



HILLSDALE COLLEGE

PURSUING TRUTH · DEFENDING LIBERTY SINCE 1844

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Hillsdale College Holds Center for Constructive Alternatives Seminar on Journalism and American Democracy

The seminar explored the purpose and importance of a free press, standards of honest journalism, and recent changes in the delivery of news and opinion.

HILLSDALE, Mich. — Hillsdale College hosted its third Center for Constructive Alternatives seminar of the 2025-2026 academic year Feb. 1-4. The seminar, titled “Journalism and American Democracy,” explored the purpose and importance of a free press, standards of honest journalism, and recent changes in the delivery of news and opinion.

Thomas G. West, professor of politics at Hillsdale College, spoke on “[The Importance and Meaning of a Free Press](#).”

“The future of press freedom depends on whether the victories won by Musk and Trump can be consolidated,” West said. “The problem for us goes deeper than mere partisanship. There is a serious view of justice held by the liberals — or as they prefer to call it ‘social justice.’ This view is what makes them so confident that their restrictions on publications outside the liberal consensus are worthy and necessary.”

Charles R. Kesler of Claremont McKenna College spoke on “[William F. Buckley, Jr. and Conservative Journalism](#).”

“Without Bill Buckley, there would’ve been no National Review, and without National Review, there would have been, in all probability, no conservative movement in the later 20th century,” Kesler said. “That would have meant no Goldwater candidacy. No Goldwater would have meant in all probability no Reagan, who entered politics, of course, campaigning for Barry Goldwater

in 1964. If there was no President Reagan, there may have been no victory in the Cold War, and we might be sitting here in a very different America.”

Mark Halperin, host of Next Up with Mark Halperin, spoke on “[The 2WAY Model](#).”

“I’m an old-fashioned reporter,” Halperin said. “I believe that journalism should do two things: it should explain the important stories and personalities of our time in a compelling way, and it should hold all powerful interests accountable to the public interest, not just some powerful interests. And I grew up in establishment liberal media, surrounded by people who had a different political orientation than I did. My orientation was to be an honest, fair reporter, and their orientation — almost a hundred percent of them — was to be liberal.”

John Kass, journalist and host of The Chicago Way, spoke on “[The Decline of Trust in Legacy Media](#),” political cartoonist A.F. Branco gave a lecture titled “[Make America Laugh Again: Politically Incorrect Cartoons](#),” and Amber Duke of the Daily Caller spoke on “[The Rise of the New Media](#).”

For photos from the CCA seminar, click [here](#). For video recordings of the lectures, click [here](#). For photos of Hillsdale College, click [here](#). For a high-resolution copy of the Hillsdale College clocktower logo, click [here](#).

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 7.3 million. For more information, visit hillsdale.edu.

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