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CONTACT:
Emily Stack Davis
517-803-3745
PR@hillsdale.edu
Follow @HillsdalePR

Hillsdale College Ph.D. Candidate Presents Doctoral Research on American Foreign Policy

Josiah Lippincott presented research from his dissertation, 'To Match Slaughter With Greater Slaughter: FDR, the Pacific War, and the Birth of the New World Order.'

HILLSDALE, Mich. — Hillsdale College doctoral candidate Josiah Lippincott presented research from his dissertation, titled "To Match Slaughter With Greater Slaughter: FDR, the Pacific War, and the Birth of the New World Order." Lippincott discussed the shift in American foreign policy exemplified by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's approach to World War II in the Pacific.

"Foreign policy is sort of treated as a separate field driven by other considerations having nothing to do with the view of justice of the regime typically in the literature, and he wants to challenge that approach," said Professor of Politics John Grant, who served as Lippincott's dissertation chair. "The dissertation is interesting and illuminating, insightful in terms of its discussion of the principles, but then I think perhaps most strikingly in how they're applied in these different circumstances."

Lippincott gave his presentation on April 14 after successfully defending his dissertation before a faculty panel.

"The core part of my argument is that idealism and realism are inseparable," Lippincott said. "A leader's view of justice, his ideal, decisively shapes how he sees reality, how he seeks to accomplish that end."

Lippincott's dissertation analyzed five phases of American foreign policy, from the founding era to the post-World War II order, focusing on Roosevelt and the war in the Pacific.

"The Progressives, starting at the end of the 19th century, rejected the Founders' natural rights theory of government, and along with it their foreign policy principles, in favor of a missionary foreign policy devoted to uplift on a global scale," Lippincott said. "The Progressive view of justice among nations rejected a fundamentally defensive foreign policy in favor of a crusading vision of the United States as the vanguard of democracy and freedom around the world."

According to Lippincott, war prior to the Progressive era was treated as a duel between equal sovereigns, limited by conventions such as amnesty and protection for civilians. Lippincott argued that the Progressive understanding of war as a moral crusade overrode these conventional limits, leading to the use of firebombs and atomic bombs during the war and the trial of those who had fought on the losing side after its conclusion.

After receiving his Bachelor of Arts in Politics from Hillsdale College in 2016, Lippincott served for four years as an artillery officer in the Marine Corps, deploying for seven months to Okinawa. He then returned to Hillsdale and received his Master of Arts in Politics from the College's Van Andel Graduate School of Statesmanship in 2022. Having successfully defended his dissertation, he earned a Doctor of Philosophy in Politics and received his diploma at Hillsdale College's Commencement Ceremony in May. Lippincott is now an assistant professor at West Virginia University's Washington Center for Civics, Culture, and Statesmanship.

For a headshot of Lippincott, click here. For Lippincott's faculty profile, click here. For photos of Hillsdale College, click here. For a high-resolution copy of the Hillsdale College clocktower logo, click here.

About the Van Andel 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 receive 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 7.5 million. For more information, visit hillsdale.edu.

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