The University of Texas at Austin
Civitas Institute

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FORUM

EXPLORING IDEAS + INSTITUTIONS THAT SUSTAIN A FREE SOCIETY

A PUBLICATION OF THE CIVITAS INSTITUTE

THE CIVITAS INSTITUTE CELEBRATES ITS MOVE TO THE THE HISTORIC LITTLEFIELD HOME ON THE UT AUSTIN CAMPUS

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Inside

"We are not enemies, but friends"

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Justin Dyer

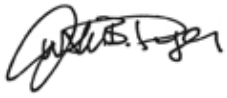
"We are not enemies, but friends," Abraham Lincoln said at the close of his First Inaugural Address. "We must not be enemies." Although passion had strained, and soon would break, Americans' bonds of affection, Lincoln hoped that "the mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone" would "swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature."

Lincoln's words oriented our work over the past year. I'm glad to report that the Civitas Institute has made significant progress. To kick off the fall semester, we a co-sponsored a campus debate with Braver Angels, an organization that takes Lincoln's words as a mission to call forth the better angels of our nature through civil debates. In the spring semester, our Faculty Fellows taught over 525 students across 15 courses. We hosted or co-sponsored 18 events that addressed our pillars of civic virtue, constitutionalism, and free enterprise, reaching scholars, graduate students, and over 400 undergraduate students. These events ranged from an energetic undergraduate lunch seminar on Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* (see p. 7) to a conference of 50 faculty members on the future of higher education (see p. 16). In the upcoming academic year, we will welcome our first full cohort of Civitas Visiting Fellows, Texas Fellows, Postdoctoral Fellows, Dissertation Fellows, and Summer Research Graduate Fellows. To end the spring semester, we launched two undergraduate fellowships: the year-long Society of Fellows will examine liberty, while the intensive Summer Honors Symposium will examine friendship.

The Civitas Summer Honors Symposium is characteristic of our broader work to cultivate civic friendship. This August, during three days at the Omni Barton Creek Resort in southwest Austin, a select group of students will participate in a seminar on friendship and its philosophic foundations. Two of the Civitas Institute's Faculty Fellows, Profs. **Dan Bonevac** and **J. Budziszewski**, will guide students as they study questions of friendship from classical, Christian, and modern perspectives. Discussions will range from Aristotle's description of the virtuous friend as "another self," to the Christian understanding of friendship in light of the virtue of charity, to Montaigne's praise of his own friend Étienne de La Boétie. Students will consider the implications of friendship for political life and its connection to civic friendship.

To celebrate the friends who made the Civitas Institute's early success possible, we gathered recently in the historic Littlefield Home, once home to George and Alice Littlefield and now home to UT Austin's Civitas Institute (see p. 6).

The theme of friendship brings us back to Lincoln's words. We are not enemies, but friends. Once again, however, passion has strained our bonds of affection. It is appropriate in this moment to revisit our founding principles and renew the civic commitments that will maintain our free society—one that protects individual rights, governs by law, and facilitates private enterprise. T[illegible] ıt that educational project is with friends. We've enjoyed a busy [illegible] programs with friends on campus and in the community.



The Littlefield Legacy

The Civitas Institute recently moved into UT's iconic Littlefield Home. This Austin landmark is a welcoming place to gather the students, faculty, and guests of the Civitas scholarly community.

Built in 1894, the Littlefield Home is one of Austin's best surviving examples of eclectic Victorian-era design. Architect James Wahrenberger of San Antonio designed the house in a Gothic-revival style for a cost of $50,000 (or about $1.7 million in today's dollars). The home features a variety of original materials including red brick, red sandstone, granite, tile, and custom iron work. The home's distinctive Victorian features include a simple central-hall plan with a wraparound porch. Two grand Gothic towers, one round and one square, dominate the roofline.

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The interior rooms are richly paneled with a variety of woods and tooled leather. Many features of the home, including the marble fireplaces, moldings, and trims contain intricate carvings and personal details, such as "L" monograms as emblems of the family name. One of the Littlefield Home's most remarkable features is a 57-foot deodar cedar tree on the front lawn, which George Littlefield had shipped from the Himalayas. Reports say Littlefield had the soil where the tree was to be placed dug up and then replaced with Himalayan soil.

At the time of his death, in 1920, George Littlefield bequeathed the home to the University of Texas. When his wife, Alice Littlefield, died in 1935, the Littlefield Home became an official part of the UT campus. Since then, the mansion has been home to the Music Department, the Navy R.O.T.C., the University Events office, and, now, the Civitas Institute.

We are honored to inhabit such a beautiful, historic property. Through our endeavors, we aim to be faithful stewards of the Littlfield Home its legacy.

Christening the Littlefield Home

In early April, Civitas Executive Director **Justin Dyer** expressed his gratitude to the supporters, staff, faculty, and students who have contributed to the early success of the Civitas Institute. UT President **Jay Hartzell** offered words of encouragement and congratulations, and **Brent Stringfellow**, UT-Austin's university architect, spoke about the architectural legacy of the Littlefield Home, with its striking verticality, purposeful asymmetries, and alleged ghosts.

Philosophical Questions about God and Freedom

In cooperation with the Jefferson Center for the Study of Core Texts and Ideas, Civitas welcomed Dr. **James Carey** for an evening talk followed by spirited discussion. Carey, currently a Tutor at St. John's College, previously served as Distinguished Visiting Professor of Philosophy at the United States Air Force Academy. His primary research interests center on logic and metaphysics in the history of philosophy. In particular, Carey's work addresses topics such as medieval proofs of the existence of God as well as the relation between philosophy and revelation.

In his talk, Carey engaged the work of Duns Scotus, a Scottish Franciscan theologian and philosopher who is considered one of the most important thinkers of the High Middle Ages. Scotus is most famous for his work in metaphysics and philosophy of religion. He made key contributions to the philosophical and theological traditions that dominated medieval European universities.

Carey examined Duns Scotus's attempt to prove not only the existence but also the freedom of God. The latter property is crucial to Scotus's argument, for only a free God can choose to create and only a free God can choose to reveal himself to his creation at a particular time and place. If Scotus' argument for divine freedom holds, as Carey thinks it does, it demonstrates the possibility of divine revelation. This view runs counter to the kind of natural theology favored by those who, following Spinoza's lead, claim that God is not the kind of being who can reveal himself to man or who can even be said to be concerned with man.

Scotus's work has generated philosophical debate since the Middle Ages. As Carey highlighted, Scotus grounds his argument in purely metaphysical terms: its validity does not rest on experience. Consequently, Scotus's work is especially relevant to scholars interested in the relation between philosophy and divine revelation. Carey's main contention is that present-day scholars who aim to examine what philosophy can and cannot show about God should return to Scotus.

Remedies for Tyranny of the Majority

One major theme in reflections on the tyranny of the majority is the legal dimension, in which a passionate and aggrieved crowd oversteps the rights of individuals and cows legislators and officials into silence. In a January 19 lunch talk with our undergraduate fellows, however, Civitas Associate Director **Antonio Sosa** focused on Alexis de Tocqueville's analysis of a more insidious dimension of tyranny of the majority. One of Tocqueville's most significant contributions to modern political philosophy is the insight that in democratic times the principle of democratic equality strengthens the enduring authority of public opinion. Consequently, the opinion of the majority threatens to constrict human thought beyond certain bounds. It is not people's lives or properties that are at risk under such tyranny; it is the integrity and independence of their minds. In exploring this problem, Sosa highlighted the basic moral orientation

that underlies Tocqueville's analysis: as he reflects on God as the only being whose wisdom and justice are always equal to his power, Tocqueville makes the case that omnipotence in men—whether it be in a king, an aristocracy, a priesthood, or the people—will always entail tyranny of one kind or another. The true friends of liberty and human greatness, to use Tocqueville's phrase, will recognize in this insight a critical means of defending democratic culture from its own excesses.

Diagnosing Inflation

Together with UT's McCombs School of Business and Real Asset News, the Civitas Institute hosted a symposium on the causes and consequences of inflation.

Inflation is the increase in prices for goods and services in an economy over a period of time. The effect of inflation is to gradually decrease the purchasing power of a currency. For example, $100 in 2023 can buy fewer goods and services than $100 in 2020.

In order to understand what current levels of inflation mean for Americans, panelists asked participants to consider a basic question: What is the cost of money? The question matters because inflation—along with interest rates, which tend to increase as inflation increases—has a powerful economic impact on our lives. Together, inflation and interest rates affect public policy, economic performance, and decision-making in business.

For the past forty years, economic globalization, technological gains, and monetary policy have all worked together, through a process of deflation, to lower the "cost of money." This lower cost of capital has increased capital investment and raised equity values globally. It also allowed governments to finance spending programs at ever lower interest rates over a long period of time. As many of the conditions that allowed governments to lower the cost of capital recede, economists are moving to consider what a higher cost of capital means for business, government, and the economy.

We gathered four experts in the field of finance to consider these questions. Each offered a unique perspective on inflationary trends and the current economic climate.

Dr. **Julia Coronado**, Clinical Associate Professor of Finance in the McCombs School of Business at the University of Texas, has served as a Federal Reserve Economist, strategist at BNP Paribas, and senior economist at Barclays in a 25-year career spanning academia, public policy, and Wall Street. She outlined various theories of inflation and how they shape current economic policymaking. While Coronado noted that the pandemic was a major shock to our economic system, she emphasized the low unemployment rate and increased consumer spending as signals that things are beginning to stabilize.

Paul Rogge, former partner and senior portfolio manager at AIM Capital Management, is a highly ranked international equity investor whose experience spans over three decades of bull and bear markets. Rogge argued for the importance of relative inflation, and noted the role technology plays in determining supply and demand of goods and services. He also challenged the audience

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to consider the movement, or energy, of markets over time. Financial markets are actually much like the human story—they evolve over time with new advances in technology and globalization. Rogge predicted that the global middle class will triple over the next decade, having a significant impact on grain and oil markets. This demographic growth, he suggested, will be one of the most important economic developments in a generation. Rogge argued that inflation is a global issue that may be here to stay for the near term, so investors should think about increased diversification as a way to mitigate against its effects.

Dr. **Lacy Hunt** is a nationally renowned economist and fixed income investor who has managed bond portfolios through more than 50 years of market action. Hunt took a negative view of intervention by the Federal Reserve. In particular, he argued that the U.S. government's response to the pandemic was a mistake. Hunt emphasized that inflation does not benefit the majority and impacts the middle class most negatively. In view of the decline in both per capita income and the standard of living, Hunt advocated for a return to a monetary policy model similar to what Paul Volker, former chair of the Federal Reserve from 1979-1987, had previously implemented. Such a model, Hunt argues, would aggressively raise interest rates to target the money supply that flows through the economy and causes inflation.

Doug Cliggott, a retired lecturer in political economy at Amherst College, is a top-ranked global strategist who spent forty years covering global bond and equity markets at Merrill Lynch, JP Morgan, and Credit Suisse. He surveyed three periods of high inflation in the 1910s, 1940s, and 1970s. He argued that the lesson of these three periods is that the Federal Reserve should do more to address current economic issues through measures such as restoring our currently fractured global supply chains. He also advocated for heightened government regulation in industries like oil and technology as a means to increase economic growth rather than the current model of companies buying back their own stock with profits. Finally, Cliggott noted renewed interest in policies such as price controls of the 1940s to temporarily contain prices while policymakers attempt to implement policies that will fix the current inflation problem.

DISTINGUISHED FELLOW LECTURES

Religious Exemptions and the Original Meaning of the First Amendment

The Civitas Institute joined with the Beck-Laughlin First Amendment Center at UT's School of Law to welcome Distinguished Fellow **Vincent Phillip Muñoz** to campus to discuss his research on religious liberty and the original meaning of the First Amendment. Dr. Muñoz is the Tocqueville Associate Professor of Political Science, Concurrent Associate Professor of Law, and serves as the founding Director of the Center for Citizenship & Constitutional Government at the University of Notre Dame.

Religious liberty, as enshrined in the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, guarantees that individuals have the right to practice their religion freely, without interference or persecution from the government or other groups. A cornerstone of the American constitutional order, religious liberty allows people to express their beliefs and participate fully in the political process without fear of discrimination or punishment. The First Amendment also prohibits the government from establishing a national religion, which could of course serve as the instrument of one religious sect to violate the religious freedom of other Americans.

What happens, though, when a citizen perceives that an otherwise valid law violates his or her religious liberty? Does the First Amendment's protection for religious liberty exempt the citizen from obedience to an otherwise valid law? Muñoz, whose scholarship has been cited in multiple Supreme Court opinions, addressed this tension in his lecture to UT students and faculty. He argued that the American founders' understanding of religious liberty does not include a right to religious exemptions.

In *Fulton v. City of Philadelphia* (2021), Justice Samuel Alito called for the U.S. Supreme Court to overturn the *Employment Division of Oregon v. Smith* (1990) decision, which Justice Antonin Scalia authored. *Smith* held that the First Amendment's Free Exercise Clause does not provide religious individuals and institutions a right to exemptions from burdensome laws. For three decades, the *Smith* decision guided the Court's religious liberty jurisprudence. Even so, the *Smith* decision was widely criticized by scholars and jurists who claimed that it eviscerated the Constitution's protection of religious liberty. Led by Alito, the Court now seems poised to overturn *Smith*.

As he laid out arguments from his new book, *Religious Liberty and the American Founding*, Muñoz suggested that Justice Scalia was essentially right in the *Smith* ruling. Muñoz argued that, if the American founders are the proper guides for First Amendment jurisprudence, Alito's call to overturn *Smith* is mistaken.

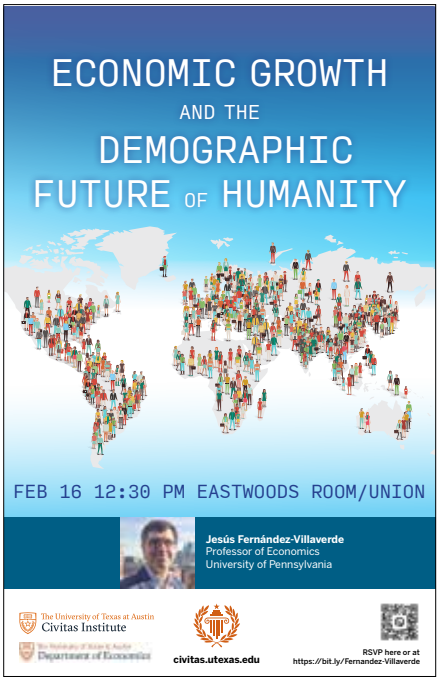
Muñoz advocates for a closer look at the founders' philosophy to better understand the implications of religious liberty. Muñoz made the case that the founders viewed the right to religious liberty as natural and inalienable. This philosophical basis, he argued, has implications for constitutional jurisprudence regarding church-state relations. In particular, it limits what we can and cannot determine about the original meanings of the First Amendment's religion clauses. We should therefore favor a more minimalistic church-state jurisprudence that, in most cases, refers controversial questions back to the American people.

Lawmakers and courts will undoubtedly continue to argue about the meaning of religious liberty as enshrined in the Bill of Rights. The work of legal scholars like Muñoz is to advance scholarship on enduring and timely constitutional questions.

Humanity's Demographic Future

In a sobering campus lecture on the economic impact of current demographic trends, Distinguished Visiting Fellow and Professor of Economics at the University of Pennsylvania, **Jesús Fernández-Villaverde**, argued that 2023 may be the first year in human history in which our species' fertility rate falls below the replacement level of approximately 2.1 children per woman. If current trends continue, the world population will peak around 2050-2060 and then begin to fall.

Many parts of the world are already at this stage. China's total population began falling in 2021. Without immigration from the rest of the globe, the Americas—from Alaska to South America—will see population decline in the early 2030s. The crisis is more acute in nations such as South Korea, where the population rapidly ages while fertility rates are in steep decline.



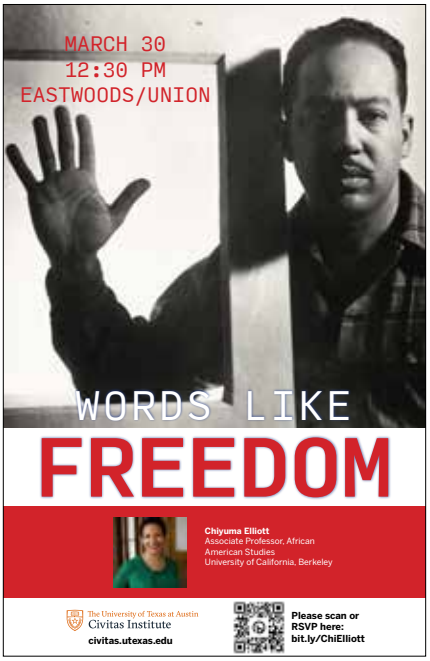
Fernández-Villaverde took up the complex task of evaluating the economic consequences of the unfolding demographic shift. He began with economic effects. With fewer workers participating in a nation's labor market, a drop in output growth is likely. In terms of fiscal impact, population decline will render many nations, in particular those with generous welfare budgets, unable to service debt or entitlement programs. Entire regions, especially rural areas, will also experience severe depopulation.

In Fernández-Villaverde's account, governments have limited ability to reverse population decline through policy. Scandinavian and European models of generous maternity and paternity leave offer a case study: their impact on increased fertility was marginal and, for most nations, similar policies would be prohibitively expensive. The effects of permissive immigration policies are also unpredictable, as immigration is likely to decline over time. In any case, immigration policy cannot solve the global demographic problem because it would only move people from one set of countries to another, not increase the total global population.

Fernández-Villaverde reminded the audience that statistical trends can and do sometimes change. As evidence, he cited the example of the 1970s predictions of global famine, which turned out to have been dramatically overstated. With a significant increase in childbearing, current demographic forecasts could change. In the meantime, current data can yield insights that allow students and researchers to prepare for a potential demographic transformation in our economic and social landscape.

Freedom in the Harlem Renaissance

Civitas welcomed Distinguished Fellow **Chiyuma Elliott** in March for a series of talks on African American literature in conversation with classical influences. Dr. Elliott is Associate Professor of African American Studies at the University of California, Berkeley. Throughout her talks, Elliott focused on the works of three prominent figures from the Harlem Renaissance era.

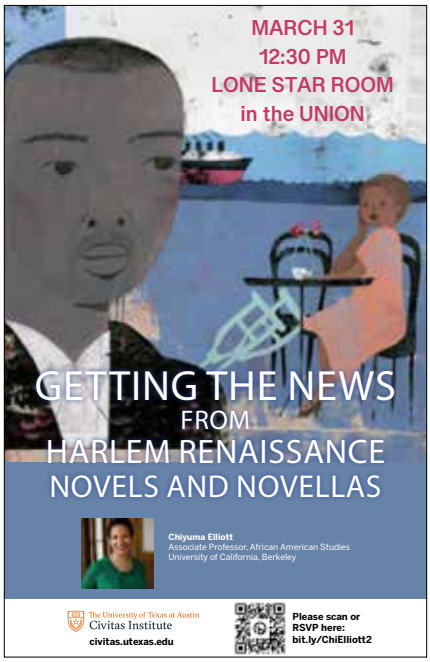


The Harlem Renaissance, a vibrant period in African American culture, gave birth to many notable figures in music, dance, art, fashion, literature, theater, politics, and scholarship. The movement spanned nearly two decades throughout the 1920s and mid-1930s, when a significant number of African Americans moved to northern cities in the wake of Reconstruction and the industrial revolution. Centered in New York's Harlem neighborhood, this period of revival reflected the intersection of the arts with the politics of a changing world. Harlem Rennaissance thinkers and artists also explored new notions of patriotism and nationalism for African Americans.

In a lunch workshop, Elliott invited students and guests to explore the work of one of the most well-known names from this period, poet and novelist Langston Hughes. Like so much historical and contemporary political thought, Langston Hughes's poetry about race in America often uses interchangeably the terms "freedom" and "liberty." But his famous 1967 poem "Words Like Freedom" is an exception because it suggests that freedom and liberty are distinct yet related words. It also suggests that each exists in its own category with other similar words. As she guided students through the poem, Elliott asked them to consider other words for freedom and liberty and to examine how Hughes's poem uses its key terms to inspire political reflection..

As political theorist Hanna Fenichel Pitkin notes, "speakers of English have a unique opportunity: They get to choose between 'liberty' and 'freedom.' No other European language, ancient or modern, offers such a choice." The students engaged in a creative writing exercise to explore various connotations of the words "freedom" and "liberty," and to consider the implications of using either word. Despite their different interpretations, participants found a significant point of agreement: the effort to unpack these terms and consider their meaning throughout different periods of history is a humanizing endeavor.

Elliott highlighted significant moments of agreement between Claude McKay and George Schuyler, two prominent authors of the Harlem Renaissance known for their differing perspectives. As the Harlem Rennaissance unfolded, a key issue in the African American community was Italy's 1935 invasion of Ethiopia. Considered the ancient cradle of civilization and the last African country to remain uncolonized by Europe, many African Americans identified with Ethiopia as their true ancestral homeland. The struggle in Ethiopia resonated with their own struggle for equality at home. Elliott argued that while McKay and Schuyler were often on opposite sides of political debates, their works reveal an important political consensus during a defining period of African American cultural revival. As Elliott explained, their agreement surprised many African American scholars at the time.



Claude McKay, a poet and author who was drawn to socialism, incorporated into his writings both a lament for America and an admiration of its highest ideals. One of his best-known works was the poem "If We Must Die," a reaction to the race riots that swept through the United States following World War I.

George Schuyler was an influential journalist. A political conservative who had disavowed socialism, Schuyler argued that the socialist movement sweeping the globe in the early twentieth-century had little to offer African Americans. While he held a more critical assessment of the Harlem Renaissance than McKay, Schuyler was a prominent member of the civil rights movement until the mid-1950s, when he broke ranks with many of its leaders. Schuyler wrote for many publications throughout the 1920s and was, most notably, a long-time editor of the *Pittsburgh Courier*, one of the largest African American newspapers of the time.

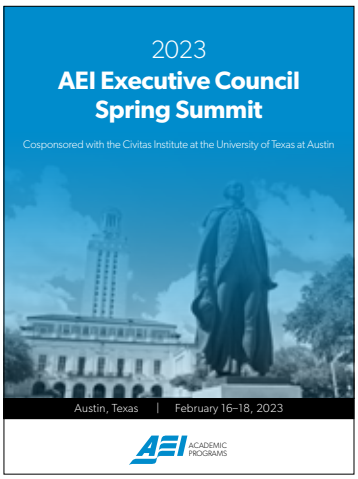
Despite their well-known differences, both McKay and Schuyler agreed on the centrality of the popular press as a medium to champion democracy for African Americans of vastly different social classes and national origins. Elliott compared the very different ways the two authors sought to bolster the role of the popular press as a key lever of democratic power.

This agreement was particularly evident when it came to Italy's 1935 invasion of Ethiopia. For both men, the Ethiopian fight for freedom and independence resonated as symbolic of the fight for equality for African Americans. As Schyuler wrote, "the simple truth of the matter is that we already have fascism here [in America] and have had it for some time, if by fascism one means dictatorial rule in the interest of a privileged class, regimentation, persecution of racial minorities and radicals, etc." This sentiment aligns closely with the McKay's posthumously-published fiction, *Romance in Marseille* and *Amiable with Big Teeth*. Both books portray characters who seek to achieve freedom while confronting the political schemes underlying much of the socialist movement.

Reading McKay's unpublished 1930s novels and Schuyler's fiction and nonfiction together illuminates a rare moment of political harmony in a dynamic period. It also reveals some of the key ideological conflicts that underpinned the period's most vivid articulations of patriotism and nationalism among African American thinkers. This moment of agreement between two writers reveals a commitment to the struggle for human dignity that transcended conventional partisan divisions.

AEI Executive Council Spring Summit

The Civitas Institute was pleased to welcome over one hundred students from universities across the nation to the UT campus in February as part of the student Executive Council program of the American Enterprise Institute (AEI). The AEI Executive Council Program provides current undergraduate students an opportunity to engage with scholars and researchers from across the ideological spectrum in order to improve the quality and diversity of public policy dialogue on their campuses. Through a series of educational and networking opportunities, the AEI Executive Council Program exposes students to today's most pressing policy issues and prepares them to model productive civil discourse.



A highlight of the Executive Council program is the annual AEI Executive Council Spring Summit, which Civitas was honored to co-sponsor. Over the course of three days, students participated in discussions and lectures on the future of American politics, foreign policy, and the global economy.

After a welcome tour of the Texas state capitol, students attended an opening dinner and discussion to consider the future of American politics. AEI Director of Academic Programs **Jeff Pickering** moderated a conversation between journalists **Kevin Williamson** of *The Dispatch* and **A.B. Stoddard** of *RealClear Politics*. The lively discussion provoked questions ranging from predictions on the 2024 Presidential election to the changing demographics of the American electorate.

On Friday, students enjoyed a full day of speakers, breakout sessions, meals, and networking. Civitas Nonresidential Fellow Dr. **Jesús Fernández-Villaverde** of the University of Pennsylvania and AEI scholar Dr. **Shane Tews** anchored a morning session on the role technologies such as cryptocurrency play in economics. Later in the morning, students heard from Civitas Faculty Fellow Dr. **Sheena Greitens**, who addressed the complexities of the U.S.-China relations. In the afternoon, students chose between breakout sessions. Their options included: "What's Up With Congress," the "Economics of Shark Tank" (featuring Civitas Faculty Fellow Dr. **Charity-Joy Acchiardo**), or the "Classical and Christian Origins of American Politics" (featuring Civitas Executive Director Dr. **Justin Dyer** and Civitas Faculty Fellow Dr. **Devin Stauffer**). The afternoon culminated in a networking reception and career counseling from UT alum and guest lecturer Dr. **Haley Robinson Dake**.

A highlight of the conference was Friday's dinner keynote address by **Kori Schake**, Director of Foreign and Defense Studies at AEI. With a distinguished career in academia and the State Department, Department of Defense, and White House National Security Council, Schake had a wealth of expertise on foreign policy to share with students. Students were challenged to consider America's approach to international relations as part of a Grand Strategy for U.S. engagement around the world.

Following a student panel, the conference concluded on Saturday with a keynote by Dr. **Ryan Streeter**, Director of Domestic Policy Studies at AEI. As a policy expert with a distinguished career in government service, Streeter shared his perspective on the future. He offered an optimistic view of the role a new generation of leaders will play in shaping the future.

From Civitas Associate Director Antonio Sosa's AEI Spring Summit opening remarks:

"Individual rights, constitutionalism, and a market economy are the basic principles of the American political order. They are the thematic pillars of the Civitas Institute. Our mission is to teach UT students, and our student fellows in particular, about these principles, what they mean at their core and why they are good for human beings. This is the meaning of American civic education. This is the purpose of the Civitas Institute."

Taking Responsibility

"Liberal Education and Citizenship in a Free Society," February 23-25

What do we owe to our young people and to the world into which we've brought them? What does it take to prepare our young people for the new challenges of a changing world as well as for the task of renewing our common world?

Recently, Civitas co-sponsored a conference whose participants drew on extensive classroom and professional experience to address these questions. Civitas Research Fellow **Constantine Vassiliou** organized, "Liberal Education and Citizenship in a Free Society: Philosophically Informed Approaches to Teaching Ethics and Leadership," which met February 23-25, 2023, at the University of Houston. About 50 university teachers and business leaders from around the country gathered to consider how universities can provide an education that prepares students to renew our shared institutions and face a new world.

In a 1954 essay, "The Crisis in Education," political theorist Hannah Arendt observed that while "the crisis in education may affect the whole world," the crisis was "most extreme" in America.

For Arendt, education is decisive in American political life because of the republic's founding aspiration: "For America the determining factor has always been the motto printed on every dollar bill: *Novus Ordo Seclorum*, A New Order of the World." To illustrate her point, Arendt appeals to a leading founder's vision of America: "In the words spoken by John Adams in 1765—that is, before the Declaration of Independence—'I always consider the settlement of America as the opening of a grand scheme and design in Providence for the illumination and emancipation of the slavish part of mankind all over the earth.'" Arendt considers what kind of education prepares young people for life in this new order, an order that aspired to abolish tyranny.

As the Liberal Education conference unfolded, a task emerged: How to create meaningful college experiences that help students mature. The key to this process is to ask basic questions about what it means to be human and to live in society. The most striking feature of the conference was the participants' tone of hope. Their confidence in the good that universities can do seemed to arise from a sense of gratitude: several participants highlighted the ways in which their own college educations had enabled them to live more intentional, responsible lives.

Conference participants told stories that evidenced a willingness to respond to students' longing for wisdom or direction. Out of a shared commitment to care for students' ethical formation, participants engaged in fruitful disagreement over how to go about that work. Civitas's own **Justin Dyer** (executive director), **Kishore Gawande** (Civitas faculty fellow), **Sarah Beth Kitch** (associate director), and **Antonio Sosa** (associate director) contributed to the conversation on current needs in civic education.

Conference participants across a range of disciplines emphasized that the point of a college education is to prepare students for responsible leadership in their communities. Hannah Arendt argues that, in a society in which parents and teachers fail to direct students to a meaningful education, "It is as though parents daily said: 'In this world even we are not very securely at home; how to move about in it, what to know, what skills to master, are mysteries to us too. You must try to make out as best you can; in any case you are not entitled to call us to account. We are innocent, we wash our hands of you.'"

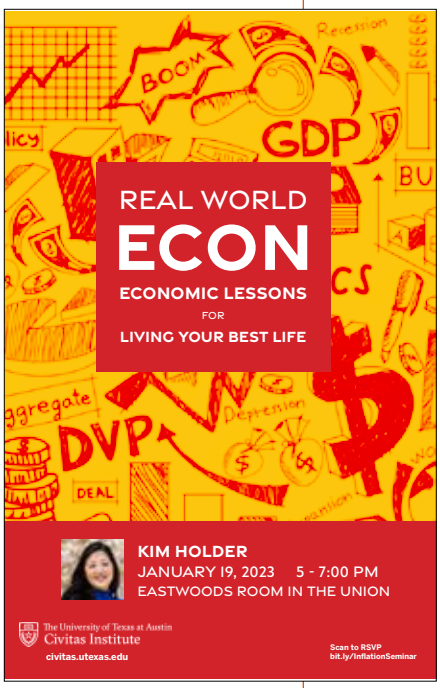
The Liberal Education conference was a success because participants took seriously the premise that young people can call to account those who steward their education: Does the education a university provides help young people to take up their own responsibility in the world? That question informs our work at Civitas. We form thoughtful leaders through a civic education that prizes careful study of the American story as well as wisdom for how to live a good life.

After Liberalism

"Liberalism & Postliberalism," April 14

One significant intellectual development in our time is a move by thinkers from across the ideological spectrum to reject the broad liberal tradition. The classical liberal tradition—distinctive for its commitment to individual rights, limited government, institutional separation of church and state, and a market economy—influenced the American founders and has long shaped our society. Yet prominent intellectuals have grown disillusioned with liberalism and pronounced its failure. Their contemporary visions for a post-liberal future challenged us to think carefully about the liberal tradition that defines American life. With our friends at Claremont McKenna College's Henry Salvatori Center for the Study of Individual Freedom, in April we hosted an ideologically diverse group of scholars from around the country for a day-long conference to discuss the successes and failures of the modern liberal project.

Financial Responsibility and Economic Education



The Financial Responsibility and Economic Education (FREE) program is a joint effort of the Civitas Institute and the Department of Economics. FREE provides avenues for civil discussions on topics related to economics and personal finance, fosters robust economic inquiry among students, and delivers professional development for economics teachers throughout Texas. To advance these goals, Civitas welcomed a series of economists to campus this semester to help students grasp key concepts in economics and personal finance.

FREE brought Dr. **Kim Holder** to campus for her talk "Real World ECON: Economics Lessons for Living Your Best Life." Holder is Senior Lecturer and Director of the University of West Georgia's Center for Economic Education and Financial Literacy. As past president of the Economic Education Association, Holder makes economics relevant for her own students and for the teachers she trains. While some might remember Economics class as a dry account of theories such as elasticity of demand, Holder teaches "real world economics" as lessons that help people live well. Holder's premise is that economics is not about money, but about decisions. In her account, economics matters because it is the study of how people make choices.

Using real-world and pop culture references, Holder brought economics to life. Through examples from popular shows like *Stranger Things*, *Jack Ryan*, and even *SpongeBob SquarePants*, Holder demonstrated that economics is the study of mankind in the ordinary business of life. Like the characters from her examples, all people face decisions with costs. These costs have both a monetary impact–the financial investment a person makes–as well as an opportunity impact–the alternatives a person gives up when he or she makes a choice.

The familiarity of pop culture makes it an effective tool to communicate these principles. In the show *Breaking Bad*, for example, when Walt White faces a terminal cancer diagnosis, he employs his chemistry knowledge to produce meth in order to provide for his pregnant wife and disabled son. Walt's trade-offs, Holder argued, show that economic principles exist even in crime. By analyzing the trade-offs popular TV show characters make, students can recognize economic principles and business lessons in the world around them. They begin to think more like economists.

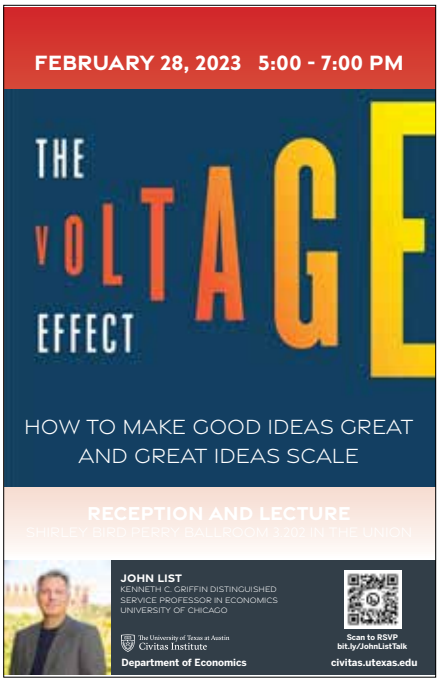
Holder is not alone in her quest to make economics more engaging. Three economics professors unpack "The Economics of Seinfeld" at yadayadayadaecon.com. The professors uncover economics lessons in some of Seinfeld's most well-known episodes. In "The Chinese Restaurant," for example, the group of friends' long wait for a table at a restaurant holds lessons on the concepts of opportunity cost, efficiency, and rationing mechanisms.

Civitas Faculty Fellows Dr. **Dirk Mateer** and Dr. **Charity-Joy Acchiardo**, who invited Holder to UT-Austin, are also experts at connecting economics to pop culture. From popular lessons such as the "Economics of Shark Tank" and textbooks like "Economics in the Movies," these award-winning professors help students discover a passion for economic principles. In addition to their teaching roles, Mateer and Acchiardo also designed UT's OnRamps microeconomics course for high school students as well as the Financial Responsibility and Economic Education program (FREE), both joint projects of the Civitas Institute and the Department of Economics. Through these efforts, more students will have the opportunity to appreciate the value of economic study for everyday life.

John A. List, the Kenneth C. Griffin Distinguished Service Professor in Economics at the University of Chicago shared insights from his newly released book, *The Voltage Effect*. Specifically, he dissected the notion of scale as a way to measure economic impact and implement policy change.

While "scale" has become a favored buzzword in the startup world, the concept extends beyond accumulating more users or capturing more market share. List writes that "scalability is critical to everything from expanding a small business, to narrowing the national achievement gap, to delivering billions of doses of a vaccine, to making a new technology widely affordable—and much more."

His book examines the science of scaling and how we can better use it to drive change in our schools, workplaces, communities, and society at large. "Be it a medical breakthrough, a policy initiative, a product innovation, or a social movement," List observes, "translating an idea into widespread impact depends on one thing only: whether it can be replicated at scale." List aims to increase the likelihood that a policy will continue to produce positive outcomes at larger scale applications. He argues that using economic tools and observations can make decision-making more scientific and therefore more effective.



Simon Halliday, Associate Professor in the School of Economics at the University of Bristol, UK and a Fellow at the Center for Advanced Study (CASBS) at Stanford University challenged students' conceptions of risk. As an author of several economic textbooks, Halliday is well-known for delightful economics lessons that engage students as they connect economic principles with societal problems. With captivating lessons, he teaches students to cultivate marketable skills.

Halliday argues that introductory and AP economics students often learn about risk in economics only through the idea of investment and compounding interest rates. However, in standard economic thinking, there are more common-sense ways to understand risk and its role in our everyday lives. Factors such as whether and what kind of education to pay for, whether to invest in a new kind of technology, and whether and when to buy insurance are things that involve an assessment of risk. Halliday uses

short, simple surveys in class with his students to demonstrate the variation people have in their preferences for risky choices.

Experiments like the ones Halliday uses in his class have been conducted in lab and field settings across the world and have been used to understand the choices people make in their everyday lives. When teaching these ideas, Halliday argues that it is important to discuss with students how a person's preferences incorporate both what they think about a particular choice as well as the ways in which those choices can change in a different context. For example, a person who possesses significant wealth might choose riskier options, whereas that same person, in possession of less wealth, might choose less risky options. As evidence of this principle, Halliday points to the recent U.S. housing crisis and other sudden losses of wealth.

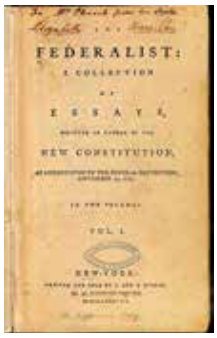
Halliday also encouraged his listeners to examine the behavioral economic principles underlying certain risky choices. He pointed out the limitations of conventional economic thinking which understands risk merely in terms of loss aversion and fundamental uncertainty. Instead, Halliday suggests that how individuals think about risk actually translates to how they think about larger policy matters. For example, people's attitudes towards inequality, and the choices they make in response, may vary. Wealthier people might be willing to see a decrease in personal income to invest in policies that address inequality, while others with less income may be less inclined to support those policies.

Through his work, Halliday challenges students and scholars to apply economic insights to the real world around them.

BOOK DISCUSSION

Mischiefs of Faction

The Federalist, nos. 10 and 51



On March 23, Civitas Associate Director **Antonio Sosa** gathered a group of Civitas undergraduate fellows for a book club meeting on Federalist Papers 10 and 51. In both essays, Publius deals with the problem of faction in a republic. Publius—the pseudonym Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay adopted—makes a number of observations that reveal the philosophical principles at the heart of the American constitutional structure. For one, our self-interest can and often is in tension with our reason—for example, an interest group may advocate for a policy that will benefit the group at the expense of the common good of the country. For another, because human beings have diverse interests and faculties, people will tend to accumulate different amounts and kinds of property. This diversity in amounts and kinds of property understandably leads to a diversity of opinions about what policies best advance the common good: creditors and debtors, landed and commercial property, among others, will tend to have different political opinions because they have different interests. Publius bluntly concludes, "The latent causes of faction are thus sown in the nature of man." Publius's counterintuitive solution is to multiply factions over an extended territory. His view is that, as the number and kinds of minority factions increase, it becomes less likely that various minority factions will consolidate into a single, majority faction with the electoral power to dominate the legislature.

The undergraduate students gathered for the book club responded to these claims with passion and insight. While some favored the prudence and pragmatism of Publius's approach, others were critical of what they regarded as Publius's overly thin account of the common good. In many ways, the disagreement among the students mirrored the broader disagreement between classical liberals and various post-liberals in today's public discourse. Students left energized by the practice of reasoned deliberation.

STUDENT VOICES

The Cincinnatus Fellowship served as the inaugural Civitas undergraduate program. A small, intellectually passionate cohort examined the problems and prospects of liberal democracy today. UT-Austin undergraduate **Zach Springer**, who recently completed his third year as a Philosophy/Classical Languages double major, shares his experience.

What did the Cincinnatus Fellowship add to your semester that you would've missed without it?

"A closer sense of community on campus. I loved the lunch talks and reading groups, which offered such intimate intellectual engagement."

What was the best moment in a Cincinnatus conversation this semester?

"That was during our conversation on 'public good' in *Federalist* 10. Was Publius endorsing a more robust or more minimal view? It was a very unique opportunity to close-read the philosophical views of the founders."

What was the most surprising thing about your experience as a Cincinnatus Fellow?

"I have to admit I was surprised by the openness to alternative viewpoints in our discourse. We had contentious conversations, but they were all constructive! And you just don't see that very often these days."

Two selective fellowships for UT-Austin undergraduates launch this fall: the intensive Summer Honors Symposium and the year-long Society of Fellows.

The Summer Honors Symposium Fellows will spend three days discussing friendship as understood in three distinct intellectual traditions—classic, Christian, and modern—under the guidance of Civitas Faculty Fellows Dr. **Daniel Bonevac** and Dr. **J. Budziszewsk**i.

The Society of Fellows will meet throughout the academic year to examine the concept of liberty through its Inaugural Conference, Speaker Receptions, Film and Book Club, and a study abroad trip to the Château de Tocqueville, the ancestral home of Alexis de Tocqueville.

FEATURE

A Commitment to Evidence

An Interview with Civitas Senior Research Fellow Richard V. Burkhauser

> ***"What has changed in the social sciences is the growth of an intellectual paradigm that rejects the view that evidence can be discovered independently from the researcher's consciousness and interpretation. To me, the Civitas Institute is a response to such reinterpretation of the empirical search for evidence by social scientists"***

Over the course of a long and distinguished career, **Richard V. Burkhauser** has focused on how public policies affect the employment and well-being of vulnerable populations. He is a Senior Research Fellow at the Civitas Institute and Emeritus Sarah Gibson Blanding Professor of Public Policy in the Jeb E. Brooks School of Public Policy at Cornell University. Previously, Burkhauser held tenured faculty positions in the Department of Economics at Vanderbilt University and in the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University. Between September 2017 and May 2019, he was a member of the Council of Economic Advisers in the Executive Office of the President. In 2010 he was the President of the Association for Public Policy and Management. He has published widely in the fields of economics, public policy, demography and gerontology. He received his Ph.D. in economics from the University of Chicago.

You have had a long career as a professor at multiple prestigious universities, both public and private, across the country. What changes have you seen during your time in higher education? How does the Civitas Institute respond to those changes?

I received my Ph.D. in economics at the University of Chicago in the 1970s from teachers/researchers who were at the forefront of the Chicago School of economic analysis, stressing the efficiency of competitive markets. I then spent the next few years as a research associate at the University of Wisconsin's Institute for Research on Poverty where I learned to appreciate the difference between efficient outcomes and outcomes that produce a more socially appropriate distribution of income. More importantly, I did so among faculty who stressed how to quantify the trade-offs between the two in evaluating public policy.

While I was one of the more progressive students at Chicago and one of more conservative research associates at the Institute for Research on Poverty, such political designations rarely entered the process of uncovering the behavioral and distributional evidence necessary for evidence-based public policy. My commitment to following the evidence in my research and in my policy advice proved successful in establishing my academic reputation at Vanderbilt, Syracuse, the University of Melbourne, and Cornell.

What has changed in the social sciences is the growth of an intellectual paradigm that rejects the view that evidence can be discovered independently from the researcher's consciousness and interpretation. To me, the Civitas Institute is a response to such reinterpretation of the empirical search for evidence by social scientists.

In addition to your teaching career, you have had opportunities to engage in policy-making roles, most notably as a member of the President's Council of Economic Advisors. How do you view the intersection of academia and public policy?

I was appointed by President Trump as one of three Members of his Council of Economic Advisors and served from September 2017-May 2019 after becoming emeritus at Cornell. The CEA is unique in that its only official duty is to provide advice to the President and hence its communications are not subject to the Freedom of Information Act. Importantly, our task was not to make policy but to provide advice on the behavioral and distributional consequences of the public policies that political members of the executive branch of government were considering. While my career in academics prepared me to provide such advice, doing so under the time pressures within the White House and the intense scrutiny of the press was a major change. What made the job possible was the leadership of Kevin Hassett as CEA Chair and the dedication of the relatively small staff of economists, almost all of whom were, like me, academic economists coming to the CEA for a year or so or economists on leave from their career jobs in other federal government offices.

There seems to be a growing concern regarding academic freedom and diversity of thought within higher education. Do you find cause for concern? If so, what should be done?

I am quite proud of the University of Chicago's leadership role in the preservation and celebration of the freedom of expression on college campuses as articulated in its 2014 *Report of the Committee on Freedom of Expression*. Since my earliest days there as a student on campus in the turbulent 1970s, through my career as an academic, I have agreed with this statement in their 2014 Report on the relative risks and rewards of such a policy:

> Of course, the ideas of different members of the University community will often and quite naturally conflict. But it is not the proper role of the University to attempt to shield individuals from ideas and opinions they find unwelcome, disagreeable, or even deeply offensive. Although the University greatly values civility, and although all members of the University community share in the responsibility for maintaining a climate of mutual respect, concerns about civility and mutual respect can never be used as a justification for closing off discussion of ideas, however offensive or disagreeable those ideas may be to some members of our community

What advice would you give to a graduate student interested in pursuing a career in research or academia?

Some people know what they want to do at a very early age. That wasn't exactly true for me, except that I thought I wanted to be a teacher of some sort. So mostly my philosophy was: when given a choice between two options take the one that gives you the most freedom to decide what you want to do with the rest of your life. I changed my major three times in undergraduate school (engineering to math to economics). I then applied to the Peace Corps and was accepted but went to graduate school because I got a Research Assistantship at Rutgers. I left after two years and taught math for a year in a local high school and then decided to go into the Peace Corps as a math teacher in Jamaica. While there I applied to the University of Chicago, since after two years at Rutgers I had learned enough economics to know that Chicago was where I wanted to study if I was going to get a Ph.D. in economics. I was accepted without funding but had enough money saved to finance my first year. I eventually got a Research Assistantship there. I had a couple of Assistant Professor offers from a couple of mid-level universities but decided to take a three year offer as a Research Associate at the Institute for Research on Poverty (first year spent in DC at HHS) to see if I could really do original, independent research on public policy issues. I could and the rest is history—Vanderbilt, Syracuse, Melbourne, Cornell, CEA, Civitas Institute.

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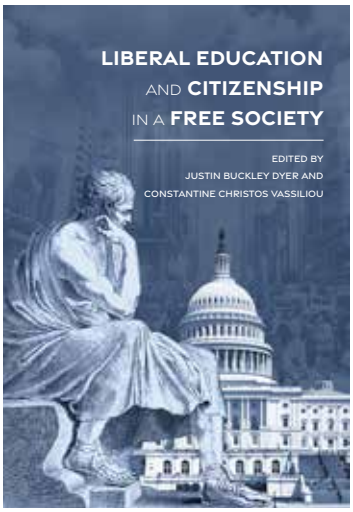
In a free society, education in and for freedom is closely connected to education in and for citizenship.

Liberal Education and Citizenship in a Free Society

Edited by Justin Buckley Dyer and Constantine Christos Vassiliou (University of Missouri Press, 2023)

Liber, the Latin word meaning *free*, is the etymological root of *liberal*, and a liberal education was, in its original conception, an education befitting a free man. We have largely moved in higher education from the seven liberal arts to a general education, but this remains closely connected to the idea of freedom. Harvard University's 1945 report *General Education in a Free Society* noted that "if one cling[s] to the root meaning of liberal as that which befits or helps to make free men, then general and liberal education have identical goals." The crucial difference is that general education is to be generally available, the province of every citizen rather than the few whose leisure is made possible by other men's labor.



At its best, general education in a modern democratic society aims to make citizens free from prejudice, parochialism, and superstition; free to form and exercise reasoned judgment, to acquire new knowledge, and to master new subjects; and, finally, free to engage in society and in government as one who can, as Aristotle put it, rule and be ruled in turn. Like liberal education, general education thus aims to be a liberating education. In a free society, education in and for freedom is closely connected to education in and for citizenship.

If might is not to be confused with right, then there must be a shared wisdom about the use of man's freedom. Liberal education is at once a liberating education and a quest for wisdom about how to live freely.