

Introduction to Civics & Community Engagement

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Overview of the course



Introduction

Definition

Importance

Key concepts in civics

Rights and responsibilities of citizenship

Principles of citizenship



The Civic and Community Engagement course is designed to introduce students to the principles and practices of engaging with communities and participating in civic life. Here's a brief overview:

Introduction to Concepts: Students learn about key concepts such as civic engagement, community service, public service, and political activism. The course often includes discussions on the history and models of civic life, critiques of philanthropy, and the role of volunteerism.

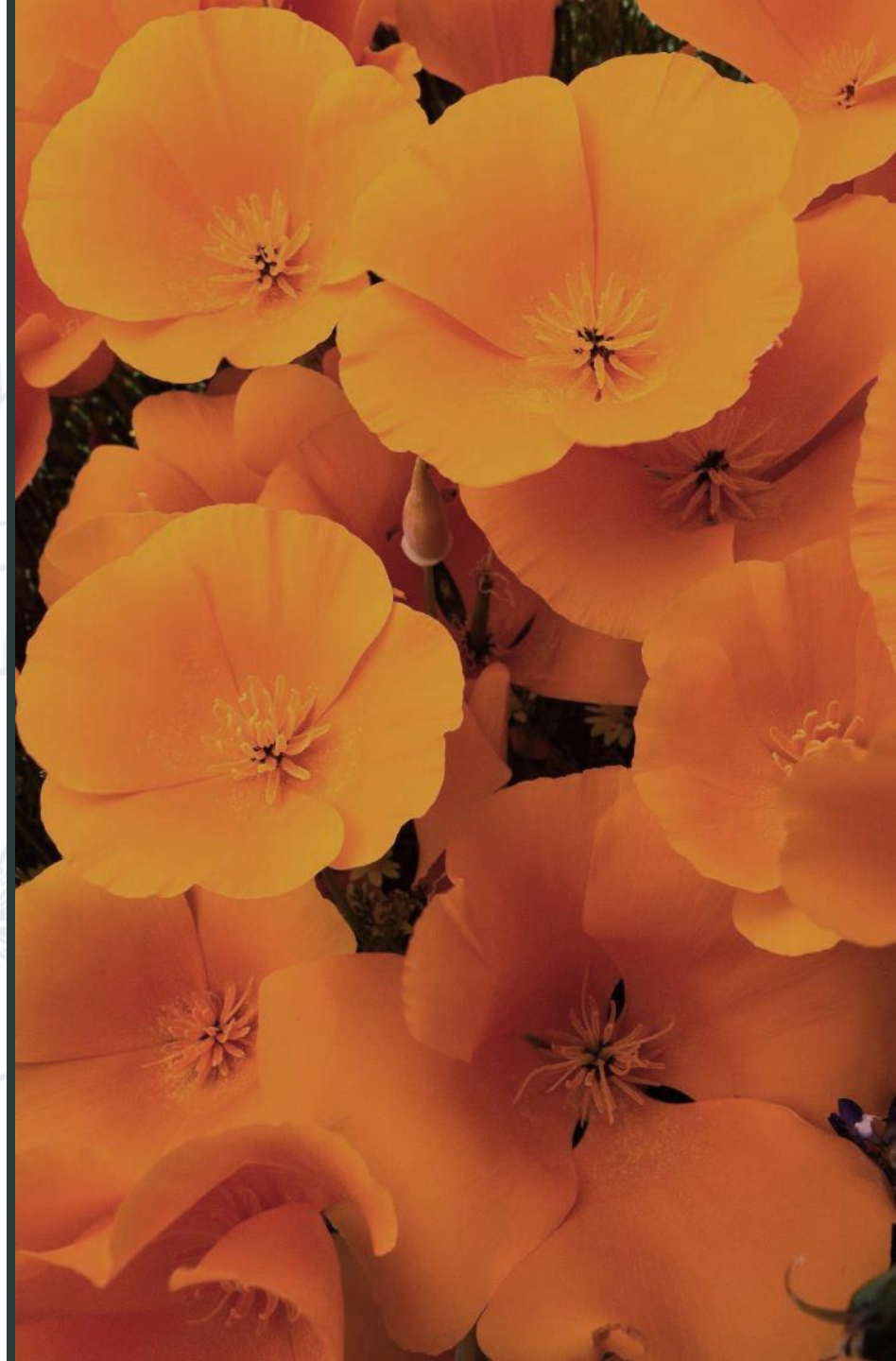
Practical Engagement: The course typically involves practical experiences where students engage directly with community projects. This can include service learning, internships with nonprofit organizations, or collaborative projects with community partners.

Skill Development: Students develop skills in self-awareness, relationship building, dialogue, and reflection. These skills are applied in real-world situations to understand and address social issues.

Critical Examination: The course encourages students to critically examine social issues, systems of power, and their own roles as active, responsible citizens. This includes identifying examples of power and privilege and understanding their impact on everyday life.

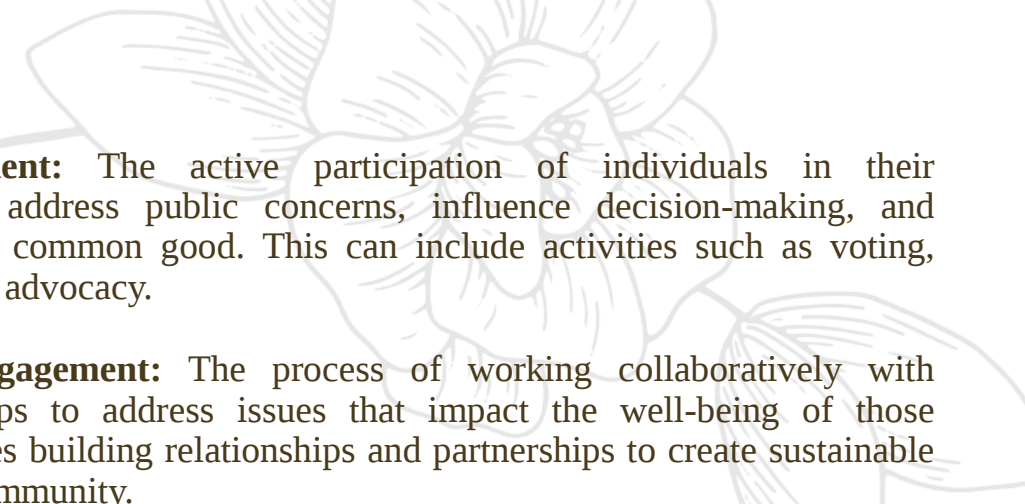
Capstone Projects: Some programs include a capstone project where students work on a significant community engagement project, often in collaboration with a community partner¹. Overall, the course aims to prepare students to be engaged, socially-conscious citizens who can contribute positively to their communities.

Definitions



Definitions related to civic and community engagement



- **Civic Engagement:** The active participation of individuals in their communities to address public concerns, influence decision-making, and contribute to the common good. This can include activities such as voting, volunteering, and advocacy.
 - **Community Engagement:** The process of working collaboratively with community groups to address issues that impact the well-being of those groups. It involves building relationships and partnerships to create sustainable changes in the community.
 - **Public Participation:** The involvement of individuals and groups in the decision-making processes of government and other public institutions. This can include attending public meetings, providing feedback on policies, and participating in public consultations.
 - **Volunteerism:** The practice of offering time and services to others without financial gain. Volunteerism is a key component of civic engagement and can include activities such as helping at food banks, participating in community clean-ups, and mentoring youth.
 - **Advocacy:** The act of supporting or arguing for a cause, policy, or proposal. Advocacy can involve activities such as writing to elected officials, participating in protests, and using social media to raise awareness about important issues
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Importance Key concepts in civics

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Importance of Civic and Community Engagement

Strengthens Democracy: Civic engagement is crucial for a healthy democracy. It ensures that citizens' voices are heard, making governments more representative and accountable.

Builds Stronger Communities: Active participation fosters a sense of belonging and solidarity among community members, enhancing social cohesion and resilience.

Empowers Citizens: Engaging in civic activities empowers individuals to exercise their rights, advocate for important issues, and effect positive change.

Addresses Social Issues: Civic engagement mobilizes collective action to tackle social, political, and environmental challenges, promoting social justice and equity.

Encourages Civic Responsibility: It promotes a sense of responsibility towards the common good, encouraging people to contribute positively to society.

Key Concepts in Civics

Citizenship: Understanding the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a society, including participation in the political process and community service.

Democracy: The system of government where power is vested in the people, who rule either directly or through freely elected representatives.

Rule of Law: The principle that all members of a society, including those in government, are equally subject to the law.

Civic Virtue: The cultivation of habits important for the success of the community, such as honesty, responsibility, and respect for others.

Public Participation: The involvement of citizens in the decision-making processes of government and other public institutions.

Rights of Citizenship

Freedom of Expression: Citizens have the right to express their opinions and ideas without fear of government retaliation or censorship.

Right to Vote: Citizens can participate in the democratic process by voting in elections for public officials.

Right to a Fair Trial: Citizens are entitled to a prompt and fair trial by an impartial jury.

Responsibilities of Citizenship

Obedying Laws: Citizens must follow federal, state, and local laws.

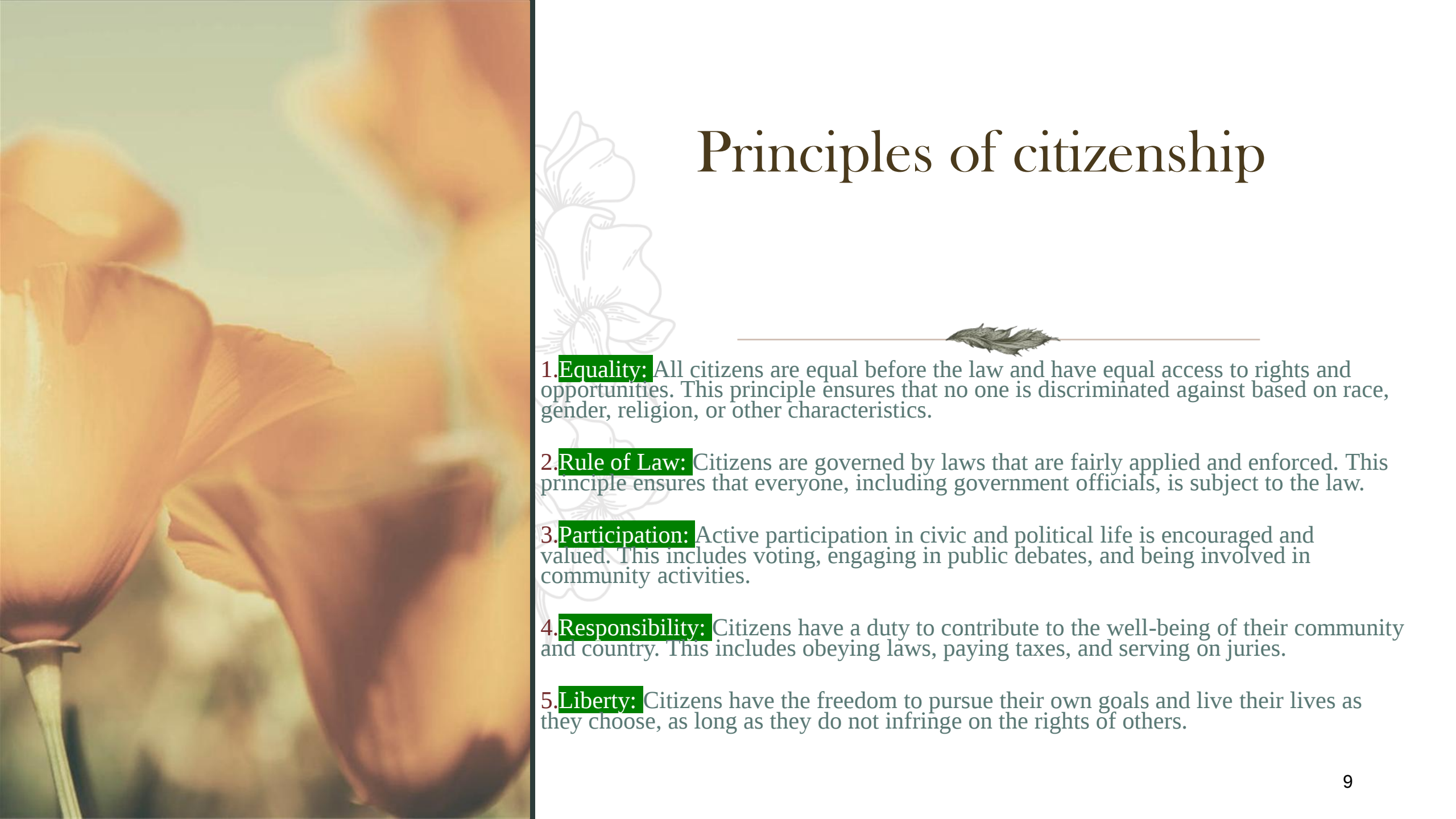
Paying Taxes: Citizens are required to pay income and other taxes honestly and on time to federal, state, and local authorities.

Serving on a Jury: When called upon, citizens must serve on a jury to help ensure a fair judicial process.

Participating in the Democratic Process: Citizens should stay informed about issues affecting their community and participate in elections.

Defending the Country: If necessary, citizens may be called upon to defend the country.

Rights and responsibilities of citizenship



Principles of citizenship

1. **Equality:** All citizens are equal before the law and have equal access to rights and opportunities. This principle ensures that no one is discriminated against based on race, gender, religion, or other characteristics.
2. **Rule of Law:** Citizens are governed by laws that are fairly applied and enforced. This principle ensures that everyone, including government officials, is subject to the law.
3. **Participation:** Active participation in civic and political life is encouraged and valued. This includes voting, engaging in public debates, and being involved in community activities.
4. **Responsibility:** Citizens have a duty to contribute to the well-being of their community and country. This includes obeying laws, paying taxes, and serving on juries.
5. **Liberty:** Citizens have the freedom to pursue their own goals and live their lives as they choose, as long as they do not infringe on the rights of others.

Thank you

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