

ERIC VOEGELIN INSTITUTE

LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY

www.lsu.edu/voegelin

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2016

From the Director:

Welcome to the first Newsletter issued by the Eric Voegelin Institute in our new series. Since my appointment last summer upon the retirement of our Founding Director, Professor G. Ellis Sandoz, we have had an active year, sponsoring many activities on campus, exploring scholarly opportunities, and continuing our close work with the Eric Voegelin Society, the international network of scholars that meets annually together with the American Political Science Association.

Voegelin's scholarship was devoted to the study of politics in light of the full range of human inquiry—about God and man, world and society, he wrote in his magnum opus, *Order and History*. An opponent of dogmatism of every kind, he thought the value of the questions human beings ask outweighs the certainty of the answers they have devised. The Institute has as its mission continuing to raise these questions and being open to all forms of wisdom that address them.

Visit our updated website to keep abreast of what we do, as well as to learn more about Dr. Voegelin. We have links there to the University of Missouri Press, publisher of his *Collected Works*, and to our sister institutes in



Europe. And we hope you'll visit us in 216 Stubbs Hall at LSU!

James R. Stoner, Jr.
Hermann Moyses, Jr.,
Professor of Political
Science & Director of
the Eric Voegelin
Institute
www.lsu.edu/jamesstoner



Panel at LSU: Freedom of Expression on Campus Today

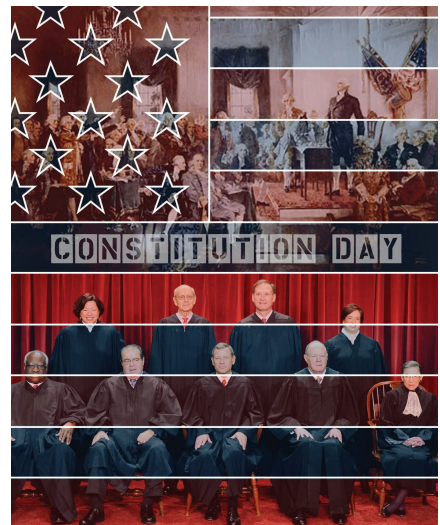
On November 19, 2015, only weeks after incidents around the country that challenged free speech on university campuses, the Voegelin Institute brought to LSU two of the nation's leading experts on the topic, one a well-known liberal and the other a prominent conservative—and they found much to agree on concerning both contemporary threats to free expression of ideas and the urgency of protecting free speech. Geoffrey Stone, former law school dean and provost at the University of Chicago, and now Edward H. Levi Distinguished Service Professor of Law, headed the university committee that drafted a nationally acclaimed Statement on Freedom of Expression. Donald Downs, Alexander Meiklejohn Professor of Political Science, Law, and Journalism at the University of Wisconsin, is a longtime active proponent of academic freedom and an early opponent of attempts at his university to impose speech codes on students and faculty. The panel was co-sponsored by the Institute for Humane Studies and was videotaped. It can be seen through <https://vimeo.com/149249290> or by following a link on the EVI website. This February, the LSU Faculty Senate—whose president, Kevin Cope, moderated the panel—joined other universities across the country endorsing the Chicago Statement.

Voegelin Institute Hosts Interdisciplinary Humanities Faculty Seminar

Working with Boyd Professor of History Suzanne Marchand and with Martin Professor of Rhetoric Michelle Zerba, EVI hosted a series of Friday afternoon seminars in which LSU faculty presented research papers on topics ranging from the use of Herodotus by Enlightenment scholars, to early Renaissance Florentine painting based on Homer, the appropriation of ideas from the Roman Stoic Seneca by 12th-century Christian authors, and classical mythological themes in contemporary rock music—all examples of what scholars call “classical reception” in the modern world. In addition to Profs. Marchand and Zerba, papers were presented by Profs. Mary Sirridge in Philosophy and Kris Fletcher in Classics. Each seminar drew over a dozen participants from across the university and generated lively discussion in a collegial setting.

“Liberal Learning in a Radical Age”

John Agresto, former president of St. John’s College in Santa Fe and deputy director of the National Endowment for the Humanities, addressed the topic above in a lecture on April 14. Speaking of the “suicide” of the humanities in many schools, Agresto defended a true liberal arts curriculum focused on great books, praising its usefulness in preparing students for careers in a changing economy and especially its intrinsic value. He also spoke to students in POLI 1001.



More Lectures:

In addition, the Voegelin Institute sponsored lectures on a variety of subjects and occasions in 2015-16:

- Constitution Day Lecture by Prof. Murray Dry of Middlebury College, co-sponsored by the LSU Law Center, with comments by Prof. Paul Baier of the Law School and James Stoner of EVI, September 10.
- Lecture by Nicole Gelinas of the Manhattan Institute, on the “sharing economy,” co-sponsored by the E.J. Ourso College of Business, November 9.
- Two lectures on the theme, “Does Democracy Need to be Fixed?” Prof. Shep Melnick of Boston College spoke on gridlock in Congress, on February 18; Prof. John Dinan of Wake Forest University addressed federalism and polarization, March 29.

Funding for the lectures by Profs. Stone, Melnick, Dinan, and Agresto was provided by a grant from the Charles G. Koch Foundation. Funding for the Constitution Day Lecture was provided in part by the Jack Miller Center. Ms. Gelinas’s talk was supported by the Manhattan Institute. Thanks, too, to all our contributors to the Institute. Visit our [website](#) to donate!

Moore & Voegelin Graduate Scholarships Awarded

Thanks to two generous endowments, the Voegelin Institute continues to be able to award scholarships to several outstanding graduate students studying political theory at LSU. This year’s recipients of the Sidney Richards Moore Fellowship are Thomas Varacalli (pictured below at the left) and Alex Cole (below, right). Recipients of the Eric Voegelin Scholars award are John Kitch (below, center-left) and John Boersma (below, center-right). Varacalli this spring successfully defended his dissertation on the 16th-century debate among Spanish Thomists about the conquest and colonization of the New World. John Kitch is writing a dissertation on the political thought of Dwight



Eisenhower, while Boersma and Cole are completing their first and third years in the program, respectively. Past recipients of these awards and fellowships now teach and conduct research across the country.