Civic Education in a Time of Upheaval Conference Schedule

Friday, February 16

8:30 – 9:00 Welcome by Dean Farnsworth and Setting the Stage by Sanford Levinson

9:00 – 12:15 On "Introducing" Constitutional Law--and the Casebooks We Use to Do That. A host of editors of leading casebooks on the US Constitution will address two central questions: 1. What aspects of the Constitution should American undergraduates and/or law students be “introduced” to in 2018, given the high unlikelihood that even the law students will actually "practice" constitutional law in any capacity other than citizens? 2. What do you see as the principal point(s) of your own casebook relative to whatever answer you gave to the first question?

Each person will make a short presentation, followed by presumably intense conversation including participation by the audience. There will be a brief break around 10:30.

Panelists: Josh Blackman, Erwin Chemerinsky, Richard Fallon, Mark Graber, Gary Jacobsohn, Sanford Levinson, Pam Karlan, Mark Tushnet

Chair: Richard Albert

Location: Francis Auditorium

1:45-2:00 Introduction to the general topic of civic education (and the remaining panels): Meira Levinson

2:00 – 3:30 Historical Perspectives. As educators and citizens try to make sense of contemporary political and ideological divisions in the United States, it can be useful to see how educators and policy makers addressed profound division and civic upheaval in the past. This panel brings together historians of education to provide perspectives and insights into prior approaches to civic education in times of upheaval.

Panelists: Jarvis Givens, Julie Reuben, Jonathan Zimmerman

Chair: Lorraine Pangle

Location: Sheffield-Massey Room

3:50 – 5:35 Civic Education in Divided Societies. Partisanship in the United States is at higher levels than we’ve seen in decades, and increasingly tracks other divides such as education level, income, and place of residence. Not only are we more extreme in our beliefs, therefore, but we are also more likely to be disconnected from those who have different perspectives. We are not the only country to face profound civic division, however; nor is this the first time that the United States finds itself ideologically driven. This panel brings together scholars and educators who work around the globe in deeply divided countries.

Panelists: Michelle Bellino, Thea Abu El-Haj, Michael Karayanni, Adam Strom

Chair: Michael Stoff

Location: Sheffield-Massey Room
9:00 – 10:30    **Teaching Civic Contestation in Schools.**

*How can and should educators teach controversial issues in schools? This is a perennial question, but one that has heightened salience in these unsettled times. What principles and practices should guide educators’ choices about what to include in the curriculum, and what to leave out as either “too hot to handle” or inappropriate to be treated as something open to debate? How have educators tried to protect themselves or their students when investigating contested topics, and what happens when things go wrong?*

Panelists: Curtis Acosta, Dafney Blanca Dabach, Diana Hess

Chair: Randall Kennedy

**Location: Eidman Courtroom**

10:45 – 12:15    **Fault Lines in the Constitution.** To the extent that the Constitution is taught in middle schools and high schools today, focus is generally placed on two areas: (1) the genius of the Framers in creating a government of divided and balanced powers, and (2) the perfection of the rights accorded to citizens, particularly those embedded in the Bill of Rights. Such anodyne and uncritical approaches to our founding document, however, diminish students’ civic capacities. As the panelists will explain, celebratory approaches to teaching the Constitution are both inadequate and inaccurate. Cynthia Levinson and Sanford Levinson, authors of Fault Lines in the Constitution: The Framers, Their Fights, and the Flaws that Affect Us Today, a book for young readers, explain an alternative perspective on the Constitution, focusing on the ways that the structures of our government contribute to dysfunctions in American political life. In addition, an educator will provide insights into ways to make civics education more complex and comprehensive.

Panelists: Cynthia Levinson, Sanford Levinson, Aaron Hull, Katherina Payne

Moderator: Meira Levinson

**Location: Eidman Courtroom**

1:30 – 3:00    **Schools as Civic Actors.** Civic education is traditionally thought of as a subject (like math or science), a set of pedagogies (such as in-class discussion or action civics), or extracurricular learning opportunities (such as student government or debate). But schools also educate civically by modeling civic values and engagement themselves as civic actors. This can prove challenging when teachers, administrators, students, and parents are divided about what their obligations should be. Should schools create “sanctuary campuses” intended to disrupt the school-to-deportation pipeline? How should they respond when students stage school walkouts over civic and political issues, or when students who merely repeat politicians’ statements run afoul of anti-bullying laws? This session will immerse participants in case study discussions about how educators and policy makers are addressing schools’ responsibilities as civic actors in times of upheaval.

Case leaders: Meira Levinson, Jacob Fay

**Location: Eidman Courtroom**

3:00   Summary comments and farewells: Sandy Levinson, Meira Levinson

**Location: Eidman Courtroom**

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**RSVP Here:**

https://goo.gl/forms/WDIX1DNo11XwqVD93

**Note:** Teachers can get Continuing Education credit through the State Bar of Texas.