

Discuss the relationship between the liberal arts and democratic principles

Alex Hall

America is in shambles. The democratic principles our country once held so dear are disappearing from our political sphere. Our leaders have become blinded by their party affiliations and political longevity. Sadly, regular citizens are affected by this way of thinking too. This problem has caused our country to develop into a polarized war of ideals. The consequences of this conflict are grave; we have essentially turned our government into a dysfunctional circus. The solution to this problem is simple. We, as Americans must take the democratic principle of participation to heart. Not by demonizing those with opposing beliefs, but by being open to opposing ideals and giving them thought. An important part of creating a country of thinkers rather than followers is by having a well-rounded liberal arts education.

A liberal arts education can help remedy this problem. If one is well-rounded in many areas of academia, he can participate successfully in our democratic process. We become more educated voters. If we are well-versed in biology, we know how a certain politician's stance on urban expansion can affect the biodiversity of that certain area. More knowledge of economics means that we are aware that a certain candidate's stance on minimum wage increases can impact inflation. This will lead to better discussions in the community and in the media as to what is best for the future of our country.

The Constitution was created by a host of free thinkers, many of whom had different opinions. But through constructive debate, discussion, and compromise, they reached their desired political manifesto, the United States Constitution. No document, before or since, has

been such a champion of democracy. Through its unprecedented system of checks and balances, and the Bill of Rights which soon followed, the people of the United States were given powers no ordinary citizen ever had. We could say what we want, do what we want (under the law), and our political system blocked any one group from having too much control. The latter statement is where the problem lies. We are uncooperative and argumentative rather than supportive and compromising. Our political system was meant to work as a team, not two or more opposing adversaries. This is all because they lack the ability to think outside their party's ideology. It is a sin for any Democrat to oppose Obamacare, and likewise for a Republican to support gun control. The disunity in the American political system has caused a serious problem.

Being educated in many subjects helps us make more thoughtful decisions in the democratic process. In turn, more qualified and open-minded officials would be elected to public office. Our nation would once again become a nation of compromises and action rather than selfish political grandstanding. Our political parties would move more towards the center and become less polarized. Instead of identifying ourselves as Democrats or Republicans, we would all fall under one unified name: Americans.