



ERIC VOEGELIN INSTITUTE

LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY

www.lsu.edu/voegelin

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2018

From the Director:

One of the most troubling issues facing the contemporary university—in at least some of its disciplines—is the lack of genuine intellectual diversity among faculty. This is ironic given the emphasis schools have placed on demographic diversity in recent years, in the name of both repairing past injustice and inviting new perspectives. While diversity of answers to a problem in mathematics ordinarily includes one correct answer and many wrong ones, things are different in study of the human things, where the variety of goods and experiences, not to mention the obscurity of vision and the paucity of genuine insight, make dialogue and dialectic—conversation and argument—essential in achieving progress toward truth.

At the Voegelin Institute we are committed in our programs and resources to presenting a wide range of intelligent opinion. We think this is critical in order for students to learn freely about the great issues in human affairs, which Eric Voegelin summarized as entailing questions of God and man, world and society. In our choice of what to read and whom to invite—and what questions to ask—we look to expand the boundaries of academic speech.



James Stoner
Hermann
Moyses, Jr.,
Professor of
Political
Science &
Director of
the Voegelin
Institute



“Keeping Up with the Literature” in the Age of the Internet, or Learning from the Past

Scholars of a certain age will recognize the kind of shelving in the photograph above from the Voegelin Reading Room. Every library once displayed its magazines thus, and most academic libraries their periodicals. Nowadays the shelves are gone, since journals are available online, usually for a subscription fee or after an interval of time, a boon for researching footnotes but a damper on browsing and therefore on keeping abreast with the debates in the scholarly literature outside one’s chosen “silo.” To encourage exploring the unexpected, the Voegelin Institute acquired custom display shelves and subscribed to paper delivery of leading journals in political theory, political science, and public affairs.

This spring, from eight to a dozen political theorists, both faculty and graduate students, gathered weekly to discuss the latest issues of the major journals, taking turns presenting summaries of articles one of our number found intriguing. (See our website under “for LSU students” for a complete accounting.)

Having paper copies can come in handy, too: When the department discovered that LSU Libraries had dropped their subscription to the *American Political Science Review*, we could invite our colleagues to stop by Stubbs 216!



Spring Conference, “Is the Social Contract Broken?,” draws faculty and students from across Louisiana and beyond

Following up on last year’s conference, “Unfettering Philosophy: Reading Aristotle’s *Ethics* in the 21st Century,” the Voegelin Institute’s Conference on April 12-13, 2018, took its theme from the books chosen by the Philosophy, Politics, and Economics (PPE) reading group for their weekly discussions, classic texts from Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau to Rawls and Nozick on the issue of the social contract and individual rights. Keynote lecturer John Tomasi of Brown University (top right) explained the argument of his recent book, *Free Market Fairness*, to a large and attentive audience in Hill Memorial Library, with seminar-style presentations the following day in the French House by Profs. Albert Samuels of Southern University (lower right), Chris Surprenant (UNO), Christie Maloyed (ULL), and Brian Pedraza (Franciscan Univ. of Our Lady, BR). The discussions were as lively as the storms that morning, with students and faculty sharing in the exchange. No contract was signed or consensus reached, unless on the value of the conversation, the breadth of issues raised, and the variety of perspectives around the table.

EVI catalyzes formation of new faculty initiative at LSU, Center for Collaborative Knowledge, helps plan their inaugural conference

Begun in conversations among Honors College Dean Jonathan Earle, Boyd Professor Suzanne Marchand (a faculty affiliate of EVI), and EVI director James Stoner, the Center for Collaborative Knowledge (CCK) took shape over the past year under the leadership of Prof. Marchand and an advisory committee of more than a dozen LSU faculty from across the university. Dedicated to generating conversations and partnerships across colleges and disciplines, CCK has been designated a funded initiative under the new strategic plan by the University Planning Committee and the provost. EVI is proud to have played a role in its conception and launch.



Active Year for Faculty Seminar, Reading Festival

Seven faculty members presented their research and writing to their colleagues in this year’s faculty seminars. In keeping with the theme of collaborative knowledge, their expertise ranged across the sciences and the law as well as the humanities. Presenters included Jack Hamilton (Journalism), Husain Sarkar (Philosophy), Pat Martin (Law), Chris D’Elia (Coast & Environment), James Stoner, John Pojman (Chemistry), and Paul Baier (Law). In addition, we unfolded Shakespeare’s *Tempest* with Chris Barrett (English) and Sophocles’ *Antigone* with Simon Goldhill (below).

EVI POLI Faculty Affiliates

- Alexander Orwin joined Political Science at LSU this academic year. His book, *Redefining the Muslim Community: Ethnicity, Religion, and Politics in the Thought of Alfarabi*, was published in 2017 by the Univ. of Pennsylvania Press.
- Cecil Eubanks celebrated fifty years of service at LSU and is director of the new LSU Ethics Institute.
- Joshua Bowman (top left) completed his two-year post-doc this spring and begins in the fall as assistant professor at Heidelberg University in Tiffin, Ohio. His *Imagination and Environmental Thought: The Aftermath of Thoreau* appeared with Lexington Books.

Lecture Series Continues

Two major lecturers were also co-sponsored by EVI this year: Simon Goldhill of Cambridge University (l.), who directs their Humanities Center, and John McNeill of Georgetown (r.), president-elect of the American Historical Association.

