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Dordt Prepares for PPCI

Jeff Taylor

Dordt University, jeff.taylor@dordt.edu

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Dordt Prepares for PPCI

Abstract

Posting about the upcoming Presidential Politics of Iowa Conference to be held at Dordt University, October 24-27, 2019, from *In All Things* - an online journal for critical reflection on faith, culture, art, and every ordinary-yet-graced square inch of God's creation.

<https://inallthings.org/dordt-prepares-for-ppci/>

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Disciplines

American Politics

Comments

In All Things is a publication of the [Andreas Center for Reformed Scholarship and Service at Dordt University](#).

in things

September 30, 2019

Dordt Prepares for PPCI

Jeff Taylor

Coming up soon—from Thursday evening, October 24, through Saturday noon, October 26—the Andreas Center and Political Science Department of Dordt University will be hosting the Presidential Politics Conference of Iowa (PPCI).



PRESIDENTIAL POLITICS
CONFERENCE OF IOWA
DORDT UNIVERSITY | OCT 24-26, 2019



Emma Green



John Inazu



Daniel McCarthy



Michael Wear

PPCI is a unique event involving scholars, students, candidates, reporters, and citizens. It will occur in the context of an academic conference, but will be more than that—it will be a celebration of grassroots democracy and the Iowa caucuses. We find a good mix of political scientists, historians, and practitioners of other disciplines as we focus on presidential elections and presidential power.

The underlying theme of our conference is “executive leadership for the common good.” A variety of methodologies, both qualitative and quantitative, are welcome at PPCI. We aim to help bridge the gap between theory and practice. Politicians do not read scholarly journals. Few voters and activists read them either. Politics is not just something about which we study and write; it’s something that we do.

The keynote speakers we will be hearing from are Emma Green of *The Atlantic*, Daniel McCarthy of *Modern Age*, John Inazu of Washington University, and Michael Wear of The AND Campaign. Each of the four is a distinguished analyst of American politics.

In addition to political topics, Green writes frequently about religion, and her work has appeared in venues such as the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*. McCarthy is a past editor-in-chief of *The American Conservative*, a magazine co-founded by Pat Buchanan; *Modern Age* journal was founded by conservative thinker Russell Kirk. With expertise on First Amendment freedoms and political civility, Professor Inazu teaches criminal law and law & religion. After serving as a White House staffer in the Obama Administration, Wear led faith outreach for the Obama 2012 campaign; he is a pro-life Democrat.

PPCI has no “party line.” Featured speakers exemplify a variety of viewpoints and we will be hosting a diverse group of participants. In addition to our four keynote speakers, we now have two presidential candidates scheduled to appear: Joe Sestak and Tulsi Gabbard.

Sestak is a former Deputy Chief of Naval Operations, former U.S. Representative (D-PA), and former Democratic nominee for U.S. Senate. Admiral Sestak has a PhD in government from Harvard University. Gabbard is a U.S. Representative (D-HI), Major in the Hawaii Army National Guard, and former Vice Chair of the Democratic National Committee. Congresswoman Gabbard placed Bernie Sanders’ name in nomination for president at the 2016 national convention.

Too often, those with power in American society obscure the most important matters in elections in favor of things like cult of personality, media-generated distractions, who’s-up-who’s-down polling, and *demos*-dividing secondary issues. We hope to go deeper. We are interested not only in who wins presidential elections but why they win and

what they do with their resulting power. The heart of politics is power. As the seat of coercive power, government has great potential for both good and evil. The foundational question for political philosophy is “Who rules?”

In the end, things like truth and peace, human scale and Kingdom values, ideological thought and grassroots action, institutional traits and historical trajectories, are more important than which Democrat or which Republican rides a quadrennial wave of corporate money and platitudinous rhetoric into the Oval Office.

Dordt University is in the tradition of Reformed Christianity. One of our intellectual exemplars is Abraham Kuyper, Dutch theologian and statesman from a century ago. Such thinkers offer a cross-ideological paradigm for political thought. Our keynote speakers are known for their ability to see beyond conventional wisdom. Our scheduled papers reflect this depth as well.

Contrary to shallow thinking and partisan assumptions, it is possible for us to care about both social justice *and* limited government, liberty *and* morality, individualism *and* community. Life is rich with meaning and nuanced in development. Our politics and analyses should be equally rich and nuanced.

In 2015, our conference had a range of attendees: teachers and students, representing both public and private schools, from about 25 different states. We expect a similar mix this year. The Iowa Conference on Presidential Politics promises to be interesting, and we hope you will be able to join us.