**Reading and Resources**

The required text for this course is:

Szypszak, C. (2011) *Understanding law for public administration*. Sudbury, MA: Jones and Bartlett Publishers.

**Read Chapter 5**

Title: Szypszak Chapter 5 and Proposed Rules: NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION. (2013). Federal Register, 78(150), 47245-47253.

Lesson - Freedom of information

The First Amendment's guaranty of a free press was put in place to keep the government from controlling the flow of information to the people. In order to guarantee official accountability, the information must be available to the public. States and Federal lawmakers have enacted freedom of information laws to address this issue. Again, some fairly clear statements have generated an amazing amount of litigation. To view some of the cases generated under this topic, see <http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/cases/topics/tog_freedom_of_the_press.html>.

There are two basic types of freedom of information law: open meeting laws and public right to know laws. Santa Clara University has an excellent source on this issue at <http://www.scu.edu/ethics/practicing/focusareas/government_ethics/introduction/open-meetings.html> .

The government must allow the population to take part in government activities. Congress enacted the "[Government in the Sunshine Act"](http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/102416) in 1976. It says generally that if enough government members are in attendance to take action, the meeting must be open to the public with sufficient notification. There are exceptions to this as well.

In order for the public to be aware of what government is doing, they have to have access. You are all familiar with the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) which became law in 1966. Federal agencies are required to disclose certain information upon written request. FOIA exceptions are outlined in your text. For everything you ever wanted to know about FOIA see [http://www.foia.gov](http://www.foia.gov/) .

For a great summary of these concepts, take a look at the Ted Talk ["Why Open Government is So Crucial to Our Society](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KzDE7D52zlA)."