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ASSIGNMENT - Civic Engagement Checklist

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ASSIGNMENT

Civic Engagement Checklist

Throughout the term, this class will include many hands-on experiences with different forms of civic engagement, some of which will be experienced together as a class and others that you might participate in individually or in small groups. As you complete these, you be reflecting on them individually, and at the end of the term you will write a synthesizing reflection on your experiences as a whole. The assignment in its entirety is made up of the following three parts:

Part 1: The Civic Engagement Checklist Activities

- Volunteer in your community for at least 6–8 hours over the course of the term (e.g., a day-long opportunity on a weekend, or a few hours a day on a project lasting more than one day; weekly participation in an ongoing volunteer activity in the community is not required for this assignment, but if you already engage in something like this you do not have to do anything in addition to that for this assignment—just be sure to write reflections about whatever you’re doing as described in Part 2.)
- Attend at least one city council or school board meeting.
- Call an elected official about an issue that matters to you.
- Write an email or send a letter to an elected official about an issue that matters to you.
- Write an op-ed (submitting it to a newspaper for publication is not required, but it is recommended!)
- Have a conversation with someone about an issue you disagree about using communication skills described in *I Never Thought of It That Way*, by Mónica Guzmán (Guzmán, Mónica. 2022. *I Never Thought of It That Way*. Dallas, TX: BenBella Books).
[Note: See accompanying “Conversation Across Difference” assignment for details about this.]
- Spend at least 30 minutes each week readings the news, including news from the left, right, and center at allsides.com.
- Optional: Students are highly encouraged to attend an Advocacy Day at the Capitol. Because this would involve missing other classes, I cannot require it, but if you can be excused from your other classes on the day we plan to be at the State Capitol, I strongly encourage you to participate. Students consistently report what an impactful and informative experience it is!
- Other ideas? Please contact me with suggestions!

Part 2: Journal Reflections

After completing each of the activities above (immediately after, when possible, but no less than 24 hours after) write a reflection of 400–500 words that answers the following questions:

1. What did you do, and what did it entail?
2. What is at least one thing you learned from the experience, and what about or within the experience brought about that learning?
3. What is at least one way the experience either related to or added additional/new insight to existing course texts we've engaged with so far this term (i.e., readings, podcasts, films, class discussions, field trips, and/or guest speakers)?
4. What other reactions or thoughts did the experience leave you with?

These reflections will be in the style of a journal, meaning that the most important thing in what you write will be the documenting of your experiences, your thoughts about them, and the connections you're making between these and the course. Therefore, your voice can be informal and references to the course texts do not need to be formally cited (though they do need to accurately reflect the ideas in the referenced text and mention should be made of which sources you're making connections to; these just don't need to be cited in APA or MLA, etc.). After you've completed each activity, submit your journal entry about it to its respective folder on our course LMS within 48 hours.

Part 3: Civic Engagement Checklist Synthesis

At the end of the term, you will synthesize your reflections on these experiences as a whole in the form of a letter to me in which you reflect on the Checklist activities you engaged in across the semester. This letter will be ~500 words, in which you:

- synthesize what you learned from the “check list” experiences as a whole as you look back on your reflections from across the term;
- share with me what was most and least useful about the checklist assignment, and
- share any suggestions you have about the “checklist” assignment for future terms.