



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
College of Humanities

FEARLESS INQUIRIES

PERSPECTIVES SERIES

**PROGRAM &
DISCUSSION GUIDE**

TUESDAY, APRIL 26, 2022

NATIONAL PRESS CLUB
WASHINGTON, DC

ABOUT THE SERIES

The Perspectives Series is the anchor initiative of the Fearless Inquiries Project, a long-term, flagship effort designed to catalyze a national culture that prizes open discussion, independent judgement and the questioning of stubborn assumptions. The project is made possible by a generous gift commitment from University of Arizona College of Humanities Alumni Jacquelynn and Bennett Dorrance.

The inaugural event in the series, “How Free is Speech on Campus, and Does it Matter” is aimed at countering what cultural critic and former President of the American Enterprise Institute Arthur Brooks has called a “culture of contempt.” This event will model a thoughtful conversation on a contentious issue to demonstrate the value of humanities-based education in public discourse.

During the event, presenters and guests will demonstrate a framework to test assumptions and beliefs for veracity, to practice civil discourse, to learn how to “disagree better,” and to better understand how opinions and beliefs can naturally change over time. This event seeks active participation and dialogue. We look forward to your participation.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

The format of the national Perspectives conversation series is modeled after the Fred Friendly Socratic Seminars, which for more than 30 years compelled participants to discuss and make hard choices about complex and challenging situations that impact life in America.

Panelists will engage in conversation with the moderator and each other as they answer questions and examine their choices related to a challenging hypothetical scenario presented at the start of the conversation. This format facilitates the audience’s understanding of the perceptions and decision-making processes of each panelist, challenges them to examine—and possibly rethink—stuck positions, and gain a greater appreciation for and acceptance of our differences.

“Our job is not to make up anyone’s mind, but to open minds—to make the agony of decision-making so intense that you can escape only by thinking.”

FRED W. FRIENDLY

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 How would you answer the question posed in the title of program, based on tonight's conversation? **How free is speech on campus? Does it matter?** What challenges exist related to those questions?
- 2 Which speaker viewpoints resonated most strongly for you? Why? Which challenged your convictions? Why? How does considering the various perspectives on the topic influence your own opinions?
- 3 What role do you think higher education should play in teaching students about their constitutional rights (both inside and outside the classroom)? How can higher education best underscore the importance of free speech in a robust democratic society?
- 4 Our argument is that the skills conferred by studying the humanities — through the study of languages, literatures, and cultures — are essential for creating an environment in which various perspectives are respected and considered, even if disagreements remain. Do you agree? Were there speaker comments that serve as good examples?
- 5 A corollary argument is that the principles of civil discourse are essential to navigating free speech's complexity. What examples of civil discourse were most meaningful this evening?
- 6 How would you describe the line between safeguarding freedom of speech and the recognition that the right to free speech exists for all, including the right to criticize in response?
- 7 How does tonight's discussion of free speech on campus relate to the broader issue of free speech in the United States today (including the spread of misinformation, propaganda and conspiracy theories; coordinated social media harassment; and legislation and executive actions that ban books, outlaws the teaching of certain subjects in school, and prohibit professors from testifying in court)?
- 8 What practices can you implement in your own life that might make good on our hope that as a culture we can elevate the quality of our disagreement while also making good on the founding language of the Constitution, which sought to create "a more perfect union, establish justice, and insure domestic tranquility," among other aims?

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The program will follow a scenarios-based format during which the moderator, Keith Allred, will present hypothetical storylines and outline a problem for speakers Jeff Chang, Michelle Deutchman, and Bill Kristol to discuss, leveraging insight from their respective areas of professional expertise and unique personal experience. The conversation will model how people from different positions can contribute important perspectives to the overall understanding of a topic without censoring, bullying, or shutting down, a demonstration that promises to deepen our understanding of the complexity of the issue at hand.



moderator

Keith Allred is the Executive Director of the National Institute for Civil Discourse (NICD) at the University of Arizona. He leads NICD's work to build the nation's capacity to engage our differences constructively, including through its CommonSense American program which brings Republicans, Democrats, and Independents together from across the country to find and champion solutions with broad support. Allred was the first professor of negotiation and conflict resolution at the Harvard Kennedy School.



Jeff Chang is a leader in racial justice movements and speaks and writes frequently on history, culture, politics, and music, with experience leading student-centered programs at Stanford as Executive Director of the Institute for Diversity in the Arts, a national model for equipping undergraduate students with skills to steward the power of the arts for social change. He is currently a Senior Advisor to Race Forward, a national policy and movement-building non-profit organization seeking racial justice.



Michelle Deutchman is the Executive Director of the University of California's National Center for Free Speech and Civic Engagement, working across all 10 UC campuses to shape and respond to national and campus discourse regarding free speech. A lecturer in law at UCLA, she previously served as Western States Counsel for the Anti-Defamation League, training both administrators and law enforcement officers in safeguarding free speech while maintaining inclusive environments on campus.



William Kristol is a journalist and commentator for national news networks, speaking on a wide range of topics including foreign policy, constitutional law, and political philosophy. He was the Founder and Editor-at-large of *The Weekly Standard*, an influential journal of politics and ideas; he is currently Editor-at-large of *The Bulwark*. Kristol led the Project for the Republican Future, shaping Republican political strategy from the late 20th century to the present. He has hosted many conversations on his video platform "Conversations with Bill Kristol" on free speech and education.

To learn more about the Perspectives Series and other project initiatives, visit: fearlessinquiries.arizona.edu