

Celebrating Democracy Conference 2005

sponsored by

*Sam Houston State University's
American Democracy Project*



Opening Session: Monday, November 14th 10:00 - 10:50 LSC 304

Joyce McCauley *Sam Houston's American Democracy Project*

Sam Houston State University is one of 183 colleges and universities actively involved in a movement to create democratic climates on campuses that encourage civic engagement. This multi-campus initiative, the American Democracy Project, grew from a collective concern about decreasing rates of participation in the civic life of America, in volunteerism, in voting, in advocacy, and in other forms of community involvement that are necessary for the vitality of our democracy. A core belief of the American Democracy Project is service to others. Our university motto, "A measure of a life is its service," reflects that belief.

Session-I: Monday, November 14th 11:00 - 11:50 LSC 304

Paul Loeffler *Our Democratic Campus Culture: A Vision of the American Democracy Project*

Universities are not in the business of educating students; they are about the business of making better societies. What kind of democratic society do we want? What are the characteristics of a community of learners dedicated to democratic principles? What does it mean to have a democratic classroom or a democratic campus? What are our interactive responsibilities as faculty, students, staff, and community partners? Who do we want as our graduates?

Session-II: Monday, November 14th 1:00 - 1:50 LSC 304

Tamara Waggener *SHSU Student Organizations and Voting*

Student organizations can use various methods to increase voting awareness and voting registration/voting turnout among students, including programs designed to increase students' awareness of local political issues, events aimed at strengthening the connection between local government officials and SHSU students, and forums structured to encourage students to participate in local civic affairs.

Session-III: Monday, November 14th 2:00 - 2:50 LSC 304

Carol Parker *Critical Friends Groups: Protocols to Advance Learning on Campus*

Critical Friends Groups, originating from the Coalition of Essential Schools, have been used in public schools to improve teaching and learning. Although primarily used by teachers for faculty development, several protocols can be developed to further enrich discussions and increase learning in university classrooms. Focusing on several ways to foster democratic and equitable classroom practices, participants use a structured protocol and learn how to improve a class discussion.

Session-IV: Monday, November 14th 3:00 - 3:50 LSC 304

John Newbold *A Community-Based Learning Experience*

Over the past three years, the Management and Marketing Department has offered a community-based learning experience as part of its capstone marketing course. Students have been called upon to create marketing plans for small businesses in the Huntsville area. One of the primary instructors explains how the course was constructed, how it has evolved, and how student and community impacts are assessed.

Session-V: Tuesday, November 15th 10:00 - 10:50 LSC 304
Ann Holder, Director of Library Services *Freedom of Expression*
Linda Meyer, Head of Access Services

This session presents the theoretical basis for the First Amendment, including the requirement for freedom of information in a democracy, legal challenges to it, and the role of libraries in providing access to materials with diverse perspectives.

Display: Tuesday, November 15th 1:00 - 5:00 NGL
Newton Greshom Library *Banned and Challenged Books*

The display will include books that have been challenged nationally and within Texas. Most of these have been children's books or books purchased for schools. Some have been retained in school districts, others have been restricted in use, and still others have been removed entirely from the schools within a district. Adult books that have been challenged or banned are also displayed. Although fewer in number, what is appropriate or allowable reading for adults continues to be a controversial issue.

Session-VI: Tuesday, November 15th 3:30 - 4:20 LSC 304
Jennifer T. Roberts *Democracy, Diversity, and Higher Education*

This interactive and informative session addresses the current state of democracy and diversity in higher education where participants will brainstorm the question of how higher education can expand initiatives for democracy and diversity to better educate and accommodate the needs of all students, faculty, and staff.

Session-VII: Wednesday, November 16th 11:00 - 11:50 LSC 304
Thomas H. Cox *Commerce, the Constitution, and Civil Liberties*

After the creation of the U.S. Constitution, many Americans wondered whether the fledgling government would survive. Two hundred years later the federal government wields incredible power over our lives. Much of this authority flows not from federal power to defend the nation or to raise taxes but through Congress' ability to regulate interstate trade. This session charts the growth of federal commerce power and examines the ways that ordinary farmers, businessmen, religious groups, and social reformers have used the commerce clause to regulate trade and political issues such as selling alcohol, controlling firearms, promoting civil rights, and fighting the war on terror.

Session-VIII: Wednesday, November 15th 2:00 - 2:50 LSC 304
Jeffrey L. Littlejohn *James Madison Meets the Modern Era: The Constitutional Revolution of the Mid-Twentieth Century*

This presentation examines the Constitutional Revolution that took place in America as a result of the New Deal, World War II, and the Civil Rights era, reconciling "ole' Jimmie", the Father of the Constitution, with some of the great 20th century issues.

Keynote Speaker: Wednesday, November 15th 3:00 - 4:20 LSC Theater
Dennis Donovan *Public Achievement: A Vehicle for Repairing the Roots of Democracy*
Center for Democracy and Citizenship
Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs
University of Minnesota

The session examines process designed to engage people in citizenship and democracy. Democracy is neither a spectators' sport nor an activity exclusive to politicians. All of us have great ideas and wonderful talents. We can learn the skills of public engagement. We can make a difference by doing "everyday politics" to create a better world. Public Achievement is an international civic engagement initiative with theory and practice. The roots of Public Achievement are found in the civil rights movement of the 1960's. Examples of its work on other campuses and in many communities will be shared to reinforce the idea that community organizing is a constructive tool for cultural change. Democracy is the work of the people.

Session-IX: Thursday, November 17th 11:00 - 11:50 LSC 304

Frank Blazek

Juries and the Importance of Jury Duty

Smither, Martin, Henderson & Blazek, P.C.

From the perspective of a former District Attorney and practicing defense attorney, this session addresses a proposed juror's bill of rights, the role of an individual juror, the role of the jury as a deliberative body, the need for accuracy, the need for the appearance of fairness, and the recognition that an imperfect system makes decisions that change lives forever.

Film Series: Thursday, November 17th 2:00 - 5:00 LSC Theater

Ralph Pease

"The Devil and Daniel Webster"

An Oscar winning classic, this marvelous film stands the test of time. William Dieterle's adaptation of Stephen Vincent Benet's book is a product of an exceptional Hollywood period that has never been repeated. "The execution of the story is remarkable, from elegant direction and incredible performances to innovative camera work and stylish scene arrangement." Bernard Herrmann's Oscar winning score works at dynamic levels throughout the film. The storyline concludes with Daniel Webster defending Jabez Stone in a climatic trial against Mr. Scratch and a jury of the damned. Webster's flowery rhetoric about democracy, patriotism, and the goodness of mankind rings true for all ages.

*For more information or to have a sign-up sheet for a class,
please contact Paul Loeffler at 294.1525 or loeffler@shsu.edu.*