

To get us started you do have a summer assignment for this class:

First, you will be reading: Mark Tushnet's Why The Constitution Matters.

Here are some questions to get you thinking as you read Tushnet's book. These questions are not to be directly answered by your essay, but use them as a guide to reading and understanding the book's somewhat dense text:

1. Does the Constitution matter, really, as much as or more than other parts of our institutional frameworks of government and politics?
2. Who really has the power to alter and expand or contract the meanings of Constitutional clauses and powers, according to Tushnet? Is he right or wrong?
3. Does he think those alterations, expansions and contraction are legitimate, or illegitimate? Does this depend on who has 'initiated' these changes and why? What do you think about these changes?
4. Ultimately, does Tushnet seem to be coming from a primarily left wing or right wing perspective? Why? How does this effect his analysis?
5. What kinds of Constitutional change would create a vision more in harmony with Tushnet's theoretical framework? Would you want such change to happen?
6. What is Tushnet's fundamental message about the importance (or lack of importance) of our Constitution, and what is his broad argument for that message? Do you agree or disagree with it? Why?

Second, you will be writing a short paper on Tushnet's book. This will be due at the end of the first week of school and will count as your first major grade. In the paper, **put your primary emphasis on a clear thesis either supporting and elaborating arguments in Why The Constitution Matters, or critiquing and breaking down arguments in the book.**

Use at least **three** scholarly or journalistic outside sources to support your elaboration or critique. Technical requirements:

Times New Roman, 12 Point, Standard Margins  
Standard Turabian/Chicago Citations  
5-7 Pages                      Double Spaced

Third, We'll be getting together at my house (3606 Montrose Ave, Richmond, VA, 23222) for a small cookout, pep talk, and chat session about the book in the week before school starts, at 5:30PM on Thursday, August 28<sup>th</sup>.

See you then, and enjoy your summer with Dr. Tushnet!