

## Civil Liberties in the Trump Era

Many historians believe that the guarantees of civil rights found in the Bill of Rights make the US unique among nations. In this class we'll focus on our traditions of free speech, the press and assembly; freedom of religion; freedom from unreasonable searches and seizure, particularly as that freedom has been interpreted to include a right to privacy; due process; and equal protection of the laws. Thus, we will be exploring in some depth the First, Fourth, and Fourteenth Amendments to the Constitution by reviewing both the texts of the amendments and key Supreme Court cases interpreting them. We'll also discuss the limitations of the law established by the amendments, recognizing that some of the civil liberties we take for granted, such as freedom from discrimination in public places and in employment on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity age and disability, are the products of statutes passed by Congress, which can be rescinded or simply not enforced. We will also be reading current news and opinion articles about threats to our civil liberties under the current administration and discussing options for responding to those threats.

We will have the opportunity to hear from several speakers who are specialists in constitutional law and history, civil rights law and politics. Among them will be a leading constitutional lawyer, Larry Lustberg, who spoke in my class two years ago and will be back to look at developments since then resulting from Obergefell, the Supreme Court case that established a right to same sex marriage; and Patrick English, another leading constitutional lawyer, who will discuss First Amendment issues.

**No text will be required;** handouts and on-line sources will be provided, as will a list of recommended reading for background and discussion.

**Leader:** Elaine Jacoby is an attorney who leads courses on civil rights, women's issues, and politics.

**Tuesdays:** 1:30 to 3:30 p.m., 8 weeks: September 26 through November 14.

**Location:** Presbyterian Church of Lawrenceville