



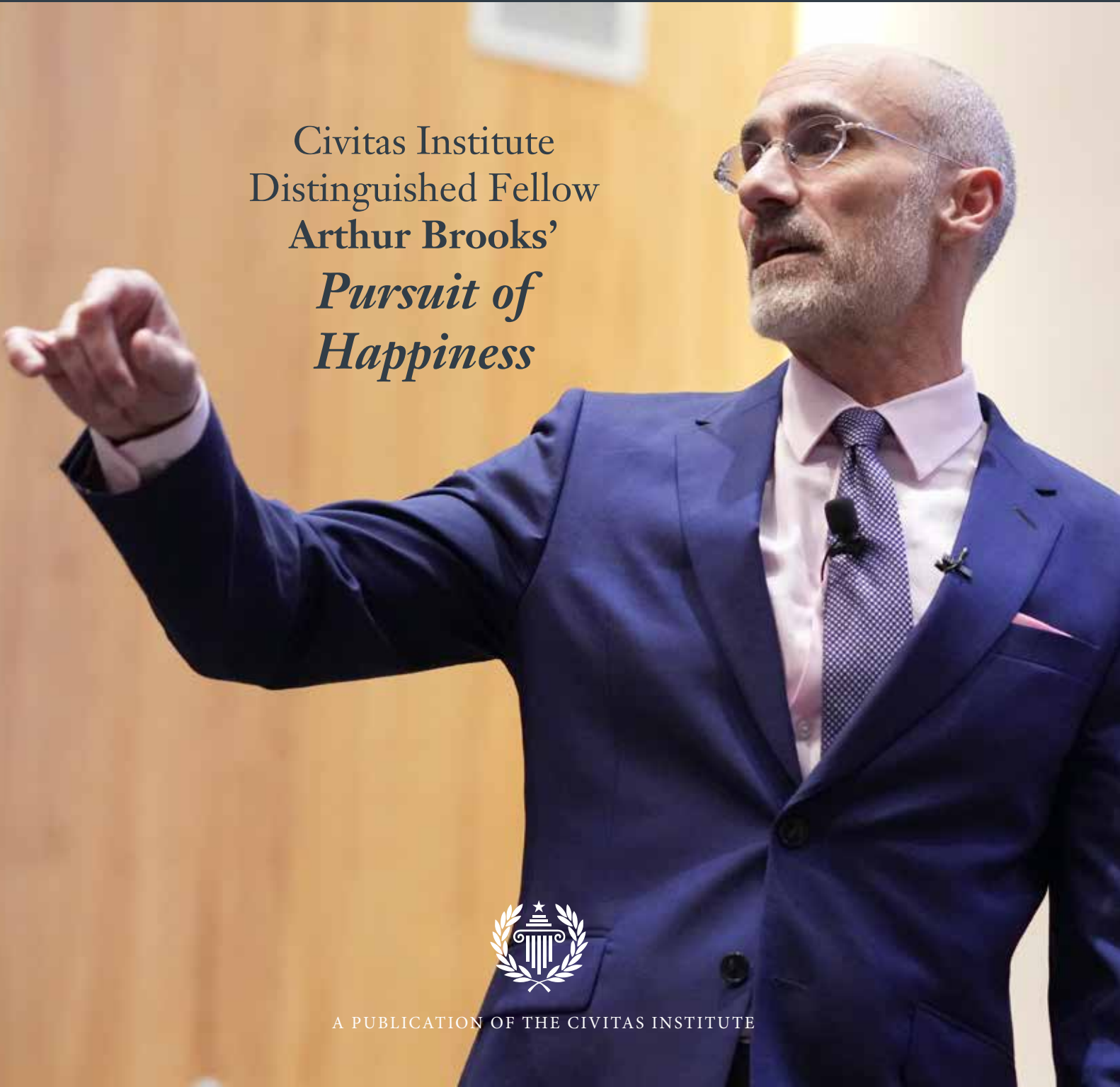
The University of Texas at Austin  
Civitas Institute

Fall 2023

# FORUM

EXPLORING IDEAS + INSTITUTIONS THAT SUSTAIN A FREE SOCIETY

Civitas Institute  
Distinguished Fellow  
Arthur Brooks'  
*Pursuit of  
Happiness*



A PUBLICATION OF THE CIVITAS INSTITUTE



**BRAVER ANGELS DEBATE** (Page 15)



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## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Justin Dyer

In a 1958 essay published in London's *Observer*, C.S. Lewis pointed to "natural law, the value of the individual, [and] the rights of man" as the three essential elements of classical political theory. The American founders, steeped in the Western tradition, made these key elements touchstones for the *novus ordo seclorum*, the new order for the ages, they endeavored to build. The edifice wasn't perfect. America's experiment in self-government was perilous. Internal factions threatened to destroy the success that foreign foes were determined to prevent. And the ancient evil of slavery was left for a future generation to overcome with bloodshed and war. The American Founding and Lincoln's new birth of freedom were hard-won accomplishments of Western civilization.

At Civitas' recent Symposium on Civic Education, one participant noted that America grew up alongside its universities (see p. 18). Many of the founders thought deeply about the role of higher education in sustaining a self-governing republic. Symposium participants faced the same question. How does higher education prepare students for freedom? And what should the content of that education be?

One of the essays we read as a group was John Nef's "The American Universities and the Future of Western Civilization" (1939), a prescient meditation on the state of education on the eve of the Second World War. "The chief task of education today," Nef asserted, drawing inspiration from University of Chicago President Robert Hutchins, "is to teach men to recognize what is important, to teach them to discriminate between the good, the mediocre and the bad, and to equip them with the means of doing something to improve themselves and to help their fellows." Nef wrote as an economic historian, but he urged scholars to consider branches of learning in relation to each other. Intellectual silos, he suggested, were among the "principal causes for the weakness of constitutional government in the face of despotism."

Nef put these ideas about the American University into practice as a founder of the University of Chicago's Committee on Social Thought, an interdisciplinary program that became home to such luminaries as T.S. Eliot, Hannah Arendt, Friedrich Hayek, and Allan Bloom. Civitas Research Fellows and AEI Scholars, Drs. Benjamin and Jenna Storey—both graduates of the Committee on Social Thought—spent the day with us discussing Nef's article and others as we considered the kind of education that we owe our students (see p. 5). Together, we debated the contours of a curriculum that would enable our students to recognize what is important, know what is true, and love what is good, so that they can live well and lead with purpose.

The symposium came as an intellectual respite to energize the work of building the Civitas Institute and the School of Civic Leadership. Students make that work worthwhile. One recent highlight was our debate in partnership with Braver Angels on continued U.S. funding for Ukraine (see p. 15). Over 50 students came to the Littlefield Home (see p. 10) for a convivial evening of debate, speeches, and rebuttals, with the right mixture of seriousness and levity. In the fall, we hosted a meaningful series of events (see p. 11-26), welcomed new fellows (see p. 26), and launched exciting courses (see p. 8). We reflect with gratitude as we prepare for good work in the new year ahead.



## FEATURE

# UT-Austin Faculty Build School of Civic Leadership



The University of Texas at Austin's motto, *Disciplina Praesidium Civitatis*, is a condensed Latin rendering of Mirabeau Lamar's observation that a "cultivated mind is the guardian genius of democracy." Critically, democracy depends on an education that prepares individuals for civic responsibility.

In the fall, UT-Austin faculty began to lay the groundwork for UT's new School of Civic Leadership. The UT System Board of Regents established the school on May 4, 2023, to provide "a unique hybrid of classical and professional education." This fall, UT-Austin President **Jay Hartzell** said, "Civic education matters. It's always mattered. But arguably now, in a time where it feels like things are pulling us apart, having people who care about the future of society and can bring us together to find common ground is increasingly important."

The SCL will prepare students who are ready to lead in their communities in Texas and beyond. "Civic education is necessary to continue this project of ordered liberty over time—and public higher education has a role to play in that," said SCL Interim Dean **Justin Dyer**.

Faculty from across disciplines at UT-Austin are building the School of Civic Leadership. One committee initiated a search for new faculty members who will value students, teach with excellence, and produce research that matters for civic life. On another committee, faculty began to deliberate on the school's initial undergraduate minor and major offerings. The curriculum

*"Civic education is necessary to continue this project of ordered liberty over time—and public higher education has a role to play in that."*

~ UT-Austin School of Civic Leadership Interim Dean Justin Dyer

will prepare students to take responsibility in civic life through rigorous study of the Western tradition, America's constitutional history and free enterprise system, and the principles and practices that sustain human flourishing in a free society.

At the same time, faculty are designing a professional development component that enables students to connect study with practice. "The school will find ways for students to get out—whether it's working with a political leader's office or with a company or with a regulatory body—to wrestle with how these fundamental concepts impact the world at large," Hartzell said.

In response to the Board of Regent's vision, the School of Civic Leadership is building a faculty and curriculum that prepare students to competently address the problems for which citizens are responsible. Drawing on the strengths of traditional disciplinary study, the SCL creates a home for inquiry into key questions of self-government. And it does so in an interdisciplinary manner: the SCL brings together philosophy, history, economics, literature, and government in order to provide students with resources for understanding the multifaceted problems of civic

life. "We're interested in the connections between political, individual, and economic liberty—and the constitutional institutions and practices that help sustain that liberty over time," Dyer said.

*"Civic education matters. It's always mattered. But arguably now, in a time where it feels like things are pulling us apart, having people who care about the future of society and can bring us together to find common ground is increasingly important."*

~ UT-Austin President Jay Hartzell

Scan to watch School of Civic Leadership video



## The Pursuit of Happiness in an Unhappy World



*“Satisfaction should not be measured by what we have, but rather by whether what we do have is more significant to us than what we want or desire.”*

ARTHUR BROOKS, A DISTINGUISHED FELLOW OF THE CIVITAS INSTITUTE, RUNS THE LEADERSHIP AND HAPPINESS LAB AT HARVARD BUSINESS SCHOOL. HE DRAWS FROM THE HIGHEST STANDARDS OF SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH AND LEADERSHIP PRACTICES TO ENABLE LEADERS EVERYWHERE TO BRING OUT THE BEST IN OTHERS AND THEMSELVES.

Thomas Jefferson included the pursuit of happiness among the three inalienable rights listed in the Declaration of Independence. Civitas welcomed Civitas Distinguished Fellow *New York Times* bestselling author and Harvard professor **Arthur Brooks** for a lecture on “The Pursuit of Happiness in an Unhappy World.” Brooks’ most recent book, which he co-authored with Oprah Winfrey, is *Build the Life You Want: The Art and Science of Getting Happier*.

Brooks’ teaching on the subject of happiness is a culmination of a decades-long interest in the cultural and psychological conditions that lead to human flourishing. He gained much of his expertise on happiness through attention to his own experience. Following a career as a musician throughout his twenties, Brooks pursued his PhD, then launched a ten-year career in academia with a focus on economics. He subsequently served as president of the American Enterprise Institute (AEI).

In 2019, Brooks embarked on a new career as one of the country’s most prominent happiness experts. In this role, Brooks combines his background in public policy and social science data with an examination of significant spiritual traditions and academic disciplines. He is the author of 13 books, including two *New York Times* bestsellers, and addresses audiences around the world. In his public speaking, Brooks works to cultivate well-being for members of private companies, universities, public agencies, and community organizations. He draws practical advice for living a happier life from social science and philosophy.

Brooks holds dual appointments at Harvard’s John F. Kennedy School of Government and the Harvard Business School. He teaches courses on leadership, happiness, and social entrepreneurship. He also offers advice for living a happier life in a popular weekly column for the Atlantic and on his podcast, *How to Build a Happy Life*.

Brooks’ research offers important insight into the nature of the pursuit of happiness. He argued that happiness is not a feeling, but rather a combination of enjoyment, satisfaction, and meaning that comes from healthy habits we incorporate into our daily routines.

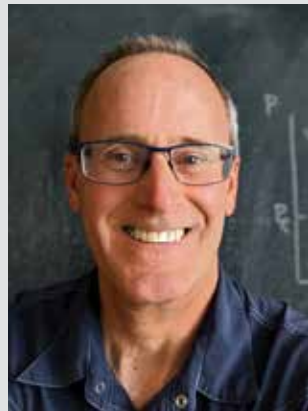
In Brooks’ view, finding meaning involves reaching a coherent understanding of the purpose of our lives. He suggested that we view suffering in our lives within this broader context of the purpose of our lives. Brooks concluded that we can pursue happiness by orienting our lives around foundational institutions like faith, family, and vocation. For example, he drew a distinction between “real friends,” who are partners in the pursuit of the good life, and “deal friends,” who are partners in business. Both are valuable kinds of friendship, but living well requires that we give time to the real friends who help us see what’s worth pursuing. Throughout, Brooks exhorted attendees to practice the habits of happiness and teach others to do the same.





## COURSE HIGHLIGHT

# Civitas Faculty Fellow Dirk Mateer's UGS 303: Wealth and Well-Being



In fall 2023, Civitas Faculty Fellow Dirk Mateer offered a UT-Austin Signature Course on Wealth and Well-Being. Signature Courses introduce first-year students to the joy of study through focused inquiry with a faculty member in a small-seminar setting.

### What prompted you to design this course?

I have always wanted to teach a course about the basics of economics with an eye towards the ethical issues that grab students' attention.

### What do students read/discuss?

I assigned students an introductory textbook that covers both microeconomics and macroeconomics. The textbook and classroom discussions are the heart of the course, but the character of the class emerges in the shared in-person experience. We listen to music, watch all kinds of popular media, gather in groups for think-pair-share activities, and compete in lively Kahoots quiz games to see who has learned the most. The course also has recitation sections where students debate ethical prompts such as "Do you think price gouging is ethical?"

### What's your favorite part of the course?

I enjoy seeing the discovery process unfold. Students are deeply engaged. Those moments are magical, and invaluable, because

this is when transformative learning takes place. My favorite example of this is a class-wide trading pit, where each student is a buyer and a seller of six items. Students love the fast-paced action; they experience market forces at work in a way they don't expect.

### What most surprises students in this course?

Many students are surprised that they must learn enough economics to become literate. This lesson is hard for those students, who mistakenly believe that their uninformed opinions should carry equal weight in our discussions.

### How does this course prepare students to take responsibility for their lives and their communities?

Economic thinking is closely aligned with financial planning and personal responsibility. We discuss intertemporal decision making so that students learn to see themselves as decision makers who consider what they want now, but also how their actions now affect the type of life they will be living in 5 years, twenty years, and fifty years from now. This emphasis on long-run decision making makes each student appreciate the arc of civic life.

### What do students gain in this course that they might not get otherwise?

Students get the opportunity to work on a group project where they take a recent song and create an animated lyric video that contains commentary on the economic and ethical decisions found in the lyrics and scenes. This capstone project synthesizes what we have done all semester.

## INITIATIVES

# Coming in 2024!

As we look forward to next year during a time of economic unrest, the Civitas Institute will be launching projects focused on economic dynamism, free enterprise, and free societies. As large questions loom in the public debate about the viability of the American Dream, we will gather some of the best minds from around the country in a symposium focused on how to make America more dynamic, creative, and productive. We will launch

essay series exploring the relationship between the growth of market economies and the virtues of the citizenry. And we will publish the work of America's foremost scholars on how reforming policy can free up more grassroots entrepreneurs to build businesses and make it easier for people of all educational and economic backgrounds to access opportunity.



EVENTS

## An Evening with Bari Weiss

*“We are the last line of defense. Every single thing we have depends on one of us. There is no second America to run to if this one fails. So get up and fight for our future in every way you can. Because this is the fight of and for our lives.”*

~ Bari Weiss



Civitas fellows, students, and staff gather in the newly renovated Littlefield Home.

## Littlefield Home Restoration Continues

After a long summer of sawdust, the Littlefield Home opened this fall to host Civitas fellows, from undergraduates through professors emeritus, for quiet study, purposeful debate, and energizing research presentations. The Victorian mansion, an 1893 design by San Antonio architect James Wahrenberger, has responded beautifully to recent restoration efforts. As the home becomes more vibrant, it has been a joy to witness the wonder that UT-Austin students express during their visits to this campus icon.

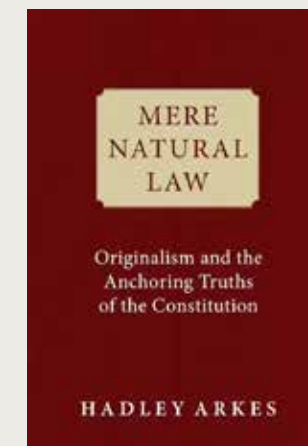
With guidance from UT’s architectural experts and project managers, the renovation continues. The first priority of the next phase is a coat of fresh paint. In addition, the restoration team will work to replace light fixtures with hardware that better matches the home’s historic aesthetic. Future plans include restoring functional antiques that draw out the home’s beauty.

EVENTS

## Hadley Arkes Double Header

### *Mere Natural Law*

On September 7, in a book reception at Arena Hall, Civitas welcomed **Hadley Arkes**, one of America’s most distinguished natural law scholars. Arkes, who is professor emeritus at Amherst College, is the founding director of the James Wilson Institute and the author of books such as *First Things: An Inquiry into the First Principles of Morals and Justice* and *Natural Rights and the Right to Choose*. He spoke about his most recent book, *Mere Natural Law*. Arkes argued that moral reasoning, like other forms of reasoning, should proceed from clear and evident premises to arrive at universal truths. For instance, a basic truth like “two lines cannot enclose a space” is an axiom of geometrical reasoning. Similarly, moral axioms like “one should never be held responsible for something one could not have done nor had the power to influence,” and “the only just government is one established by the consent of the governed” underpin the form and function of our democracy. Arkes held that these truths supply a natural architecture that transcends all positive, or man-made, law and therefore serve as a standard for judging the soundness of all positive law. They are pathways and guardrails that are immediately intelligible to our practical reason, whether or not we are consciously aware of them. In Arkes’ account, natural law is “merely” the explicit use, in jurisprudence and governance, of truths we assume and reason from in our daily lives.



### *On the Moral Grounds of a Free Economy*

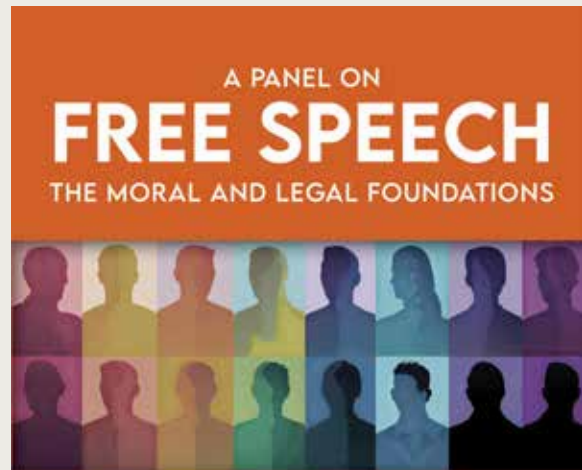
In a campus lecture on September 8, Arkes revisited the moral grounds that underlie and sustain a free economy. His talk started with this historical vignette: When Richard Nixon lost to John F. Kennedy in 1960, and in his campaign for Governor of California in 1962, he was invited to join a major law firm in New York. There he argued a case before the Supreme Court, established himself as a serious figure in the law—and made more money than he had ever made as a Congressman, Senator, or Vice-President. Georgy Malenkov had risen in the U.S.S.R. under Stalin, taking a leading role in the management of the war; and after Stalin’s death he became the chairman of Council of Ministers. But four years later, in a clash with Nikita Khrushchev, he was ousted. He was exiled to run a hydroelectric plant in what is now Kazakhstan. It was as though George McGovern, losing in a massive landslide to Richard Nixon in 1972, had been sent out to run a filling station in Idaho. When the government owns and controls the economy there is no possibility of escaping or returning to security and wealth in the private sector. Consider this contrast in the United States: when Alger Hiss was released from prison, a man convicted of perjury and widely thought to have been working against his country as a communist agent (a judgment that would be amply confirmed after the Soviet Union collapsed), he moved into the private sector. Hiss, from an elite background, including a clerkship with Justice Holmes, was provided a safe harbor working for Harvard University Press. He was given security, that is, in an institution secured by private wealth, with little dependence on the government – highlighting the deep connection between economic liberty and political liberty.





## EVENTS

# Civitas Free Speech Week Panel: *The Moral and Legal Foundations of Free Speech*



Among the ideas and institutions that sustain a free society, free speech is essential. During National Free Speech Week in October, Civitas offered UT-Austin students and faculty an opportunity to further explore the logic of free speech. UT-Austin President **Jay Hartzell** introduced Civitas' Free Speech Week panel. "The freedom to speak, think, and express is at the very heart of any world-class academic institution," he said.

The Civitas panel explored the moral and legal foundations of free speech in America. Panelists were Judge **Kyle Duncan** of the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, **Vincent Lloyd** of Villanova University, and **Ilana Redstone** of the University of Illinois. Each speaker explored a dimension of the moral basis for free speech.

Redstone argued that members of a political community deprive themselves of the benefits of free speech when they lob labels at each other instead of engaging one another's arguments. She advised students to articulate their principles in order to foster meaningful debate.

Lloyd discussed the virtues that enable students and faculty to engage in academic inquiry. He emphasized curiosity and courage as practices that enable serious scholarship on important questions that range from theology to philosophy to American history.

Duncan described the American jurisprudential tradition on free speech. He reflected on why the U.S. Constitution affords such robust speech protections, as well as the moral goods those protections preserve—namely, freedom of thought and pluralism.



Audience members posed questions on how to navigate difficult conversations in and beyond the classroom and how the American tradition deals with the limits of free speech.

Following the event, students enjoyed an opportunity for further discussion with the panelists. Duncan met with undergraduate students for an in-depth discussion of the moral reasoning that underlies the legal protection to freedom of thought and expression. Lloyd and Redstone met with Civitas graduate fellows to consider what intellectual integrity looks like in the workplace.



## Civitas-Jack Miller Center Teachers' Seminar: Discussing the Declaration

The Civitas Institute and the Jack Miller Center co-hosted an online seminar for middle and high school teachers on the Declaration of Independence. Civitas Associate Director **Antonio Sosa** led the seminar. The seminar accomplished two purposes: to help participants gain a deeper understanding of the Declaration and to help them find fresh, compelling ways to teach the essential principles of the American Founding to middle and high school students.

During the seminar, teachers closely read the most significant passages in the Declaration. They developed a lively discussion of the theological significance of the appeal to "Nature's God," the boldness of the Declaration's description of the natural equality of men as "self-evident," and the radical implications of the Declaration's insistence that the origin of just government is "the consent of the governed."

To help give teachers a sense of the key ideas that undergird the Declaration's claims, Sosa guided seminar participants through

passages from relevant Founding-era literature. Teachers considered Locke's account of natural equality in his *Second Treatise*; James Wilson's distinction between the way in which humans are naturally equal and the way in which they are naturally unequal; Jefferson's 1826 letter to Roger Weightman, where he uses his memorable "booted and spurred" analogy to illustrate the injustice of aristocratic privilege; and Hamilton's distinction, in *A Farmer Refuted*, between Hobbes' amoral state of nature and Locke's version of the same state, where justice, though lacking the support that only the law can provide, still exists.

By deliberating over the meaning of key passages, the teachers who attended the seminar gained a deeper understanding of the Declaration of Independence. As a result, they left better equipped to bring the spirit and wisdom of the American Founding into their classrooms in engaging ways.



## EVENTS

# Civitas-ISI Undergraduate Conference: Comparing the French and American Revolutions



The Civitas Institute and the Intercollegiate Studies Institute (ISI) co-hosted an undergraduate seminar entitled, “The American and French Revolutions Compared.” The seminar gave students from across the country, including several members of Civitas’ Society of Fellows, an introduction to some of the most philosophically and politically significant differences between these two momentous events. A single practical question guided all of the discussions: why did the American Revolution successfully establish, and the French Revolution fail to produce, a constitutional, liberal, and lasting political order?

Dr. **Casey Wheatland**, Senior Lecturer at Texas State University, led four seminars focused on

the American Revolution. Dr. **Khalil Habib**, Associate Professor of Politics at Hillsdale College, followed the next day with three seminars focused on the French Revolution.

On the American side, Wheatland focused on the following themes: first, the Laws of Nature, Independence, and the Causes of Revolution; second, Morality, Civil Society, and American Self-Government; and, third, Human Nature, Statecraft, and Prudence. In response to these sessions, many of the students coalesced around the view that, while the American Revolution was greatly inspired by new philosophical principles—including natural rights and social contract theory—it nonetheless could not have been realized if the Americans of the time had not been a spirited, liberty-loving people.

On the French side, Habib focused on the following themes: first, Burke, Prescription, and Chivalry; second, Feudalism and Liberty in Tocqueville’s *Reflections on the Revolution in France*; and, third, the Nature and Character of the French Revolution. Students found these sessions sobering as Habib, echoing Tocqueville, stressed the connection between the feudal world’s loss of the spirit of local life and local liberties characteristic, on the one hand, and the modern world’s centralization of power and over-regulation of human life, on the other.

Students came away from these seminars with a renewed appreciation for the prudence and piety that guided the American founding. They also gained a broader perspective on the immense difficulties of establishing an enduring regime of ordered liberty.

## EVENTS

# Civitas-Braver Angels Debate: Civitas Undergraduates Pursue Truth on Policy Question

The Civitas Institute hosted more than 50 students in the Littlefield Home’s Seminar Room for an evening of spirited, civil debate. Civitas partnered with BridgeUSA and Braver Angels to present student debaters with a question: should the U.S. stop funding the Ukraine conflict?

The Braver Angels event format makes debates distinctively rewarding for students. Braver Angels debates are not competitive, so there are no winner and losers. Instead, these debates follow a parliamentary format: debaters address each other indirectly through the speaker, who functions as an umpire. The purpose of Braver Angels debates is to foster candid, insightful, and civil conversations about matters of interest to public-spirited students. They aim to decrease the heat of disagreement while preserving the light that genuine debate can generate.

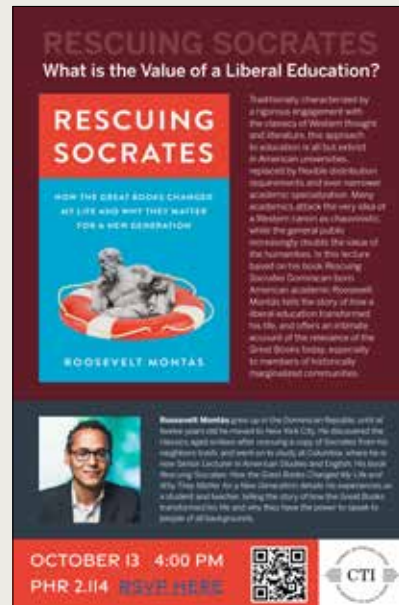


Students rose to the challenge with concise speeches and civil engagement. They expressed their genuine opinions to one another on a matter of considerable controversy, without falling into fruitless bickering or indignation. The evening was a model of civil discourse, where each side seemed primarily motivated not by a desire to “win the argument,” but by a desire to speak and defend the truth as they understood it. It was wonderful to watch students exhibit this generous attitude in the midst of disagreement. Students demonstrated an openness to what the other side had to say, an awareness that one may not see the full truth of an issue, and a willingness to correct one’s views if one is persuaded by new and better arguments.





## Rescuing Socrates: Montás on Why Liberal Education Matters



On October 12, the Civitas Institute and the Jefferson Center for the Study of Core Texts and Ideas co-hosted a book talk featuring **Roosevelt Montás**, Senior Lecturer in American Studies and English at Columbia University. Montás is the author of *Rescuing Socrates: How the Great Books Changed My Life and Why They Matter for a New Generation*. In telling the story of how the Great Books transformed his life and why they have the power to speak to people of all backgrounds, Montás blends together the genres of memoir, critique, and literary analysis.

A liberal education is traditionally characterized by a rigorous engagement with the classics of Western thought and literature. Montás argues that this approach to education is all but extinct in American universities, replaced by flexible distribution requirements and ever-narrower academic specialization. Many academics attack the very idea of a Western canon—the body of literature considered essential to the education of a free human being—as chauvinistic. Meanwhile, the general public increasingly doubts the practical value of studying liberal arts or the humanities more broadly.

In sharing details of his personal journey and the liberal education that shaped his own life, Montás challenges this modern notion. Montás grew up in the Dominican Republic until moving to New York City at age twelve. He discovered the classics at age sixteen after rescuing an edition of a Platonic dialogue from his neighbor's trash. He went on to study at Columbia University, where he is now director of Columbia's Freedom and Citizenship program.



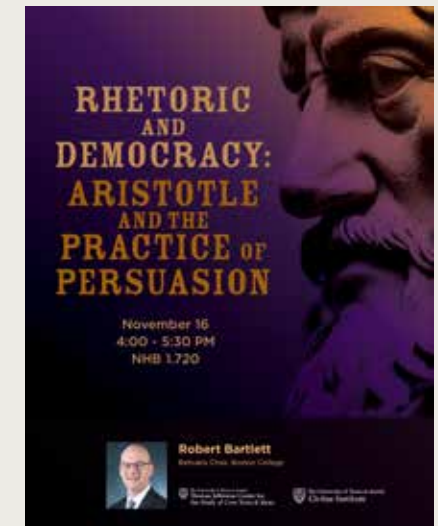
## Robert Bartlett on Aristotle's *Rhetoric and Democracy: Persuasion in Civic Life*

The Civitas Institute and the Jefferson Center hosted **Robert Bartlett** for a talk on his new translation of *Aristotle's Rhetoric*. Bartlett, a professor at Boston College, began his account of rhetoric and its importance to public life by reading quotations from remarks by American presidents, including Kennedy, Bush, and Trump. He did so in order to show the decline in public rhetoric in a way that would be immediately recognizable to the audience and serve to highlight the importance of the topic.

He then discussed the meaning of rhetoric, Aristotle's defense of rhetoric against Plato's criticism, the relation between rhetoric and accepted opinion, and the relation between rhetoric and philosophy. Bartlett explained that rhetoric simply means persuasive speech. For Aristotle, it comes in three forms. There is deliberative or political rhetoric, e.g., a speech by means of which a legislator tries to persuade his peers to vote for a given bill. There is judicial rhetoric, e.g., a speech by means of which a prosecutor tries to persuade a jury of the truth of a certain version of past events. And there is apodeictic rhetoric, e.g., a funeral oration in which the bereaved praises the departed. Each form of rhetoric serves a valuable function in the political community.

And yet, as Bartlett reminded his audience, Plato regarded rhetoric with suspicion. Plato's suspicion is evident in the *Gorgias*, which advances what is arguably the most famous version of the classic criticism of rhetoric: rhetoric is a "knack" rather than a genuine form of knowledge, is indifferent to truth because it is solely concerned with persuasion, and is therefore often a tool of manipulation. Against this argument, Aristotle defends rhetoric by showing that it is an indispensable aid to those who are concerned with the truth and with justice, and who are therefore also concerned with the most effective means by which to educate their fellow citizens. Rhetoric, used in this manner, is so far from being a form of manipulation that it is in fact an inoculation against manipulation. Bartlett, echoing Aristotle, does not deny that rhetoric can be used for unjust ends. Instead, Bartlett suggests that citizens think of rhetoric as a loaded gun, which can be used for good or ill.

Since Bartlett's book is a work of translation rather than interpretation, a few remarks are in order on the character of his translation. As is common with scholars who have been influenced by Leo Strauss, Bartlett's translation is literal in style. This means that, as much as is compatible with readable



English, the translation renders the same Greek word by the same English word. A significant advantage of this method is that it makes it possible for English readers to trace the use of specific Greek terms throughout a given work. The translation thereby gives the English reader a clearer sense of the importance certain words had for a given Greek author. The great disadvantage of this method is that it produces English translations that can read somewhat awkwardly, since a precise rendering of Greek terms rather than readability in English is their goal. Ultimately, while looser translations will provide more pleasant reading experiences to those with a casual interest in Aristotle, Bartlett's translation is a better fit for those with a scholarly interest.

## STUDENT VOICES

*I loved attending the Braver Angels debate to witness the intersection of students' diverse views, and how the Civitas Institute encourages the sharing of those views in an accepting and respectful environment.*

*~ Sara Beth Beasley, government and economics*

*The conference in Dripping Springs was an electrifying time for many reasons, but perhaps chiefly for the reason that it was the first moment where all of the fellows were brought together. The union of these distinct minds created an atmosphere that couldn't be replicated. By this accomplishment, most of the SoF's work was already complete.*

*~ Gabriel Babineaux, government*

*My favorite event was getting to participate in a seminar with Dr. Bernard Haykel. He offered some very unique perspectives about conflicts in the middle east, and it was fascinating hearing about his interactions with crown prince MBS.*

*~ Nathan Comeaux, finance, business honors, and Plan II Honors*

*As Undergraduate Fellows at the Civitas Institute, students get to explore the nexus of free thought between academic research and practical, real-world applications. The program's diverse and stimulating events develops a process of independent thought at the undergraduate level for UT Austin and helps the University fulfill its aspiration: What Starts Here Changes the World.*

*~ Carter Moxley, business and corporate communications*

*The Civitas Society of Fellows has allowed me to meet fellow undergraduates who are as fascinated with our national philosophical heritage as I am. The program has created a blend of camaraderie, civil discourse, and intellectual rigor which is unmatched anywhere else at UT.*

*~ Paul Charles, finance*

*The Civitas Fellowship has provided me access to a vibrant community that I find intellectually stimulating and engaging. It has been incredibly refreshing to be a part of a community that is interested, not only in what X says about Y, but also in what we can learn from what X says about Y, both when it comes to our individual lives and our shared, civic life together. Being a member of a community with such interests has had a positive influence on my teaching and research. By keeping the practical applications of the views we are studying at the forefront, I have become a better teacher, one who is able to connect more effectively with my students. And it has also spurred some important insights in my understanding of the topic of my research—Aristotle's views about education. Specifically, I have come to understand more clearly the ways in which Aristotle's own teaching in the ethical treatises is intended as a preparation for civic life.*

*~ Reid Comstock, Postdoctoral Fellow*

## CIVITAS FELLOWS

# Civitas Fellows Research Presentations

When we read the Federalist Papers, should we think of a single author—Publius—or three distinct authors—John Jay, Alexander Hamilton, and James Madison? How does the U.S. government define poverty, and how does that matter to citizens' lives? What norms govern disputes on the open seas—and how should Americans think about those norms? Why is love important for a free society? Throughout the year, Civitas Fellows meet weekly to discuss these questions and more.

Each week, one fellow presents a research project and then addresses questions from scholars across different fields. The tone is conversational, as fellows take care to speak beyond the bounds of their specific disciplines to the broader interests of Civitas fellows. In the process, each fellow makes his or her academic expertise relevant to the task of responsible citizenship. Across diverse perspectives, we've built a conversation that allows us to tackle common concerns with a dash of good humor.

This fall, one highlight of the research series is the genuinely constructive criticism that fellows have been willing to give one another. Through the gifts of attention and candor, fellows have pushed one another to clarify what matters in the scholarship each of them is doing.

## FREE for All

The Financial Responsibility and Economic Education (FREE) program, a joint effort between the Civitas Institute and UT's Department of Economics, launched a pilot Microeconomics course through the OnRamps program in 16 Texas independent school districts. OnRamps offers dual enrollment courses to high school students to prepare them for success in college. An initial 28 teachers and 812 students participated in the course in the fall. To equip the initial cohort of teachers, FREE held a Professional Learning Institute at the beginning of the semester. Later in the semester, FREE offered another Professional Learning Institute to equip an additional 22 teachers who will participate in the pilot in the spring semester.

FREE also convened a faculty working group from organizations across North America to research biases in responses from AI technology such as ChatGPT. This working group will collaborate to develop improved queries and a prototype Econ Chatbot that incorporates economic principles that promote human flourishing.

Finally, FREE partnered with UT's Liberal Arts Instructional Technology Services team to produce a video series that highlights UT Economics alumni. The series shows students how principles of economics and finance apply to important questions in everyday life and in a wide variety of careers. FREE's new website highlights the video series as well as curated resources on economic principles that promote human well-being.





# Civitas Civic Education Symposium: How to Prepare Students to Take Responsibility for Their Communities

Hannah Arendt, one of the 20th century’s most insightful political theorists, describes the basic task of education. In her account, the world is always new and in need of renewal. Young people are also new—new to the world, and soon to be new members in the political community that is the responsibility of adults. The obligation to educate the young therefore “belongs among the most elementary and necessary activities of human society, which never remains as it is but continuously renews itself through birth, through the arrival of new human beings.” Young people need an education that prepares them for the task of being human as well as for the task of citizenship.

In November, Civitas hosted scholars from around the nation to discuss fundamental questions at the heart of Arendt’s reflections on education. Participants included Civitas Distinguished Fellows **Paul Carrese**, **Chiyuma Elliott**, and **Vincent Phillip Muñoz**; Civitas Faculty Fellows **Daniel Bonevac**, **Rob Koons**, **Dirk Mateer**, **Brian Roberts**, and **Dima Shamoun**; Civitas Executive Director **Justin Dyer**; Civitas Director of Research **Ryan Streeter**; and Civitas Associate Directors **Sarah Beth Kitch** and **Antonio Sosa**. Civitas Research Fellows **Benjamin Storey** and **Jenna Silber Storey** offered the keynote, a reflection on the aims of civic education.

*“Education is the point at which we decide whether we love the world enough to assume responsibility for it and by the same token save it from that ruin which, except for renewal, except for the coming of the new and the young, would be inevitable. And education, too, is where we decide whether we love our children enough not to expel them from our world and leave them to their own devices, nor to strike from their hands their chance of undertaking something new, something unforeseen by us, but to prepare them in advance for the task of renewing a common world.”*

*~ Hannah Arendt, “The Crisis in Education” (1954)*



Participants focused on a key question: “What kind of education prepares students to lead in their communities?” To address this question, they first considered the responsibilities of citizenship: What kinds of decisions actually come before citizens in the course of their daily lives? Next, participants considered what kinds of love, knowledge, and skill young people need in order to competently address those decisions.



Over the course of the day, each member of the conversation reflected on the most important aspects his or her own education. Robust debate over the aims and content of civic education drew out valuable points of reflection, which fellows addressed with a deep confidence in the good of public higher education.

## The Art of Choosing Book Workshop

In connection with the Civic Education Symposium, Civitas Research Fellows **Benjamin Storey** and **Jenna Silber Storey** presented their new book project on the value of liberal education to a full room of Civitas fellows. The Storeys argued that a liberal education, which centers on the long-running conversation about what it means to be human and live in society, can help students develop a mature sense of how to make choices that lead to flourishing lives. In response, Civitas fellows offered questions that illuminated what students need from higher education.





## Hong Kong Denies Visa to Civitas Fellow Rowena He



*“Many people feel shocked and helpless about the crackdown, but they can still hold to their ideals, wherever they are in the world. Once the seeds are sown, freedom will always bloom.”*

*~He on Radio Free Asia*

Born and raised in China, Civitas Senior Research Fellow **Rowena He** studies the Chinese government’s 1989 Tiananmen Massacre of protestors who rallied in support of democracy. Her award-winning 2014 book, *Tiananmen Exiles: Voices of the Struggle for Democracy in China*, anchors a career He has dedicated to preserving the memory of thousands who labored for liberty in her homeland. The work

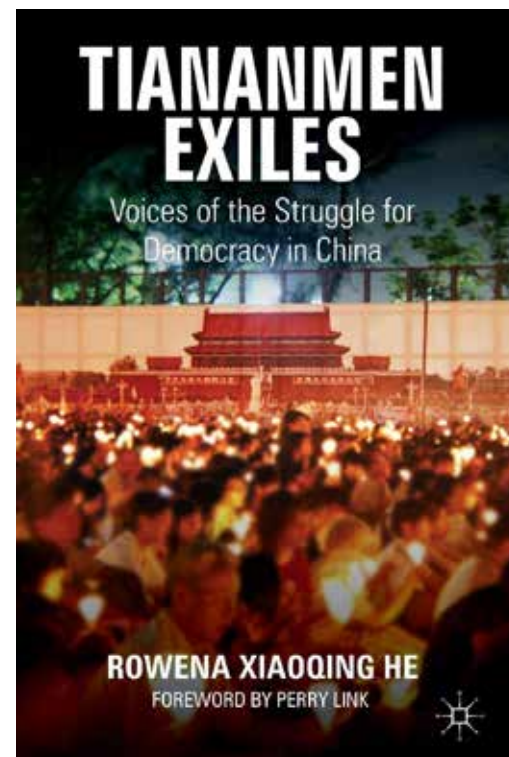
of remembering fortifies He to advance the cause she shares with those she studies: to safeguard democracy and freedom.

A Canadian citizen, He joined the Civitas Institute last summer while she waited on the Hong Kong government’s response to her request for an employment visa. In fall 2023, as part of its effort to censor the history that inspires pro-democracy activists, Hong Kong denied He’s visa request. In turn, the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), where He has worked as an Associate Professor, terminated her position.

The international press has closely followed Hong Kong’s visa decision and CUHK’s decision to fire He as a purposeful attack on academic freedom. After she learned that CUHK had fired her, He responded to interview requests from the *Voice of America*, NPR, the *Financial Times* (London), Radio Free Asia, *City Journal*, the *Globe and Mail* (Canada), and more.

As Radio Free Asia reports, in February 2023, pro-Beijing youth activist Nicholas Muk denounced He in the *Wen Wei Po*, a newspaper that runs with support from the Chinese Communist Party. Muk attacked He’s book, *Tiananmen Exiles*, for “spreading anti-China and disruptive thoughts in Hong Kong.” Rowena He reported that public libraries in Hong Kong have since removed her books from the shelves in an ongoing effort to censor dissenters.

At the Civitas Institute at UT-Austin, He continues her work. Last summer, she participated in the Society of Fellows conference and, in the fall, she shared her story in the Civitas research presentation series. After He met with the Civitas Society of Fellows, she said, “I was very impressed by the younger generation of students. I think this kind of community is exactly what we need. I really hope that in this country—whether you’re left or right, it really doesn’t matter—I hope the United States will be united to safeguard democracy and freedom.”



## Society of Fellows Year-End Recap

In its successful inaugural term, the Society of Fellows at the Civitas Institute provided fellows with the opportunity to develop their understanding of liberty and its moral conditions. As the semester progressed, we were happy to see our fellows grow in friendship as they participated in a variety of Civitas events and activities.

The fellowship began with a late-summer conference on liberal democracy and its problems. This two-day retreat gave students their first opportunity to get to know one another as well as to become familiarized with some of the main themes that the Society of Fellows explores: dynamic and locally focused citizenship, the philosophical roots of liberal democracy, religious freedom and freedom of conscience, and the specter of totalitarianism.

Throughout the semester, undergraduate fellows attended speaker events, private seminars, and dinners with speakers. For example, the fellows discussed over dinner the state of freedom of speech on university campuses and in the country at large with Judge **Kyle Duncan**, Professor **Ilana Redstone**, and Professor **Vincent Loyd**. Students also attended private seminars, each one with no more than 20 students, with Judge Duncan, Civitas Visiting Fellow **Bernard Haykel**, and **Bari Weiss**. From freedom of speech and the state of journalism in the United States, to the prospects of the flourishing of liberal values in the Middle East, our fellows enjoyed in-depth discussions with some of today’s most interesting and insightful intellectual figures.



The highlight of the semester was the Braver Angels debate on the United States’ funding of Ukraine’s war effort (see p. 14). Key to the event’s success was that it required that students to be active participants in debate rather than passive listeners. Our fellowship cohort, which fielded three of the main speakers for the debate, excelled at this. They modelled the civic spirit that the Civitas Institute studies and fosters.

The Society of Fellows marked the end of the semester with a formal holiday dinner at Arena Hall. By then, the inaugural members of the Society of Fellows were eager to take a break from their finals, don formal attire, and enjoy an evening of great food and jovial company.

We look forward to the semester ahead, which will feature unique speaker events, private seminars, and books clubs on the themes of justice and the health of modern American democracy.



## Civitas Summer Honors Symposium 2024: How Can I Lead a Happy Life?

Last summer, the Civitas Institute hosted its inaugural Summer Honors Symposium, a three-day retreat at a west-Austin resort. In conversation with Civitas Faculty Fellows **Daniel Bonevac** and **J. Budziszewski**, a select cohort of UT-Austin students discussed the theme of friendship and its philosophic foundations through close readings of some of the greatest minds in the Western tradition.



In early June, the Civitas Institute will host the Summer Honors Symposium 2024 at a resort in the Texas Hill Country. The theme of this year's symposium is the theory and practice of happiness. Students will examine happiness in the light of philosophy and public policy. Over the course of three days, our summer undergraduate cohort will study and discuss texts on what it means to become happy. They will begin with Aristotle, who famously defined happiness as the activity of soul in accord with virtue. Moving from classical to modern thought, students will study Montaigne, who counseled moderation through variation as the key to leading a fulfilling life. Students will then think with Tocqueville, who analyzed the restlessness of soul that characterized American democracy for both good and ill.

Tocqueville, a consistently practical thinker, provides a bridge to the symposium's next set of readings and discussions: happiness from the point of view of public policy. Students will discuss community and individualism, dynamism and stagnation, as well as the current state and prospects of social capital in the United States. With guidance from some of the best scholars in happiness studies, symposium fellows will explore these topics through selections from the works of Wilhelm Röpke, Robert Nisbet, and Robert Putnam, among others.

This year's Summer Honors Symposium will deepen students' theoretical understanding of happiness—what it is and what it is not—and improve their capacity to actually lead happy, meaningful lives. Both goals are valuable but the latter is the most important, because, as Aristotle said about the study of living well, the point is not knowing but doing.

## Constantine Vassiliou's Author Meets Critics

Civitas Research Fellow Constantine Vassiliou hosted an author-meets-critics roundtable for his first book, *Moderate Liberalism and the Scottish Enlightenment: Montesquieu, Hume, Smith and Ferguson*. The book is primarily about the political philosophy of Montesquieu, who by virtue of his influence on the Founders and, through them, the American constitution, is a liberal thinker who holds an especially estimable place in the minds of civic-minded Americans.

Vassiliou had the opportunity to expound and defend his perspective on Montesquieu's thought to a panel of scholars that included **Lee Ward** (Baylor University), **Jeffrey Church** (University of Houston), **Luke Foster** (University of Notre Dame), **Nathaniel Gilmore** (University of Texas at Austin), **Thomas Pangle** (University of Texas at Austin), and **Andrea Radasanu** (Northern Illinois University). The discussion was frank and spirited, and all came away with a clearer grasp of the main points of contention in the interpretation of Montesquieu's thought.

To honor Montesquieu, Vassiliou did more than write a book about his thought. He also managed to procure French wine from Montesquieu's former estate and invited Charlie Leary, a wine historian, to give those in attendance some background on how the wine they were fortunate to enjoy that evening was connected with Montesquieu's commercial dealings in the eighteenth century.





# Liberty in the Middle East

Civitas Distinguished Fellow **Bernard Haykel** stopped by the Littlefield Home to lead a seminar with students from the Society of Fellows. Haykel, who is Professor of Near Eastern Studies at Princeton University, led students in a discussion on two topics: the prospects of liberal reforms in Saudi Arabia and the geopolitical implications of the Israel-Hamas war.



## New Fellows



Distinguished Fellow  
**Arthur C. Brooks**

Arthur C. Brooks is the Parker Gilbert Montgomery Professor of the Practice of Public and Nonprofit Leadership at the Harvard Kennedy School, and Professor of Management Practice at the Harvard Business School, where he teaches courses on leadership, happiness, and social entrepreneurship. He is also a columnist at The Atlantic, where he writes the popular “How to Build a Life” column. Brooks is the author of 13 books, including the 2022 #1 New York Times bestseller *From Strength to Strength: Finding Success, Happiness, and Deep Purpose in the Second Half of Life* and the forthcoming *Build the Life You Want: The Art and Science of Getting Happier* with co-author Oprah Winfrey available September 2023. He speaks to audiences all around the world about human happiness, and works to raise well-being within private companies, universities, public agencies, and community organizations.

Brooks began his career as a classical French hornist, leaving college at 19, touring and recording in the United States and Spain. In his late twenties, while still performing, he returned to school, earning a BA through distance learning. At 31, he left music and earned an MPhil and PhD in public policy analysis from the Rand Graduate School, during which time he worked as an analyst for the Rand Corporation’s Project Air Force, performing military operations research analysis. Brooks then spent the next 10 years as a university professor, primarily at Syracuse University, where he taught economics and nonprofit management, and published 60 peer-reviewed articles and several books, including the textbook “*Social Entrepreneurship*” (2008). In 2009, Brooks became the president of the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) in Washington, DC, one of the world’s most influential think tanks. Over the following decade, he was selected as one of Fortune Magazine’s “50 World’s Greatest Leaders” and was awarded seven honorary doctorates.



Research Fellow  
**Benjamin Storey**

Benjamin Storey is a Civitas Research Fellow and a senior fellow in Social, Cultural, and Constitutional Studies at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI). He is concurrently a Tocqueville scholar at Furman University, where he previously served as a research professor, Jane Gage Hipp Professor of Politics and International Affairs, and director of the Tocqueville Program. He focuses on political philosophy, civil society, and higher education, and he is the co-organizer of a conference series on the future of the American university. Dr. Storey is the coauthor, with his wife, Jenna Silber Storey, of *Why We Are Restless: On the Modern Quest for Contentment* (Princeton University Press, 2021). Together, the Storeys are working on a book titled, *The Art of Choosing: How Liberal Education Should Prepare You for Life*. He has a PhD and MA from the Committee on Social Thought at the University of Chicago and a BA from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.



Research Fellow  
**Jenna Storey**

Jenna Silber Storey is a Civitas Research Fellow and a senior fellow in the Social, Cultural, and Constitutional Studies department at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI). Dr. Storey concentrates on political philosophy, civil society, classical schools, and higher education. She is also the co-organizer of a conference series on the future of the American university. Dr. Storey is concurrently a Tocqueville scholar at Furman University, where she was previously research professor, assistant professor in politics and international affairs, and the executive director of the Tocqueville Program. Dr. Storey is the coauthor, with her husband, Benjamin Storey, of *Why We Are Restless: On the Modern Quest for Contentment* (Princeton University Press, 2021). Together, the Storeys are working on a book titled *The Art of Choosing: How Liberal Education*

*Should Prepare You for Life*. Dr. Storey has a PhD from the University of Chicago’s Committee on Social Thought and a BA from the University Professors Program at Boston University. She spent time in Germany as a visiting student at the University of Tübingen and as an exchange student at Dresden University.



Predocctoral Fellow  
**Alexander Batson**

Alexander Batson an intellectual historian of early modern Europe who is currently finishing his PhD at Yale University. Batson’s current projects address European imperial ideology, maritime law, the emergence of historical scholarship in the Renaissance, and the political and legal thought of the Protestant Reformer Philip Melancthon.

He focuses on the early modern period (16th-17th centuries) because it is an age of beginnings. So many important concepts – globalism, capitalism, international law, sovereignty, to name a few – find their origins in this period. It’s also a great period to teach to undergraduates, since we find so many of our own problems mirrored there. Want to talk about plague? The sixteenth century has plenty. Polarization and toleration? Let’s dive into the Reformation and the Thirty Years War.



Predocctoral Fellow  
**Maura Cowan**

Maura Cowan is a PhD candidate in Philosophy at Tulane University, specializing in the history of political philosophy. Her interests include the intersection of politics, literature, and philosophy, with a focus on the ancient Greeks. She completed her undergraduate degree at St. John’s College in Annapolis, and has taught classics of political philosophy and literature at both the secondary and university level. Before joining the Civitas Institute, Maura was a fellow at the Murphy Institute. She is currently writing a dissertation on the “ancient quarrel” between poetry and philosophy presented in Plato’s Republic.





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# Civitas Institute SPRING EVENTS 2024



January 26: **Forgiveness in Politics** with Rev. Eugene Rivers

February 16: **Love, Sex, and Liberalism** with Christine Emba and Louise Perry

March 22: **Disputed Questions** with Ross Douthat and Michelle Goldberg

April 12: **The Humane Economy** with Samuel Gregg

May 8: **The Austin Symposium on Economic Dynamism**



The University of Texas at Austin  
Civitas Institute