

American Government: Unit 2—Civil Rights

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed..."

These instantly recognizable words from the Declaration of Independence speak of the "unalienable" rights of all people, and the role of government in securing those rights. The words of the Declaration, and the Constitution's Bill of Rights that followed it, form the backdrop of our second unit in this course. The central focus that the nation's founders placed upon the rights of individuals remains a focus today, and one which, in an ever-changing society, is constantly tested by

new interpretations, and questions about what the limits of our individual rights are when balanced against the common good.

Key Questions for the Unit:

- What are the most important civil rights?
- What rights tend to stretch the "comfort level" of a society?
- Why does government protect individual rights, yet also protect the majority against the few?
- How do states balance their requirements of police power with preserving civil rights?
- How does the multinational heritage of the United States create civil rights issues?
- How has the legal view of different minority groups changed over time?
Why are issues of citizenship so important in the US today?

Assignment	Pages	?’s	Due	Pts	
1. The Unalienable Rights (19.1)	485-489	2-6	9/22	25	
2. Freedom of Religion (19.2)	490-497	2-5	9/23	20	
3. Freedom of Speech & Press (19.3)	499-505	2,4,7,8	9/25	20	
4. Expression & Nat’l Security (19.4)	506-508	2,3	9/28	20	
Assembly and Petition (19.5)	508-511	2,4			
5. Due Process of Law (20.1)	517-520	2,4,5	9/29	30	
Freedom & Security of Persons (20.2)	521-526	2,6,7			
6. Rights of the Accused (20.3)	528-535	1, 4, 6	9/30	20	
7. Rights of Accused: Punishment (20.4)	536-539	2-5	10/1	20	
8. Diversity & Discrimination (21.1)	545-549	2-5	10/2	20	
Week 3 Vocabulary Test (“_____” to “_____”)			10/5	20	
9. Equality Before the Law (21.2)	550-555	2-6	10/6	25	
10. Federal Civil Rights Laws (21.3)	556-559	IC	10/7	20	
11. American Citizenship (21.4)	561-567	2-6	10/8	25	
Personal Code			10/16	TBA	
Week 4 Vocabulary Test (“_____” to “_____”)			10/19	20	
Unit Test	All above		10/21	100	
Unit Essay	See below		10/22	50	

Unit Vocabulary: There's no separate test for these terms, but you should know what they mean by the end of the unit.

alien	bail	exclusion	expatriate
habeas corpus	incriminate	indictment	jeopardy
libel	quota	refugee	symbolic speech

UNIT TWO ESSAY: DUE October 22

CHOOSE ONE of the civil rights introduced in this unit that you feel is one of the most important to protect for future generations, and that you may feel is in danger of being undermined. Write a brief, well-organized, academic essay (1 – 2 pages long double-spaced, typed, 1 inch margins) that discusses the following:

Its Past: The sources of the civil right you choose-- including its philosophical, constitutional, and legal heritage*

Its Present: The present-day importance of the civil right you choose -- drawing from personal and/or historical examples

Its Future: Challenges that you foresee on the horizon to keeping the civil right you choose strong for future generations and/or implications if it is restricted or removed

***Suggestion:** Once you choose your focus civil right, re-read the appropriate section of the text to make sure you truly understand what it's supposed to be, where it comes from, and why we have it. It is appropriate to look beyond the textbook to find information about your chosen civil right (a.k.a. "research") but the focus of the essay should be your own ideas and interests, rather than a "report" of your findings. Use information from the text and other sources to better understand your chosen civil right, but don't dwell on it.

Unit 2 Essay Scoring Guide for Unit 2 Essay

GRADED ELEMENTS	Excellent	Good	Average	Weak	Poor	Missing
INTRODUCTION clearly identifies topic & gives sense of beginning for essay	5	4	3	2	1	0
PAST: Clearly identifies sources of the civil right chosen-- including philosophical, constitutional, and legal heritage	10	8	6	4	2	0
PRESENT: Clearly identifies present-day importance of the civil right chosen -- drawing from personal and/or historical examples	10	8	6	4	2	0
FUTURE: Clearly identifies and supports a vision for the future of chosen civil right, including challenges or strengths that may grow in future years	10	8	6	4	2	0
CONCLUSION wraps up essay with summary or restatement of thesis	5	4	3	2	1	0
CONVENTIONS applied correctly to support essay; Spelling, grammar, punctuation support message	10	8	6	4	2	0
TOTAL 						
