

James Madison Program
in American Ideals and Institutions

AMERICAN CONSTITUTIONALISM AND THE LEGACY OF PROGRESSIVISM
A PUBLIC CONFERENCE

MAY 21 – 22, 2012
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The James Madison Program in American Ideals and Institutions, Princeton University

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The Association for the Study of Free Institutions, University of Nebraska at Omaha

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the election of 1912, which retired William Howard Taft from the presidency and elevated Woodrow Wilson in his place. That election featured a stark contrast between, on the one hand, a progressivism that sought to increase the power of government with a view to ameliorating economic inequality, and, on the other, an older constitutional conservatism committed to more strictly limited government. 2012 promises to see an election of no less historical import, and one involving similar themes. With the election in 2008 of Barack Obama, progressivism seemed once again ascendant, and the president and his supporters in Congress enacted ambitious legislation, most especially the health care act, animated by a progressive impulse to increase government's reach with the aim of addressing social and economic inequalities. This agenda, however, also provoked strenuous opposition. That opposition gave rise to a new movement in American politics, the "tea party," many of whose members have criticized the president's agenda not only as imprudently ambitious, but even as transcending constitutional limits on federal power.

These parallels remind us that the contest between progressivism and constitutional conservatism is an enduring aspect of modern American politics, one that may reflect a permanent tension in the nature of our regime. With a view to understanding that contest and that tension, along with their historical and contemporary implications for our politics, the James Madison Program in American Ideals and Institutions and the Association for the Study of Free Institutions are pleased to announce a conference on American Constitutionalism and the Legacy of Progressivism. The program includes scholars from a variety of disciplines in the social sciences and humanities speaking on issues relating to this theme. We seek to address a number of questions: How has progressivism influenced the development of American institutions? Has it merely adapted those institutions to new circumstances, or has it transformed them radically from their original character? What ideas and issues were contested in the election of 1912, and to what extent are they still in play today? What is the relationship of progressivism to the American founding? Can it claim to have philosophic roots in the founding, or does it represent ideas alien to the American regime as it was first established? How has progressivism influenced the development of American law and constitutional interpretation? Finally, and most generally, how does progressivism shape contemporary American politics and culture, and what is likely to be the future of its influence?

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6th Annual James Madison Program May Conference

MONDAY, MAY 21, 2012

10:30 to Noon **Presentation of Award of the Association for the Study of Free Institutions to James W. Ceaser**

Keynote Address

James W. Ceaser, *Harry F. Byrd Professor of Politics,*
Woodrow Wilson Department of Politics, University of Virginia

1:30 to 3:15 p.m. **Progressivism and Institutional Change**

Panelists: John J. Dinan, *Wake Forest University*
 Kenneth P. Miller, *Princeton University & Claremont McKenna College*
 Ralph A. Rossum, *Claremont McKenna College*
Chair: William B. Allen, *Michigan State University*

3:45 to 5:30 p.m. **The Election of 1912**

Panelists: Louise W. Knight, *Northwestern University*
 Sidney M. Milkis, *University of Virginia*
 Nick Salvatore, *Cornell University*
Chair: Daniel K. Williams, *Princeton University & University of West Georgia*

TUESDAY, MAY 22, 2012

9:15 to 11:00 a.m. **Progressivism and the American Founding**

Panelists: Alan R. Gibson, *California State University, Chico*
 Charles R. Kesler, *Claremont McKenna College*
 Johnathan O'Neill, *Georgia Southern University*
Respondent: William Kristol, *The Weekly Standard*
Chair: Carson L. Holloway, *University of Nebraska, Omaha*

11:30 to 1:15 p.m. **American Law and the Legacy of Progressivism**

Panelists: Barry Cushman, *Princeton University & University of Virginia*
 Ken I. Kersch, *Boston College*
 Paul D. Moreno, *Hillsdale College*
 Bradley C. S. Watson, *St. Vincent College*
Chair: Keith E. Whittington, *Princeton University*

2:45 to 4:30 p.m. **The Legacy of Progressivism in Contemporary American Politics and Culture: A Roundtable Discussion**

Panelists: James W. Ceaser, *University of Virginia*
 Patrick J. Deneen, *Georgetown University*
 Allen C. Guelzo, *Gettysburg College*
 William Kristol, *The Weekly Standard*
Chair: Robert P. George, *Princeton University*