We have reviewed many definitions of civic engagement this semester. All of them in some way emphasize participation in the institutions that define civic life, including informal activist organizations, formal nonprofit organizations, and governments, both small and complex. To begin to understand civic engagement requires some level of introductory involvement with entities such as these. For this class, you must spend 30 hours engaged with two of these types of organizations. You must spend at least 10 hours and no more than 20 hours engaged with each organization.

The goal of this assignment is to introduce you to two forms of civic engagement, in different settings. Your involvement with these organizations will provide the basis for two papers you will write this semester, your compare and contrast paper and your service activity assignment. You will receive detailed instructions about those assignments in upcoming weeks.

Over the past several weeks, Lisbeth Pereyra and I have worked in collaboration with the Center for Civic Engagement on campus to identify possible community engagement assignments for you. Lisbeth has shared that list with you as a google doc. The list we have provided is preliminary, but it provides enough options for you to get a start in identifying locations for your this assignment. We will add other options to that list as the semester progresses. In addition, if you have other recommendations regarding how you would like to meet this requirement, such as through involvement with an organization or activity not listed on the sheet, you may do so, but you must receive my approval first.

I have organized the service assignments into several categories: volunteer service (government or nonprofit), shadowing/administration (government), shadowing/administration (nonprofit) and activism (student or community). You must pick engagement options from two of the four categories. That means, you cannot select two volunteer service projects. The reason for that distinction is to make sure you learn about civic engagement in more than one setting. This issue is particularly important for those of you who have engaged in considerable volunteer work already. I want to make sure that this course provides you with experiences that are different from those you have had at other times in your life and deepens your understanding of what civic engagement involves.

Christie Zwahlen from the Center for Civic Engagement, will come to class and provide guidance to you in your outreach to organizations. Review the list of possible assignment sites, reach out to the contact person and discuss the assignment. Once you have decided on an assignment site, please e-mail that information to Lisbeth (lpereyr1@binghamton.edu) and copy me (dcamp@binghamton.edu). She will maintain a master list of student assignments. Because this course is about the expectation of civic engagement as an aspect of citizenship, I will not ask you to provide verification that you met the 30 hour requirement; I trust you will honor your commitment. However, if I learn that you do not complete the requirement or misrepresent your participation, I will meet with you to discuss the consequences for your grade.
As you participate in your engagement assignments, please reflect on the following questions. They will be part of our class discussion and central to your two related written assignments:

1. What is the purpose of this organization?
2. In what way does this organization contribute to community life and American democracy, broadly?
3. Who benefits from this organization? Who are its stakeholders?
4. Does this organization have opponents or critics? If so, who are they and why are they critical?
5. Does the organization rely on volunteers? If so, how much? What is the role of volunteers?
6. If you shadow a person involved with a public service career, what are your observations about the kind of work they do?
   a. What is it like?
   b. What kinds of issues do they address in their jobs?
   c. How are those issues related to the public purpose of the organization?
   d. What does the person say about his/her public service career? Why do they do it? Are they happy with their jobs?
7. Is the organization successful at what it does? How do you know? What are its indicators of success? Do you think it is making a difference?

If you have any questions or run into difficulties setting up your civic engagement time, please contact Lisbeth or me and we will work with you to resolve it.