project.

How will we do it?

You’ll meet every two weeks from September through April to work on civic projects. This fall, your group will choose a civic problem and you’ll spend the winter researching the current state of action of your topic and drafting a call to action. In the spring, your group will research your

topic, interview activists, and find ways to make a real political difference on the issue. At the end of the year we'll present the highlights of our work at our annual "Civic Night" where you'll make your call to action to community members and current and future participants in F&C.

What are the goals of the project?

The goal of the civic curriculum is to provide students with the personal, civic, and academic skills necessary to become engaged and active citizens of their communities. Your group may not solve the social problems you identify this year but you will develop the experience necessary to lead the way on civic issues in the future. Remember, the goal of the program is not to create great presentations on Civic Night but to create great citizens. Specifically these are some of the skills the curriculum aims to teach:

Personal Skills:

Self advocacy
Leadership
Formal communication
Personal responsibility

Civic Skills:

Community organizing
Critical thinking
Cooperation
Problem solving

Academic Skills:

Critical thinking
Research literacy
Acting upon theory
Writing

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Civic Leadership Calendar

Meeting No.	Week of	Lesson
1	Sep 23	Civic Project Orientation
2	Oct 3	Becoming Active Citizens
3	Oct 17	Choosing our Civic Issues
4	Oct 31	The Current State of Action
5	Nov 14	Action vs. Awareness
6	Nov 28	Calling Our Representatives
7	Dec 9	Trivia night/Holiday party
**	Jan 9	Alumni Reunion!
8	Jan 16	Documentaries (<i>TAs are on winter break</i>)
9	Jan 30	Choosing Website Features + Preparing Interviews
10	Feb 13	Conspiracies and Fake News
11	Feb 27	Interviews
12	Mar 20	Researching our Topics/Website Features
13	Apr 3	Website Features
14	Apr 17	Website Features
15	Apr 24	Presentation Prep/Finalizing Website
16	May 3	Civic Night!

Note: Meetings are generally every two weeks, at 5:30 - 7:30pm on Mondays, Wednesdays, or Fridays. To accommodate the New York City DOE calendar and Columbia University's calendar the schedule gets a bit wonky in the spring.

Student Expectations for Civic Engagement:

- **Commitment:**
 - You are expected to participate in the full year-long program. Civic meetings are just as mandatory as summer seminars. If you know in advance that you will have a difficult time attending your scheduled time **you must ask for a schedule change as soon as possible.**
- **Attendance:**
 - Students will receive the remaining \$500 of their stipend after attending their 12th meeting.
 - Students are coming from all over NYC to attend these group meetings and we need a majority of students in attendance to move the project forward. If you can not attend a specific meeting you **must** let your TA know via Slack by 8:30am.
 - If too many students cannot make a meeting your TA may decide to cancel or reschedule. The *last* thing we want is to have to cancel a meeting at the very last minute because only 1 or 2 students have shown up (this has happened!!)
- **Homework:**
 - Before each meeting you should post one news article to Slack channel #news and explain why you're posting it in 2-3 sentences.