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Hillsdale College Ph.D. Candidate Stephen Goniprow Presents Doctoral Research

Goniprow presented research from his dissertation “An Introduction to Global Justice Theory.”

HILLSDALE, Mich. — Hillsdale College doctoral candidate Stephen Goniprow gave a research presentation on his dissertation titled “An Introduction to Global Justice Theory” on Tuesday, Nov. 19. Global justice theory, which emerged in the 1970s, rejects absolute national sovereignty and advocates for international distributive justice. Goniprow gave his presentation after successfully defending his dissertation before a faculty panel.

Goniprow argued that the origins of global justice theory can be found in the work of John Rawls, though Rawls’ thought emphasized justice only on a national level. In “A Theory of Justice” Rawls sought to address the problem that people are born in different circumstances and with different talents, which they did nothing to deserve.

“He thinks that his theory, what he calls ‘justice as fairness,’ is the best solution to this fundamental problem — undeserved and unequal starting positions in societies,” Goniprow said. “So his first principle is going to narrow the range of starting positions by ensuring that all have equal civil rights, all have the same liberties, and his second principle is going to mitigate the effects that both social contingencies — so family upbringing, family wealth — and then natural contingencies — things like your natural ability — have over our lives.”

Goniprow said that inequality was only acceptable to Rawls if it benefited the least advantaged. While Rawls only advocated for these principles of “social justice” within nations, Goniprow argued, global justice theorists essentially took Rawls’ theory and globalized it.

“Every leader, every foreign policy practitioner of the late ’60s and ’70s agrees, we’re now in this interdependent world, and so it’s logically inconsistent for Rawls to restrict his teaching on

distributive justice to national boundaries,” Goniprow said. “We should take Rawls’ two principles of justice, and we should extend them to the world at large. We should globalize Rawls.”

The presentation took place in Lane Hall and was followed by a brief reception. Kevin Slack, associate professor of politics, served as Goniprow’s dissertation chair and provided introductory remarks.

“Dr. Steve Goniprow has written an excellent dissertation, one that I learned a great deal from,” Slack said. “His dissertation begins and ends with John Rawls, namely, how Rawls’ ideas were attacked as conservative. They only recognized redistribution within the nation-state but were then used for globalist ends.”

Goniprow received his Bachelor of Arts from Trinity College in 2014, his Master of Arts in Education from Boston University in 2016, and his Master of Arts from Hillsdale’s Van Andel Graduate School of Statesmanship in 2018. Having successfully defended his dissertation, he will earn a Doctor of Philosophy in Politics in December 2024 and receive his diploma at Hillsdale College’s Commencement Ceremony in May 2025.

For a headshot of Goniprow, click [here](#). For Goniprow’s student profile, click [here](#). To view the poster for the event, click [here](#).

For a high-resolution copy of the Hillsdale College clocktower logo, click [here](#).

About Hillsdale College Graduate School of Statesmanship

The Van Andel Graduate School of Statesmanship was founded in 2010 “to educate students in the language of American constitutionalism and to place its graduates in positions of public service in politics, in journalism, in the Academy, and elsewhere.” Its courses of study, which culminate in either a Master of Arts or a Doctor of Philosophy in Politics, are centered around the core texts from the Western and American traditions of political thought — what Thomas Jefferson called the “elementary books of public right.” All admitted students received a full-tuition scholarship and admitted Ph.D. students receive an additional living stipend. For more information, visit gradschool.hillsdale.edu.

About Hillsdale College

Hillsdale College is an independent, nonsectarian, Christian liberal arts college located in southern Michigan. Founded in 1844, the College has built a national reputation through its classical liberal arts core curriculum and its principled refusal to accept federal or state taxpayer subsidies, even indirectly in the form of student grants or loans. It also conducts an outreach effort promoting civil and religious liberty, including a free monthly speech digest, *Imprimis*, with a circulation of more than 6.6 million. For more information, visit hillsdale.edu.

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