



Law and Democracy

Students and scholars at the University of Virginia study the foundation and functions of democracy, the structures that uphold it and the practices that help it flourish.

Through special events, research, and courses and clinics **with experts in the field**, students engage deeply with the law to understand the unique culture, innovation and ideas that fuel and preserve America's government.

► Former U.S. Rep. **Liz Cheney**, who led the House committee investigating the Jan. 6 attack, speaks on the first night of the class Congress, Oversight and the Separation of Powers, with Professor Payvand Ahdout and lecturer **Tim Heaphy '91**, a former U.S. attorney who led the House investigation into the attack on the Capitol building.

Karsh Center for Law and Democracy

The Karsh Center for Law and Democracy is a nonpartisan legal organization at UVA Law School. The Karsh Center's mission is to promote understanding and appreciation of the principles and practices necessary for a well-functioning, pluralistic democracy, including civil discourse and democratic dialogue, civic engagement and citizenship, ethics and integrity in public office, and respect for the rule of law. The center supports these essential features of our democratic life through rigorous and cutting-edge legal and interdisciplinary scholarship and programming.

CENTER EVENTS

- Threats to Liberal Democracy: Affective Polarization, Populism and Inequality in the United States
- The Politics of Presidential Indictments, With Professors Cynthia Nicoletti and Frederick Schauer
- The Role of Statutory Principles in Reconciling LGBTQ+ Rights and Religious Freedom
- A Conversation With Justice Anthony Kennedy, With David Rubenstein
- The Charlottesville Trial: An Overview of *Sines v. Kessler*
- UVA Democracy Biennial: Crises, Opportunities, Freedoms
- Can the President Pardon Himself?

KARSH CENTER AFFILIATED FACULTY



► **Payvand Ahdout** focuses on modern uses of judicial power through the lens of federal courts, and recently won the Yale Law Journal's inaugural Emerging Scholar of the Year Award.

► **Aditya Bamzai** teaches administrative law, civil procedure, computer crime and conflicts of law. From 2019 to 2021, he served as a member of the Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board.

► **Melody C. Barnes**, the founding executive director of UVA's Karsh Institute of Democracy, served in the Obama administration as director of the White House Domestic Policy Council.



► **Michael D. Gilbert** teaches and writes about election law, legislation, and law and economics, as well as misinformation and corruption.

► **Craig Konnoth** explores issues of health and civil rights, and health data, in his scholarship. His work looks broadly at minority and marginalized communities, including the LGBTQ+ community.

► **Joy Milligan** studies the intersection of law and inequality, with a particular focus on race-based economic inequality, and federal officials' long-term role in extending racial segregation.



► **Kimberly Jenkins Robinson** leads the Center for the Study of Race and Law and the Education Rights Institute. She is an expert on how federal and state law and policy can close educational opportunity gaps.

► **Bertrall Ross** writes and teaches on democratic responsiveness and accountability, as well as the inclusion of marginalized communities in administrative and political processes.

► **Micah J. Schwartzman's** work focuses on law and religion, jurisprudence, political philosophy and constitutional law.

Karsh Center Distinguished Fellows



► **Eugene R. Fidell** is one of the nation's leading experts on military law. He served as a judge advocate in the U.S. Coast Guard and has represented personnel in every branch of the armed forces.

► **Linda Greenhouse** teaches The Institutional Supreme Court. She covered the Supreme Court for The New York Times between 1978 and 2008 and writes a biweekly op-ed column on law.

► **Chinh Q. Le '00** is a visiting professor of practice at the Law School. From 2011 to 2021, he served as legal director of the Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia.



► **Retired Judge J. Michael Luttig '81** served on the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals from 1991-2006, having been appointed by President George H.W. Bush, and in other federal government roles at the Justice Department and White House.

► **Robert S. Mueller III '73** was the nation's sixth FBI director, transforming the agency in the wake of Sept. 11. In 2017, Mueller was appointed special counsel to oversee the investigation of Russian government efforts to interfere in the 2016 presidential election and related matters.

► Now a partner at WilmerHale, **Aaron Zebley '96** served as the deputy special counsel under Special Counsel Robert S. Mueller III for the duration of the office's investigation.

► UVA Law and the Karsh Center for Law and Democracy recently hosted the Annual Law and Religion Roundtable, led in part by Professor Micah Schwartzman. The two-day symposium brings together an international group of ideologically diverse scholars to discuss works in progress and emerging issues involving religious freedom.



CONTACT

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STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Common Law Grounds

Common Law Grounds is a student-faculty group that encourages discussion and debate among students and faculty across the ideological spectrum, with the goal of identifying and articulating areas of agreement about core values and practices, isolating points of substantive disagreement while also looking for common ground, and fostering a culture of open and civil dialogue about legal and political issues.

The society aims to help revitalize and transform the legal debate, restoring the fundamental principles of respect for human dignity, protection of individual rights and liberties, genuine equality and access to justice to their rightful—and traditionally central—place in American law.

Federalist Society

The Federalist Society for Law and Public Policy Studies promotes awareness and application of the following principles: that the state exists to preserve freedom, that the separation of governmental powers is central to the U.S. Constitution and that it is the duty of the judiciary to say what the law is, not what it should be.

American Constitution Society

The American Constitution Society for Law and Policy is a national organization of law students, law professors, practicing lawyers and others.

COURSES AND SEMINARS

<p><i>After Dobbs</i></p> <p>Artificial Intelligence and Democracy</p> <p>Civil Rights and Antidiscrimination Law</p> <p>Civil Rights Litigation</p> <p>Civil War and the Constitution</p>	<p>Comparative Constitutional Law</p> <p>Comparative Freedom of Speech Law Seminar</p> <p>Constitutional Law II: Freedom of Religion</p> <p>Constitutional Law II: Freedom of Speech and Press</p>	<p>Constitutional Law II: Survey of Civil Liberties</p> <p>Designing Democracy: Participation</p> <p>Designing Democracy: Representation</p> <p>Disability Law</p> <p>Education Law Survey</p> <p>Law and Riots</p>	<p>Law of Corruption</p> <p>Law, Inequality and Education Reform</p> <p>Law of the Police I: Rules, Rights and Regulation</p> <p>Legislative Drafting and Public Policy Litigating the 2024 Presidential Election</p>	<p>Monument Litigation</p> <p>Pain and the Law</p> <p>Political Prisoners</p> <p>Poverty Law and the Lawyer's Role</p> <p>Poverty Law, Advocacy and Policy</p> <p>Pretrial Litigation Skills: Civil Rights</p> <p>Privacy Torts</p>	<p>Regulation of Political Advocacy Seminar</p> <p>Race, Education and Opportunity</p> <p>Racial Justice and Law</p> <p>Regulation of Political Advocacy Seminar</p> <p>Regulation of the Political Process</p>	<p>Rule of Law and Its Threats</p> <p>Second Amendment and Gun Violence Colloquium</p> <p>State and Local Government Law</p> <p>State Attorneys General</p> <p>The Constitution, Democracy and U.S. History</p>	<p>CLINICS</p> <p>Civil Rights Clinic</p> <p>First Amendment Clinic</p> <p>These courses represent the 2022-25 school years. Not all courses are offered every year.</p>
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HANDS-ON EXPERIENCES

Civil Rights Clinic

Students provide relief and legal support to individuals and communities that have been harmed by the criminalization of poverty and other forms of discrimination or deprivation of rights.

First Amendment Clinic

In conjunction with the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, students undertake projects protecting First Amendment rights.

Designing Democracy Project

The Designing Democracy Project aims to train the next generation of democracy innovators. Participating students serving as fellows are involved in two projects: studying the voter participation gap between higher-income and lower-income Americans to advance policy solutions to close the gap, and studying the state of democratic representation in the U.S. to advance policy solutions to remedy present deficiencies within such representation.