THE PROGRAM FOR POLITICS, LAW AND SOCIAL THOUGHT

POPULISM AND DEMOCRACY

GUEST SPEAKERS:
JOHN P. MCCORMICK, PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
AND
JAN-WERNER MUELLER, PROFESSOR OF POLITICS
PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

9:00 AM - 4:30 PM WORKSHOPS
(Locations and Rooms TBA)
FRIDAY
FEB. 23, 2018
5:00 - 6:30 PM PUBLIC DIALOGUE
6:30 RECEPTION
HERLING HALL
ROOM 100

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND THE FULL SCHEDULE OF THE DAY'S EVENTS VISIT HTTPS://POLITICS.RICE.EDU

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DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY, CLASSICAL AND EUROPEAN STUDIES,
THE DEAN OF HUMANITIES AND THE OFFICE OF DEVELOPMENT

RICE
John P. McCormick and Jan-Werner Müller are two of the pre-eminent theorists of the impact of globalization, state-integration, and pluralism on modern democracy.

McCormick has unearthed radical democratic currents in the political and social theory of Renaissance Italy, nineteenth century Europe, and the Weimer Republic. He has used his studies of past theories of European state transformations to propose structures for advancing democracy and the rule of law modern state and supra-state structures. In particular, he has demonstrated the significance of institutions that protect the welfare of the people from the domination of global elites.

Müller, in contrast, is concerned with the ways in which “the rule of the people” may pose a threat to democracy. His seminal work on defining populism in contemporary Europe and the Americas has emphasized the challenge to democracy posed by certain forms of religious belief and practice, new modes of authoritarianism, and anti-elitism and anti-pluralism.

Politics, Law & Social Thought has invited Professors McCormick and Müller to discuss past and present relationships between populism and democracy.

PROGRAM (February 23, 2018)

12noon-12:50pm
Undergraduate Seminar
What Are the Problems with Democracy?
Humanities 117 (pizza lunch for students)

Since Aristotle at least, the “rule of the people” has been reviled for its inconstancy and tumults, its tendencies towards cruelty, injustice, and corruption, and its support for demagogues and despots. Only radical pre-modern thinkers like Machiavelli celebrated the people for curbing the excesses of elites and protecting self-government. As late as the nineteenth century, even liberal thinkers struggled to respond to demands for greater democratization. In the contemporary western world, few openly criticize the desirability of democracy—yet democracy is currently struggling under considerable pressure from intra- and extra-state forces. This seminar will ask whether past critiques of democracy offer a broader perspective on its current weakened condition.

3pm-4:30pm
Student Research Panels
Was Machiavelli a Republican or a Democrat?
How do Democracies Fail?
Humanities 119

5pm-6:30pm
Public Dialogue
Populism and Democracy
Herring Hall 100

McCormick and Müller will offer introductory remarks for 15-20 minutes, then respond to each other’s perspectives. At 6:00pm, audience members will be invited to join the conversation. We will ask the speakers to respond to questions, including:

- What is the difference between the “rule of the people” and populism?
- What is the greater threat to democracy, populists or “global elites”?
- What role may supra-national institutions play in protecting and advancing democracy?

Following the Public Dialogue, there will be a wine and cheese reception in the lobby of Herring Hall.