



Democracy

Days 2022

September 19 through 22

St. Charles Community College

stchas.edu/democracysdays

Welcome to the 22nd annual SCC Democracy Days!

Thank you for joining us on campus and online for this event. There has never been a better time to learn more about democracy and to practice it.

This year's program features 17 sessions with faculty and staff from 14 academic disciplines and program areas. Three sessions are being led by SCC students. More than half a dozen guest speakers are coming to SCC to address the urgent issues confronting us.

What a time to be alive.

This nation is more divided than it has been since the middle of the 19th century. Partisanship has given way to political tribalism, a phenomenon that is fueled by and reflected in our media consumption. One result: We lack a common narrative not just about theories of governance but about the pandemic, public education, criminal justice and policing, and the 2020 election. That's hardly everything, but let's dwell momentarily on the last one, the election, which was certified at the federal and state level, with recounts and five dozen court cases all coming to the same result. Yet the losing candidate as recently as three weeks ago is publicly demanding to be reinstated as President or for there to be a re-do of the election. Customary notions of "law and order" have gone by the wayside.

We are not alone. Internationally, democracy is "under siege," according to Freedom House, a nongovernmental organization which monitors democracy, freedom and human rights globally. Will democracy lose out to authoritarianism? We cannot sit passively and wait and see.

It is Good that we gather for reasoned discourse on these matters. Great and lasting thanks to our presenters and panelists and to the many people who have enabled these efforts including AV systems engineer Nick Wallace, Mike Caito and Peggy Schnardthorst in Marketing & Communication, website specialist Harry Morris, social media assistant / consultant Lindsay Brand, executive director of the Foundation Betsy Schneider, Housekeeping, Department of Public Safety, the Copy Center and the SCC administration.

Michael Kuelker
Professor (Emeritus) of English
Democracy Days organizer 2001-present

P.S. How is the agenda set? Every year, the D DAYS program is composed out of the energies and commitments of those who step forward to participate. Each spring semester since 2001, an all-faculty/all-staff email goes out at SCC querying for participants for that autumn's forum. No one who has proposed a session has ever been turned down. There you go! It's all about "Get Up Stand Up."

Monday, Sept. 19

10 Democracy, Dictatorship and War

In the post-Cold War era, it was commonly believed that democracy was ascendant, with the expectation that dictatorships would become a thing of the past. Today it is democracy that is in retreat, and Europe has seen a shocking example of tyrannical imperialism. **Gabe Harper** (SCC Political Science) will discuss the prospects of democracy worldwide and its potential to make war a thing of the past.

11:30 Teach-In: Abortion Access in Missouri

Join Gender Studies scholar **Brenda Boudreau** (McKendree University) for a Teach-In about abortion access. Practical takeaways include: learning how to dispel misinformation, learning how to use inclusive and fact-based language, and finding out what you can do to help the state of reproductive freedom. Joining the discussion will be **Annie Sakura** (SCC English) and session moderator **Jayme Novara** (SCC English).

1 *Crip Camp* [film]

Join us for an excerpt from the documentary *Crip Camp: A Disability Revolution* followed by a 30-minute discussion led by **Paige George** (SCC Disability Support Services Manager). The film shares with insight, clarity, humor and beauty the experiences of one group of disabled young people and their journey to activism and adulthood. In so doing, the film provides an opportunity for all to delve into the rich and complicated history of disability activism, culture and history. Community-led screenings and conversations can elevate and amplify diverse voices in the disability community, build capacity for advocacy and activism and provide space for people to connect and share their stories.

2:30 Feeding Democracy: Food as Politics

From corporate food production to agricultural policy, and from the local grocery to the backyard BBQ, our food system and our food choices are unavoidably political. Join **Mike Dewes** (SCC Culinary) and a smorgasbord of local food system experts for a heaping helping of food politics.



Tuesday, Sept. 20

9 **Fight to the End**

Gun rights. Questioning elections. "Cancel culture." Assassination. International aggression. Perhaps more than at any other time in living memory, democracy itself seems to be rife with conflict arising from external opponents as well as within. Can't we all just get along? Should we even want to? Join **Charles DeBord** (SCC Philosophy) in unpacking a philosophy that claims that democracy's struggles are a feature, not a bug: our very existence as conscious human beings guarantees it. The conclusion may shock and offend you, but just remember, you're always free to disagree!

10 **Politics, Democracy, Psychology**

This presentation will center on the use of psychological principles in understanding the current rise of tribalism in politics. How that tribalism threatens the democratic process and how it isn't simply a case of "both sides doing the same thing." **Marvin Tobias** (SCC Psychology) will talk about how identity and emotionality have tainted the political process, and the presentation will conclude with tools and correctives which can hopefully promote a better democratic process.

11:30 **Why Are Books Dangerous? A Historical and Literary Case for Reading Banned Books**

Corey Porter (SCC English), **Rachel McWhorter** (SCC English), **Michael Kuelker** (SCC English) and panel moderator **Grace Moser** (SCC History) confront the issue of censorship that is splashing across the news and social media, and answer the question, *Why?* Why are these books deemed so dangerous that they required removal from public and school library bookshelves? The panel will address the history of banned books and moral panics and look at the latest books objected to by school and library boards around the country. Attend to find out why we should care about protecting this right to read "banned" books.

REGISTER TO VOTE in Missouri

@ sos.mo.gov

deadline is Oct. 12, 2022

1 Critical Disability Theory

US society continues to challenge what “democracy” looks like at the site of our bodies and our identities – recognizing a long heritage of white supremacy and heteronormativity. Yet mainstream society has only begun to confront our latent ableism in these conversations. Critical Disability Theory offers a lens to view disability not as a “property of bodies” but rather as a set of “cultural rules about what bodies should be or do” (Rosemarie Garland-Thomson).

From stock characters in mythology and literature, where physical disabilities have too often represented “character flaws,” to contemporary images of the “super-crip” mascot for those that overcome a fate “worse than death” (picture Christopher Reeves in his chair, “Super Man” as the copy, on 48-foot wide billboards) – disability problematically continues to function as the margins by which “normal” society may feel reassured of itself. This panel will share some tenets of CDT and have an open discussion about the micro-aggressions to outright injustices our society still perpetuates around the idea of “disability” – and what we might do to challenge them in the name of democracy. **Rachel McWhorter** (SCC English) is our panel moderator.

2:30 Russia & Ukraine: What Our Students Are Saying

What impact has the Russian-Ukrainian conflict had on SCC English as a Second Language students and on international/immigrant students in general? **Dawn Huffman**, who has taught language learners for 27 years, will explore the accounts of students who are attempting to study in a non-native language while having to cope with a myriad of emotions that arise in times of war. In addition, she will explain how the classroom can become a haven for students who are from conflict-ridden cultures and/or divided nations.



Map of Ukraine [source: public domain]

Wednesday, Sept. 21

10 Pushing Back Against the Bans: Libraries and Intellectual Freedom

This panel of SCC librarians and information professionals will address the recent and ongoing challenges of books in America's schools and best strategies for addressing the challenges. The panel will be made up of local librarians, members of Missouri Library Association's Intellectual Freedom Committee, and an attorney from the ACLU who is working against these recent bans. We will discuss the history of banning books in libraries and schools, what led us to where we are today, and how to best address things going forward.

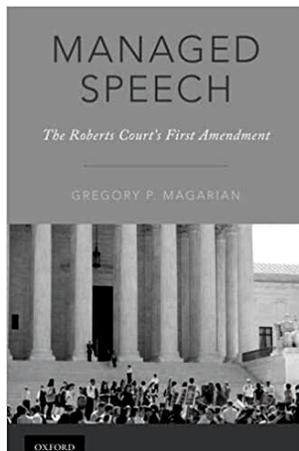
11:30 The U.S. Constitution and the Insurrection of Jan. 6, 2021

Democracy Days 2022's keynote address will be delivered by a specialist on the U.S. Constitution who will examine this founding document in light of Jan. 6, 2021. **Gregory Magarian** is Thomas and Karole Green Professor of Law at Washington University School of Law in St. Louis and the author of *Managed Speech: The Roberts Court's First Amendment* (Oxford Univ. Press, 2017).



Prof. Magarian teaches and writes about U.S. constitutional law, with emphasis on the freedom of expression. His work also examines church and state, firearms regulation, and regulations of the political process.

Prof. Magarian has published widely in leading law journals, made numerous scholarly presentations, and taught and lectured at universities around the world. He served as a judicial clerk for Justice John Paul Stevens of the U.S. Supreme Court and Judge Louis Oberdorfer of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. He practiced law at Jenner and Block in Washington, D.C. and taught at Villanova University before joining the Washington University faculty in 2008.



Managed Speech: The Roberts Court's First Amendment is now available in the SCC Library.

This presentation is sponsored by SCC History.

1 **My Body, My Choice?**

The Supreme Court has overturned the constitutional right to an abortion. In recent months, some states have banned all abortions, including those caused by rape and incest, while other states proposed laws that will label abortion as homicide and seek the death penalty for women seeking abortion. Meanwhile, other states are proposing laws that ban certain types of contraception. This panel confronts the implications of the new and proposed laws. **Kate Weber** (SCC History) explores the history of abortion and other restrictions on women's bodily autonomy. **Dana Prewitt** (SCC Sociology) will discuss the sociological impact of this ruling on American women. **Paul Roesler** (SCC Political Science) will examine the Constitutional roots of the Right to Privacy, and how its elimination will weaken other bodily autonomy rights, including birth control and gay sex.

2:30 **What's Going On? A Satirical Look at America Through the Eyes of Educators**

Gregory Bosworth (SCC Dean of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences) chairs a panel offering a critical examination of America through the lenses of educational professionals who are on the front lines of the anti-intellectual movement that has permeated many facets of our daily lives. From mass shootings, the overturning of *Roe vs. Wade*, the Jan 6 Committee, inflation, and the war in Ukraine, we will speak on topics that we as everyday Americans are dealing with in our homes as well as the classroom. Joining Dr. Bosworth for this provocative discussion will be **Dana Prewitt** (SCC Sociology), **Nicole Nunn-Faron** (SCC Education), **Laura Barbarick** (SCC Psychology) and **Kate Weber** (SCC History).

Thursday, Sept. 22

10 **Can Capitalism Guarantee Democracy?**

William Baca-Mejia (SCC Economics) delves into the relationship of capitalism and democracy. Orthodox economists, such as Milton Friedman, tend to suggest the causality between capitalism and freedom and that capitalism leads to a better democracy. Nonetheless, the classical liberal notion of capitalism is one thing, and capitalism has evolved into different market structures that go against what we know as democracy. To be more precise, the reflections of John Maynard Keynes on his "Am I Liberal?" or "Economic Possibilities for Our Grandchildren," suggest that we should be wary of the orthodox interpretation of the link between the economic and political spheres of society. Understanding the complexities between the economic and the political systems helps us to see how the process of accumulation works in favor or against democracy.

10 Interfaith Panel Discussion on Abortion**

venue: College Center (CC) Rotunda aka The Cave

Rev. Rebecca Turner, Pastor of Maplewood United Church of Christ, engages in an interfaith dialogue on abortion with **Rev. Emma Holley**, Pastor at Faith Des Peres Presbyterian Church, and **Sonya Vann**, Minister at Christ the King UCC in Florissant and Executive Director of Central Reform Congregation in St Louis. This session will take place in the College Center (CC) Rotunda (“The Cave”).

11:30 The ADA in Higher Education: A Student Panel

Paige George (SCC Disability Support Services Manager) offers a short history of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as it relates to higher education. A panel of students who are receiving accommodations at SCC, or have in the past, will discuss the challenges that they have faced and the solutions that have worked for them. This session will raise awareness about disability issues and give an opportunity for everyone on campus to learn more about the disabled student’s experiences.

1 The Poetry & Prose of Protest

The current political climate of the United States has created an environment that is rife for protest in its many forms: marches, picket lines, vigils, speeches. This panel examines another form of popular protest with a rich history: the written word. Following a brief history of the use of literature as protest, members of the Fall 2022 **Creative Writing II class** taught by **Joe Baumann** (SCC English) will present their protest writing and discuss their motivations and inspirations for writing, as well as what they hope the power of art and the written word can achieve in a time of turmoil and upheaval.

2:30 Jennifer Ambler’s Political Parody in Blue **

venue: main stage of the Fine Arts Bldg (FAB)

Jennifer Ambler is a serious political junkie. No really, she’s got a problem! Her obsession results in writing hilarious parody songs about the insanity of the American political system. It’s Weird Al meets Schoolhouse Rock. Ambler is a native of Florida. She attended the University of Florida, majoring in Political Science and interning for her Senator in DC. She spent 10 years in New York pursuing her Broadway and musical theatre dreams. In 2017, she launched Parody in Blue, a performing arts company dedicated to talking about current issues through musical comedy. She lives in Georgia. This presentation, sponsored by SCC Student Life, will take place on the main stage of the Shook Fine Arts Building (FAB).

7 pm The Kinloch Doc [film]

A documentary film on Kinloch, a city in St. Louis County that has undergone profound social, political and economic changes since its inception in the 19th century. See full description at stchas.edu/democracysdays.