



# YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE

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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative  
2005 Volume III: War and Civil Liberties

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## **The Courage to Be An Enemy of the People**

Guide for Curriculum Unit 05.03.01, published September 2005

by Daniel Addis

As students work through this unit they will grapple with the question: *During a time of crisis, discord, or terror, should I speak out and stand up for what is right and put myself and my family in danger, or should I keep quiet, cooperate, and ignore my principles so that I can protect myself and my family?*

The students will deal with this question by reading accounts of real life examples of people who put themselves at risk, even died, by standing up and speaking out for justice. The two real life examples are: "The Court Martial of Jackie Robinson"—an account of the future baseball star who changed the face of baseball who, while serving in the army, was charged with disrespecting an officer in connection with his refusal to sit in the back of a bus. Jackie put his entire baseball career on the line by standing up for his dignity and the dignity of African-Americans. The other example is of an Austrian man who refused to serve in the German army during World War II because he considered such service a desecration against the teachings of Christ. After we study these real life stories, we will delve into a fictional examination of the above question, using Henrik Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People*. In this unit, students will work cooperatively, do presentations, lead the class in discussion, and write a research paper about people being abused and what should be done about it.

(Developed for Literature and Composition, grade 12; recommended for English and Language Arts, grades 11-12)

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