

Civics for Adults Update, July 1, 2020

CIVICS FOR ADULTS IS GOING VIRTUAL!

WORKSHOPS WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION ONLINE! THE FORMAT IS A PPT PRESENTATION/LECTURE OF ONE+ HOUR, FOLLOWED BY A QUESTION/DISCUSSION TIME.

I hope you are staying safe and healthy. I've been working to convert my workshops to an online presence. Several are scheduled now and will be advertised as we work out registration arrangements for non-system patrons, if possible.

I will be conducting all the workshops virtually for the **Hillsboro Public Library!** Please contact that library for the schedule. Also, upcoming will be **Klamath Public Library!**

Please let your local library know if you'd like them to schedule a workshop(s).

A downloadable descriptive flyer is attached and available on my website.

https://cdn-cms.f-static.net/uploads/2516289/normal_5ef7d00a31df4.pdf

Workshops

[Interesting Facebook posts below!]

Misinformation, Fake News and Political Propaganda

Are you overwhelmed with messages from politicians, news sources and other media? Distinguish truth from fiction using real-world examples. Become your own "factchecker"! Also, how to find accurate information.

"Well organized, excellent information!"

"This was fun and informative! Thank you so much!"

"Loved it...well-rounded, wide array of examples!"

Citizen Activism 101—Making Change Happen

Have a concern about local, state or federal issues? Learn about strategies for change, and more: Examples of successful advocacy; Brief historical perspective; Choosing your battles; What matters to you?; Who makes the rules?; Tools for change; "Lobbying"; "Tracking" legislation; providing "testimony".

"ACTIONABLE!"

"Great presenter...should be a day conference!"

"Very practical information"

The Constitution – Fulfilling Democracy's Promise?

Let's look at the Constitution's creation and its structural limitations, and trace major changes to its interpretation. We puncture some myths and develop a perspective that helps evaluate its meaning more thoughtfully.

"Every citizen should take this serious look at our Constitution."

"Good level of history and contemporary political ideas"

Beyond Voting: Elections and Campaign Financing

This is a unique workshop covering topics related to our electoral systems and presenting specific ideas for bi-partisan civic/political engagement. Topics include: Voting as Constitutional right(?), Voting Security, Alternative Systems, Redistricting, Electoral College, Campaign Financing, Tracking Money/Campaign Finance Databases, Public Financing of Elections

"...solid information – This is what all Americans need to know."

"I consider myself a well-informed citizen but I learned a great deal of new information"

"You are a great teacher, Donna."

Facebook posts

Interesting little thread on Twitter about Massachusetts' move toward getting a measure on the Nov ballot for **Ranked-Choice Voting** statewide. [It would make it the second state to do so, after Maine]. We, of course, will

see RCV in Benton County, Oregon, in Nov. and possibly more than one ballot measure for STAR voting [Multnomah County and Lane County]. I believe either of these methods are superior to what we do now, for many reasons. It is something I discuss in the Elections/Campaign Finance workshop!

<https://twitter.com/LHSummers/status/1273320444960137217?s=20>

Here's a "two-fer"! Washington Post had a good article the other day with some **tips for recognizing and handling misinformation**: "You are probably spreading misinformation. Here's how to stop." By: Fowler, Geoffrey A. The Washington Post; Washington, D.C. 06 June 2020

You're probably wondering why I just don't give you the link. Well... WaPo [like some other pubs] has a limit on the number of articles per month you can access. But if you have a library card you can most likely find an article from these pubs via your library's databases. In this case I used **eLibrary** via the Multnomah County Library. I searched like this: Advanced Search - Washington Post in a Field that I define [choose] to be "Publication Title". Then Keywords [in this case: 'spreading misinformation']. Run the search. Then sort by "Most Recent First". It was the 6th article.

Here is something I just learned that I find fascinating. I've been studying **proportions of votes in Congress vis-a-vis state populations** [Small states have vastly disproportionate influence, e.g. A majority vote in the Senate can represent just 18% of the population.].

But I've come across a related disproportionate situation - that of size of state legislatures / state populations. What do I mean? Well, in Oregon we have roughly 4 million people and a House of Representatives with 60 members, thus, about one Rep for every 60,000 persons [ballpark numbers]. Rhode Island has about 1 million population and a House Chamber of 75, hence about one Rep for every 15,000 people! How much easier might it be for a Rep to serve - and know - 15,000 people vs 60,000? The states are all over the map [no pun intended] in regard to their legislatures and per capita legislative representation.

I just think it's really fascinating.

A good collection of what to watch out for, as regards **various ways people use online posts to mislead!**

https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/janelytvynenko/hoax-misleading-claims-george-floyd-protests?fbclid=IwAR2b_E-rc1zTUNSyV3i9Rqo3VmMkeNY4odqyHYNP52enbA_YFV2DdGBswzY

One of the things I'm **incorporating in my Misinformation workshop is a short discussion of economic measures**. Why? Because so much of what we hear about how our country is doing relate to those measures. And so, are these measures really good metrics for how we are doing? Many economists now think not. They think some current measures ignore crucial negative and positive factors. Here is a quite interesting article from the Harvard Business Review:

<https://hbr.org/2019/10/gdp-is-not-a-measure-of-human-well-being>

The campaign to get an **independent redistricting commission** in Oregon is underway. They are using electronic signature gathering. Here is an article from the Oregonian about it.

<https://www.oregonlive.com/news/2020/05/independent-redistricting-commission-supporters-launch-oregon-signature-gathering-campaign.html>

"Demographics, earnings, and family characteristics of workers in sectors initially affected by COVID-19 shutdowns"

<https://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2020/article/demographics-earnings-and-family-characteristics-of-workers-in-sectors-initially-affected-by-covid-19-shutdowns.htm>

Bipartisan, welcome and appreciated. **"Grassley, Leahy urge Roberts to permanently air Supreme Court arguments"**. "Given this widespread support for access to our nation's highest court - and the countless contributions it makes towards the civics education of the American public - there is no reason why pro-transparency measures should end when the Court returns to its normal functions," Grassley and Leahy wrote."

Hear, hear! <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/politics/grassley-leahy-urge-roberts-to-permanently-air-supreme-court-arguments/ar-BB14LVWj?ocid=msedgntp>

There are multiple reports from multiple locations that **journalists are being targeted** [from multiple sides!]. We should remember this...



Interesting book about the problems with our two-party system and suggesting reforms including multi-party democracy, Ranked-Choice voting, enlarging the House, etc., **Breaking the Two-Party Doom Loop**. By Lee Drutman. ““Good institutions require us to see beyond our narrow perspectives and engage broadly with a diversity of ideas and interests, encouraging us to seek compromises to hard problems. Bad institutions push us into our narrow corners, making us certain we are right and they are wrong and that finding a reasonable compromise is a form of surrender. If our political system depends on superhumans swimming against a hard current pushing them in the opposite direction, we need a different political system.”

Changes are happening with voting rules for November. Here's a summary with a map.
<https://www.nonprofitvote.org/absentee-ballots-and-covid-19/>

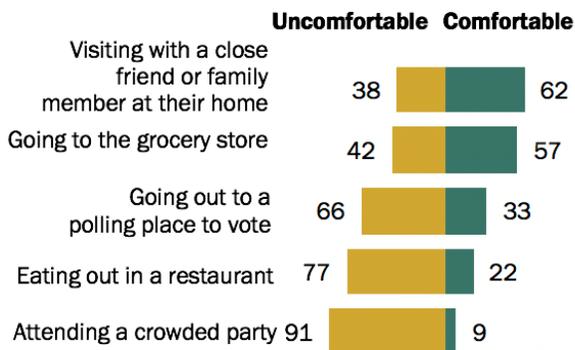
The 10 Best Fact Checking Websites for 2020

https://mediabiasfactcheck.com/2020/04/12/the-10-best-fact-checking-websites-for-2020/?fbclid=IwAR2tEv09QNJI9hA-GQWYRhkD03PHSk7KfpLOOBU_TiwIXuHX13th3pnrTLs

We in Oregon and Washington know that **vote-by-mail** is the way to go. Especially now with COVID-19 the election in Nov could be severely impacted if we don't see more states allow for, at the least, an expansive absentee ballot process. If you know folks in other states which do not have vote-by-mail or expanded absentee voting [e.g. no doctors' notes required] please ask them to contact their elected officials, including their Secretary of State's office, and encourage a move toward easy absentee/vote-by-mail options.

More Americans feel comfortable visiting a close friend, family member than going to restaurants, parties

% saying that, given the current situation with the coronavirus outbreak, they would feel _____ doing each of the following



Note: Share of respondents who did not offer an answer not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 19-24, 2020.

“Most Americans Say Coronavirus Outbreak Has Impacted Their Lives”