



INFOSCOPE

News and Tips for Managing Information

Civics for Adults: Enhancing Civic Knowledge and Inspiring Political Engagement

"No nation can remain both ignorant and free". *Thomas Jefferson*

This summer I had the pleasure and honor of conducting a series of workshops on Civics for Adults. They were free, and held in the Community Room of the George R. White Library at Concordia University. [Thank you, Concordia!] This was a labor of love I put together because of my dismay with the level of understanding of the political process, the level of civil discourse and accompanying epidemic with a lack of critical thinking. I also desired to create a space where people could, first, be exposed to some basic factual knowledge resources, and then use that knowledge to engage in constructive conversation.

I would like to continue this effort and am open to designing workshops with similar themes for libraries and other organizations. Single or multiple workshops can be created, custom-designed for your organization's interest and process. Please contact me to inquire further.

"..thank you for all your efforts, the great information and classes...I would recommend your classes to anyone" T. Scholnick

Comprehensive Resource Lists for all the workshops [but the last one, which was discussion only] were created. They are available on my website.

Resource Lists

Civics Workshop 1 Civic Literacy, Critical Thinking / Evaluating Information
<http://www.dcoheninfo.com/Civics/Workshop-1-Resources.pdf>

27% of citizens in a Newsweek poll couldn't name the Vice-President.

Civics Workshop 2 The Founding of the Country / The Constitution
<http://www.dcoheninfo.com/Civics/Workshop2.pdf>

Trial and error is the American way, after all. "We screwed up the Constitution the first time around and had to write another one in 1787," Patterson points out. "Big whoop."

[From Americans: A 'Bunch of Amateurs', and proud of it, NPR <http://www.npr.org/2012/05/19/152933832/americans-a-bunch-of-amateurs-and-proud-of-it>]

"I brought a friend to the civics class who does not necessarily agree with me ... we had some great conversations on our drives home...he's now paying a lot more attention to the campaigns at the federal and state levels. Our conversations are continuing. Thank you for offering this excellent class." Patrick Story

URLs are hot-links accurate as of Aug 20, 2012.

Summer-Fall
2012

**Civics for Adults:
Enhancing Civic Knowledge and Inspiring Political Engagement**

**Civics for Adults
Workshops Available**

**Civics Workshops
Resource Lists**

Tax Reform Study Group



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Information is Power

... if you can find it!

Civics Workshop 3 Budgets and Taxes

<http://www.dcoheninfo.com/Civics/Workshop-3-Resources.pdf>

"...tax expenditures include any reductions in income tax liabilities that result from special tax provisions or regulations that provide tax benefits to particular taxpayers.

Special income tax provisions are referred to as tax expenditures because **they may be considered to be analogous to direct outlay programs** [bolding added by Cohen], and the two can be considered as alternative means of accomplishing similar budget policy objectives. Tax expenditures are similar to those direct spending programs that are available as **entitlements** to those who meet the statutory criteria established for the programs."

Joint Committee on Taxation

Civics Workshop 4 Influencing Government / Social Change

<http://www.dcoheninfo.com/Civics/Workshop-4-Resources.pdf>

"Given the time constraints under which senators and representatives operate, no member can be fully informed on every issue." [*American Government, 10th Ed. Gitelson et al*]

Moral—we all need to give our input to our legislators.

Civics Workshop 5 Election 2012: Voter Registration System—is it working? Electoral College, Campaign Finances

<http://www.dcoheninfo.com/Civics/Workshop-5-Resources.pdf>

"State leaders in the 1780's had little sympathy for the idea of universal voting rights." [*American Government, 10th Ed, Gitelson et al*] Between gender, race, and property requirements, in 1789 only 10% of the population were eligible to vote.

Unregistered citizens

at least

51 million

or **nearly 1 in 4** eligible citizens are not registered to vote.



That's more than 24% of the eligible population.

"Great series. Good research, presentation, content, participation. Eclectic group of people with varying input" Juanita Burns

Graphic from: *Inaccurate, Costly, and Inefficient: Evidence That America's Voter Registration System Needs an Upgrade*. Pew Center on the States. February, 2012.

Tax Reform Study Group—Could Anything Be More Timely!?

I am forming a small study group based on the book: If Americans Understood the Income Tax: Our Most Expensive Ignorance by John O. Fox. Please let me know if you are interested [or interested in a one-session workshop on Tax Reform for your organization.]