

**Gedeon W. Werner**

**Controversial Issues in Contemporary American Life**

**ABSTRACT**

There is probably no society more complex than the American one. "The Melting Pot," "the Harbor for the poor," "the American Dream." Or is it? Is it the land of opportunities for all or is it a land of opportunities for a few chosen ones? Is the "American Dream" equally accessible for the African Americans and Latinos as it is for the white population? Are human rights, the beacon of democracy, truly respected across the USA? How about gun control especially in view of the recent Newtown, Connecticut shoot-out? These issues often divide Americans along racial, religious or income lines. One cannot truly understand the complexity of contemporary American society without looking at two opposing sides of each issue.

Our two meetings are designed as a "walk through" on two pre-selected issues facing the American society today: racism and the gun control. In each case, we shall examine two sides of the issue and argue different points of view, an exercise designed to allow an open-minded student to form his/her own opinion. This is not a course in ethics, anthropology or American law but a discussion course about contemporary American life and views and concerns shared by the American society. Each session will be preceded by a short introduction/background on pro and con of each selected issue. Participants are encouraged to do investigative research for each issue discussed, using the Internet and newspapers.

**BIO**

Gedeon W. Werner is a Polish born, American educated professional specializing in international economic and political development. His professional experience includes (1) US Government where he worked at the US Department of Labor; (2) academia with assignments at the University of Maryland at College Park and the University of Łódź; (3) the NGO sector – the George Soros Foundation and (4) the private sector – he is currently managing a private management and investment fund.