CALL FOR PAPERS

Graduate Conference in Political Theory at the University of Chicago

The Graduate Student Working Group at the University of Chicago will host its first biennial conference on April 25, 2020. Our theme is "The Politics of the Ordinary" and we are pleased to announce Professor Nancy Luxon (Minnesota) as the keynote speaker for the event. Accommodations with current UChicago graduate students for the evenings of April 24 and 25 and meals on the day of the conference will be provided. We may have limited travel funds for attendees which we will distribute on the basis of need.

Please kindly submit applications by November 25, 2019. You can find the application here: https://forms.gle/XUzAyDsFNtgeAvWb6

The Politics of the Ordinary

The study of politics frequently seeks to make sense of the event, the revolution, or the rupture -- that singular moment of political action that indexes local or global historical transformation. Such a conception of political science construes everyday practices and habits as uneventful, meaningless, or mundane. Quotidian features of political life become invisible, marginal, or simply insignificant for political analysis. This conference turns to the category of the ordinary in order to raise new questions about "eventful" topics from voting to revolutions as well as to point to understudied areas of daily life usually characterized as "private" and non-political. The ordinary might offer a productive ground from which we can better appreciate not only the eventfulness of the event but also the non-event. Or it might radically alter our political vocabularies and provide new frameworks for studying politics.

Possible questions to consider: What presuppositions are involved in distinguishing the “ordinary” from the “event” in the first place? How might a focus on the ordinary reorient our approaches to the study of politics? What would it look like to theorize politics from the perspective of everyday life? Does such an approach run the risk of politicizing everything in existence and subsequently evacuating the political of distinctive meaning?

We invite graduate students working in political theory to submit papers concerned with the politics of the ordinary - past, present.