



THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

McLean Center for the Study of Culture & Values

2021 Spring Semester Wednesday Colloquy Series

Democratization and the Imperatives of Culture and Values: Socio-political and Philosophical Approaches

The CUA Mclean Center for the Study of Culture and Values announces the 2021 Spring Wednesday Colloquy Series “*Democratization and the Imperatives of Culture and Values: Socio-political and Philosophical Approaches.*” The series will be offered in a ZOOM format.

The constraints caused by COVID19 required the postponement of 2020 conferences and seminars to a future time. A few international conferences were ZOOMed and offered opportunities to expand the participation beyond the seminar/conference sites. Even the Wednesday Colloquies last semester included a world-wide participation beyond the friendly confines of the library/seminar room in the basement of Gibbons Hall. We are no longer limited to participation of our campus community and by the size of our room. When we are all safe and healing, we hope to resume the practice of hospitality and the well-being induced by the ethnic food, reconstitute our visiting scholars’ program and to gain opportunities of our tradition of an on-campus, face-to-face research sharing community.

The ZOOM format for the Wednesday Colloquy Series allows us to continue the engagement of representatives of the international network of scholars from universities which will be motivated to participate in a three-year research and pedagogical project titled “*Democracy: An Educational Urgency in Multi-cultural and Multi-religious Contexts*” (2018-2021??). This project is sponsored by The Fondazione Gravissimum Educationis, Rome and conducted through the McLean Center, Washington DC. Our interim report to the first part of the project included sharing synopses and PowerPoint files for lectures, videos of discussions, bibliographies and a model course syllabus. These products-outcomes of seminars and conferences included the work of visiting scholars from Belgium, China, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Italy, Romania, Russia, Sri Lanka, Ukraine, Vietnam, Zimbabwe as well as the United States. These research groups explored the variety of understandings of democracy and pluralism in contemporary times by focusing the following themes: “*The Meaning of Democracy: Foundations and Contemporary Challenges*” (2018), “*Power, Truth and Trust: In Search of More Human Governance*” (2019) and “*The Meaning of Democracy: Practicing Citizenship and Understanding Pluralism in America*” (2020).

The argument is that democracy is seen as a form of political self-organization with a long historical past, it is necessary to reflect on the way in which democracy can remain viable in a world that is as fractured and yet interdependent as it presently is. The operational hypothesis is that the contemporary populist turn has origins, not only in social changes and the pressures of globalization but also in an insufficiently grounded realization of democracy. To pose it bluntly, democracy

finds itself at a critical moment because it has never sufficiently established itself. This unique perspective requires an exploration of the historical evolution of the democratic idea and an examination of the shortcomings in its implementation. Democracy has been less of a reality than a continual work in progress. To that extent, we may view the contemporary turmoil in democratic politics, in both the developed and the developing worlds, as both a promise and a threat. Neither chaos nor success is inevitable in the great experiment to which the history of democracy has led us. Indeed, we might properly regard the adventure, on which we have been launched, as one that now more than ever places responsibility for the future in our own hands.

The McLean Center in partnership with the Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (RVP) has engaged the educational urgency and imperatives of this adventure. We facilitated the research of collaborators around the globe in order to build their capacity to identify local challenges and opportunities, the rise of nationalist populism with inevitably anti-democratic overtones which are surely on everyone's mind. We are in a new era in which the patterns of democratic political life may be undergoing a radical change. In the attempt of responding our contemporary challenges the McLean Center and the RVP sponsored some international ZOOM conferences held in China and Romania on the themes of *"Building Global Governance in a Time of Global Crisis"* (July 2020) and *"Rethinking Borders and Boundaries: Exploring New Ways of Intercultural Encounters"* (October 2020) respectively. In the 2020 Fall semester, the McLean Center Wednesday Colloquy Series discussed *"The Meaning of Democracy: Practicing Citizenship and Understanding Pluralism in America."* In the 2021 Spring semester, the Wednesday Colloquy Series will continue its focus on *"Democratization and the Imperative of Cultures and Values: Socio-political and Philosophical Approaches."*

As we begin the new series in these troubled times, we recall Professor George F. McLean's research mission, that is, to mine the work of the Spirit in each people through the study of their culture and values. Culture is best understood as the cumulative dialogue through history between the initiative of the Spirit and the response of humankind in its varied environments. The goal of the McLean Center is to promote a creative mining of cultural traditions and their application to issues of contemporary life. As a new mode of philosophizing it is to bring the rich values to life from, in and through the deep cultural commitments of the many peoples in order that they be lived intensively and pervasively across civilizations. What are the transmission belts to translate profound intellectual and spiritual insights and visions into the lived experiences of cultures and peoples? How can these insights and visions inspire them to govern themselves – to practice democracy – in more human ways? What will be the outcomes that are conducive to their flourishing and their personhood? What are the best collective ways of managing and perhaps celebrating the valued variants of our common humanity and our participation in the mystery of existence?

The McLean Center 2021 Spring Semester Wednesday Colloquy Series will continue to highlight the research of scholars from the CUA community. Three elements will constitute the 2021 Spring series on aspects of democratization and the imperative of culture and values. Discussion will include certain salient features of socio-political and religious thought in relation to the search for meaning in these complex, democratic and pluralistic times. It will cover the Renaissance reformulation of social philosophy, the modern reflection of the relationship of democracy to liberalism and nationalism, the new approaches pioneered by Romano Guardini and found in the life and work of George F. McLean.

The McLean Center 2021 Spring Semester Wednesday Colloquy Series will take place online (Zoom). All presentations will be conducted on Wednesdays, 12.30pm-2.00pm. The following pages provide more detailed information about each presentation. For Zoom Link, questions or accommodations, please contact McLean Center for the Study of Culture and Values (MCSCV); Telephone: 202/319-6089; Email: cua-cscv@cua.edu.

2021 Spring Semester Wednesday Colloquy Series

Democratization and the Imperatives of Culture and Values: Socio-political and Philosophical Approaches

Part I. Philosophical Approaches



February 3, 2021

Shaun Rieley

Ph.D. Graduate of The Catholic University of America

Thomas More and Statesmanship: Reading Utopia as Political Theory

February 10, 2021

Samuel Sprunk

Georgia Gwinnett College, Atlanta, GA

Ph.D. Graduate of The Catholic University of America

Isaiah Berlin's Vision of a Liberal Nationalism



February 24, 2021

Rev. Eugene F. Hemrick

Director of Research, Washington Theological Union, Washington DC

CUA Research Associate, Institute for Policy Research

Understanding Guardini's Milieu Responsible for His Accomplishments



Part II. Socio-political Approaches



March 3, 2021

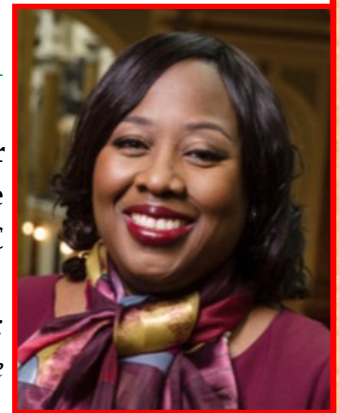
John David Kromkowski
Attorney, Baltimore, MD

Demographic Patterns and Ethnic and Racial Variety in America

March 10, 2021

Renate Chancellor
Chair, Department of Library and Information Science
The Catholic University of America, Washington, DC

*The Truth Will Set You Free:
Combating Misinformation in Today's Information-Driven Media Landscape*



March 24, 2021

Vinnie Rotondaro
Journalist, Washington DC

*Italian American Historical Consciousness in Northeastern, PA:
Mining, Exploitation and Political Alienation – A Case Study*

March 31, 2021

William Sweet
Chair, Department of Philosophy, Professor of Biomedical Ethics and Philosophy of Law; Jules Léger Research Chair in the Humanities and Social Sciences, St Francis Xavier University, Canada

George F. McLean and the Project of Philosophy across Cultures

