AMINTAPHIL 2018 Conference on Democracy, Populism, and Truth

August 16-19, 2018
Boston University, Boston, MA
Due Date: June 30, 2018

We invite submissions for the 2018 biannual conference of the American Section of the International Association for Philosophy of Law and Social Philosophy (AMINTAPHIL) on the topic of Democracy, Populism, and Truth. Suggestions for specific paper topics have been developed by the Program Committee and are listed below.

AMINTAPHIL is an interdisciplinary society of philosophers, legal theorists, political scientists, and economists who are interested in normative questions about justice, society, the economy, and democracy. It is affiliated with the International Association for the Philosophy of Law and Social Philosophy (IVR), which meets biannually in years opposite to AMINTPHIL meetings. All members of AMINTAPHIL gain membership in IVR.

AMINTAPHIL conferences follow a distinctive format, in which “principal papers” are submitted and distributed in advance. “Comment papers” are then submitted, also in advance of the conference, and the meeting proceeds in discussion format. Attendees are expected to read the papers prior to the conference. The Program Committee will group papers on related themes into distinct sessions for the conference, and all sessions are plenary (i.e., there are no breakouts). This conference format lends itself to gaining deep, multi-faceted and multi-disciplinary perspectives on the chosen topic, and engaging in rich dialogue with other attendees. All on-topic submitted papers are included in the conference, and selected papers are published in a subsequent, peer reviewed volume of essays by Springer.

AMINTAPHIL members are eligible to submit papers. (Membership information is now online at http://www.pdcnet.org/amintaphil.) Principal papers, due by June 30, 2018 should be no more than 5500 words, and should begin with a brief abstract; comment papers will be due by August 5, 2018 and should be no more than 2200 words. All members of AMINTAPHIL will be notified when principal papers are available for download. Submit papers to Mark Navin at navin@oakland.edu with the subject line: “AMINTAPHIL 2018 submission.”

Please direct inquiries to:
AMINTAPHIL Executive Director: Prof. Mark Navin, Department of Philosophy, Oakland University navin@oakland.edu.
Local Host: Dean Ann Cudd, Dean of Arts & Sciences, Boston University, acudd@bu.edu

Suggested Topics
The following is a list of topics and sub-topics for the AMINTAPHIL 2018 conference. The list serves to provide suggestions and give more definition to the general topic of the conference. It is not intended to be either exhaustive or exclusive. Nor is it intended to be the template for the final program of the conference or the grouping of papers and commentaries into sessions.

Populism and Democratic Institutions
• What is populism?
• How does populism relate to democratic and anti-democratic social movements, e.g. nationalism, isolationism, religious factionalism, women’s rights, LGBTQ rights, Black Lives Matter, disability rights, health care rights?
• How is populism given voice by federalist systems of voting partition, e.g. the Electoral College?
• How is populism enhanced or triggered by election district gerrymandering?
• What is the threat or benefit of populism to political parties?
• Given populism’s reliance on emotional appeals, to what extent is the role of emotions in politics good or bad?
• What is the relationship between populism and publicly-funded education?
• Does populism only or mostly reflect uneducated preferences?

Truth, Media & Populism
• How do (more or less) traditional news media sources support populism?
• What role should news media play in informing populist debate?
• What obligation(s) do members of the news media have to be truthful?
• What obligations do politicians and citizens have to be truthful in advancing their political goals and policy preferences?
• How has social media transformed populist leadership and populist movements?
• How does social media foster and sustain populist protest movements/social movements?
• What are the ethical responsibilities of social media providers, such as Facebook, Google, and other online platforms in the fight against misinformation, fake news, and false attributions of fake news?
  o (How) Should participants in political debates be identified, e.g. as lobbyists, agents of foreign powers, government contractors, ‘sock puppets’?
  o (How) Should social media companies regulate participation in online political debates, e.g. to prevent participation by people with particular ideological commitments or (foreign) funding sources?
• Are there (or should there be) norms of public reason governing our behavior as social media consumers: as individual purveyors, transmitters, and recipients of social media messaging?

Democracy, Truth, & Public Political Discourse
• (How much) has partisan politics undermined truth or truthfulness in political and/or public discourse?
• How does a permissive legal environment for campaign and political cause expenditures tend to benefit or harm truthful political discourse?
• How can we control more effectively for truth in political discourse and respond more effectively to its absence?
• Should there be legal constraints on who may participate in political debates? E.g., should foreign actors be excluded? What about corporations, hate groups, or government employees who occupy (highly) politically sensitive roles?
• Is truthful public political discourse a reasonable aspiration in a democracy?