

constitutional conversations

Program Schedule

**All workshops will be hosted at the Williamsburg Library
515 Scotland Street | Williamsburg VA, 23185**

October 6, 2011 6:30 – 8:00 PM: *The Constitution Outside of the Constitution*

Many commentators have argued that the American “constitution” consists of a much wider range of legal materials than the document ratified in 1789 and its subsequent amendments. During this workshop we will explore the legal norms and texts that have shaped and reshaped the contours of our constitutional government.

November 3, 2011 6:30 – 8:00 PM: *Are Judges Political? Judicial Review and Theories of Constitutional Interpretation*

The Supreme Court’s decision to use its authority to review the constitutionality of federal, state, and local laws is one of the most politically sensitive and consequential acts the Court can undertake. During this workshop we will explore the concept of judicial review, as well as the impact of different theories of constitutional interpretation on judicial behavior.

December 1, 2011 6:30 – 8:00 PM: *The Federal Legislative Power*

A basic principle of American government is that Congress may act only if there is express or implied authority to act in the Constitution. During this workshop we will explore Congress’s authority under the Constitution to legislate, as well as the extent to which legislative actors shape constitutional law.

January 19, 2012 6:30 – 8:00 PM: *The Federal Executive Power*

Ever since American Historian Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. used “imperial presidency” as a book title, the term has become central to the debate over the balance of power under our system of government. During this workshop we will explore the boundaries of the Federal Executive Power, as well as the debate over what many view as the ascendancy of executive authority in our constitutional system.

February 2, 2012 6:30 – 8:00 PM: *The Structure of the Constitution's Protection of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties*

The text of the Constitution contains few provisions concerning individual liberties. In part, this was because the framers believed that an enumeration of rights was unnecessary. The government they had created was one of limited powers. Government officials were not authorized to violate basic liberties. Additionally, many framers believed that the enumeration of some rights would lead individuals to believe those not listed were not protected. Despite this, a Bill of Rights, protecting individual rights, was ultimately drafted and ratified. During this workshop we will explore how the various provisions of the Constitution and Bill of Rights protect our most precious civil rights and civil liberties.

March 1, 2012 6:30 – 8:00 PM: *The States and American Federalism*

Federalism in the United States is the evolving relationship between state governments and the federal government of the United States. Since the drafting of the U.S. Constitution, and particularly with the end of the American Civil War, power has shifted away from the states and toward the national government. During this workshop we will explore the historical foundations and future of Federalism in America.

April 5, 2012 6:30 – 8:00 PM: *Economic Liberties*

Economic liberties generally refer to constitutional rights concerning the ability to enter into and enforce contracts, as well as to acquire, possess, and convey property. During this workshop we will explore how the Supreme Court's treatment of government economic regulation has changed over time.

May 3, 2012 6:30 – 8:00 PM: *Workshop Wrap Up: Special Program*

For more information please contact Julie Silverbrook at julie.silverbrook@constitutionalconversations.org or visit us at <http://constitutionalconversations.org/>