



COLUMBIA VOTING WEEK 2014



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Events and Biographies

The inaugural Voting Week schedule and moderator/speaker/panelist biographies.



COLUMBIA VOTING WEEK 2014

Monday 10/6

Voting Week Opening

Lerner Hall, Satow Room, 6:00 - 6:30 p.m.

Welcome:

Columbia College Dean James Valentini

School of International and Public Affairs Dean Merit Janow

Talk/Panel on “Running for Public Office”

Lerner Hall, Satow Room, 6:00 - 7:30p.m.

What is it like to run for office? What are the challenges? What does it take to be successful? Peel back the curtain with insights from former NYC mayor David Dinkins and a panel of Nily Rozic, Jamaal Nelson, Lincoln Restler, Mark Levine, moderated by Dean Kathryn Yatrakis, as they discuss the greatest challenges to running for public office, and what the future holds for the election process.

Speaker: City of New York's 106th Mayor, SIPA Professor in the Professional Practice of Public Affairs, David Dinkins

Moderator: Dean of Academic Affairs, Kathryn Yatrakis

Panelists: New York City, City Council Member, Mark Levine. New York State Assembly Woman, Nily Rozic. Lincoln Restler, senior adviser in the administration of New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio. Jamaal Nelson, Senior Director, Regional Impact, Leadership for Educational Equity

Co-Sponsors: [SIPA](#), [OMA](#), [Student Engagement](#), [CPU](#)

Tuesday 10/7

Panel on “Political Consulting and Running Elections”

Lerner Hall, Room 569, 4:00 - 5:30 p.m.

An industry that has grown exponentially in the past decade, political consultants now play essential roles in managing and advising virtually every component of a campaign. Come to hear Jef Pollock, Basil Smikle, Lincoln Mitchell and Alexis Grenell examine the current state of this booming industry and its impact on the democratic process.



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Moderator: Political Science Professor Robert Shapiro

Panelists: Jef Pollock, founder and president of Global Strategy Group, Alexis Grenell, independent political consultant, Basil Smikle, SIPA lecturer and political strategist, and Lincoln Mitchell, National Political Correspondent for the *New York Observer*.

Co-Sponsors: [SIPA](#), [School of General Studies](#), [Student Engagement](#), [CPU](#)

Panel on “Political Engagement, Advocacy, and Public Policy”

Lerner Hall Party Space, 7:00 - 8:30p.m.

In a democratic society, the engagement of people with their politicians is key. Learn from panelists Dick Dadey, Marcia Bystryn, Paul Steely White, and Sayu Bhojwani about what political engagement looks like today and the impact advocacy can have in impacting the political process.

Moderator: Professor and Director of the Urban and Social Policy Program, School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA) Ester Fuchs

Panelists: Dick Dadey, executive director of Citizens Union, a good government group, Marcia Bystryn, president of New York League of Conservation Voters, Paul Steely White executive director of Transportation Alternatives, and Sayu Bhojwani, founding Director of the New American Leaders Project.

Co-Sponsors: [SIPA](#), [Student Engagement](#)

Wednesday 10/8

Talk on “Challenge of Being a Leader and Politician”

Casa Italiana, 1161 Amsterdam Avenue 4:00 - 6:00 p.m.

While our democracy demands from its representatives the work of both politician and leader, the two very different roles can often conflict. Explore the difficult balance between the desire to lead and the necessity to politick with Rhode Island Governor Lincoln Chafee.

Opening Remarks: Political Science Professor, David Johnston

Moderator: Professor Fuchs

Speaker: Rhode Island Governor Lincoln Chafee



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Co-Sponsor: [Department of Political Science](#) and [World Leaders Forum](#)

Talk on "Voting Rights in the Asian Pacific Islander Community"

Lerner Hall 569 from 6:00-7:30p.m.

Come join Columbia Asian American Alliance on a night to learn about the importance of voting rights in the Asian Pacific Islander community, participate in a phonebanking session, and enjoy some dinner! Please bring your cellphones!

Speaker: Elizabeth R. OuYang is president of Organization of Chinese Americans - New York chapter

Sponsor: Columbia's [Asian American Alliance](#)

Thursday 10/9

Talk/Discussion on "Democratic Engagement"

Lerner Hall, Satow Room, 4:00pm - 5:30pm

Speaker/Discussion Facilitator: Joelle Gamble, National Director of the Roosevelt Institute Campus Network

Why don't people engage in the political process? Why don't people vote? What are the ramifications of this? Take part in this fascinating talk and discussion exploring the individual challenges of democratic engagement with Joelle Gamble, the National Director of the Roosevelt Institute Campus Network.

Co-Sponsors: [Columbia Roosevelt Institute](#), [CPU](#)

Friday 10/10

Talk on "Conservative perspectives on civil rights, the First Amendment, immigration, and government reform"

501 NW Science Building, 2:30 - 4:00 p.m.

For some, the areas of civil rights, civil justice, the First Amendment, and immigration reform are topics for politicians who self-identify as liberal. But what are the conservative perspectives on these issues?



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Speaker: Hans A. von Spakovsky, senior legal fellow at the Heritage Foundation

Sponsor: [Columbia University College Republicans \(CUCR\)](#)

Talk on "Perspectives from Iraq: Building a Democracy in a Multicultural Society"

Lerner Hall, Cinema 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.

In the wake of years of tumult, what are the challenges of building a working democracy in a multicultural society like Iraq? Is democracy even possible? And, if so, what does such a democracy look like in a modern Iraq? Join Dr. Barham Salih as we engage with these questions and more.

Moderator: SIPA Professor Dipali Mukhopadhyay

Speaker: Former Kurdish Iraqi Prime Minister, Barham Salih

Co-Sponsors: [SIPA](#), [CPU](#), [Student Engagement](#)

Art Show: "Check: The Relationship of Art and Politics"

St. Paul's Basement from 7:00 - 10:00pm

As the closing event of Voting Week, Postcrypt Art Gallery will host "Check: The Relationship of Art and Politics," an art installation show questioning the relationship between art and politics. Noted conceptual artist Bruce Nauman suggests, "art can never have direct political and social impact on culture" but rather it serves as an indirect impetus that is "certainly real." Tracing back to the historical usage of art as propaganda, *Check* investigates art as a catalytic object. *Check* is an opportunity for contributors to express their own political beliefs, whether through criticism, support, or the daunting confusion of not knowing what those beliefs even are. We invite the politically active and lukewarm alike to an event rooted in personal context.

Co-Sponsors: [Postcrypt Art Gallery](#)



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Moderator/Speaker/Panelist Biographies

Moderators

Ester Fuchs - *Director of the Urban and Social Policy Program, School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA)*

Within Columbia's gates, Dr. Esther Fuchs has worked as a professor for the School of International and Public Affairs, Barnard College, and Columbia College and the director of programs and centers on urban policy research throughout the University. Outside of Columbia, Fuchs serves as the director of whosontheballot.org, an online voter engagement initiative, and has worked across a plethora of city, state, and national governmental initiatives in bridging the gap between policymakers, government agencies, and the public.

DiPali Mukhopadhyay - *Assistant Professor, School of International and Public Affairs*

Dr. Dipali Mukhopadhyay's main field of study centers on modern state formation in conflict and post-conflict settings, a subject in which she has researched about and written on extensively. She has consulted for the US Department of Defense, the Canadian government, and the World Bank and published work both academically and in the *Carnegie Endowment* and *US News & World Report*. Mukhopadhyay also recently published *Warlords, Strongman Governors, and the State in Afghanistan*, examining strongman governance in Afghanistan.

Robert Shapiro - *Professor of Political Science, Columbia University*

A distinguished professor of political science, and the former chair of the Department of Political Science at Columbia University, Dr. Robert Shapiro has taught, researched, and studied American politics with a focus on public opinion, policymaking, and political leadership among other topics as part of a number of organizations and boards. Recently, he coauthored the book *Selling Fear: Counterterrorism, the Media, and Public Opinion*, examining the ways in which US officials manipulated coverage in the wake of 9/11 to maintain a climate of fear.

Kathryn Yatrakis - *Dean of Academic Affairs, Columbia College*

Dean of Academic Affairs for Columbia College since 1998, with many positions in Columbia University prior, Dr. Kathryn Yatrakis has played an integral part in the development of Columbia College. Her leadership during at Columbia has included administering the Core Curriculum, liaising between Columbia College and the College of the Arts and Sciences, and serving on a wide range of boards and committees at Columbia University and its peers. Yatrakis graduated from Columbia University in 1981 with a Ph. D. in Political Science.

Speakers

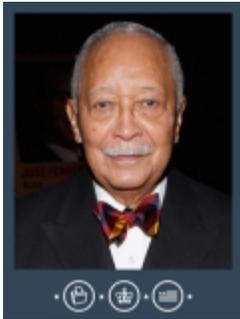


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Lincoln Chafee - *Governor, Rhode Island*

Elected in 2010, Lincoln Chafee is the 74th Governor of Rhode Island. During his first term in office, Chafee led Rhode Island to confront the nation's worst financial crisis in decades, contentious debates on education and workforce revitalization, landmark healthcare reform and marriage equality legislation, and ambitious green infrastructure initiatives. Prior to his gubernatorial career, Chafee was a United States Senator where he served for seven years and mayor for his hometown of Warwick for four terms.

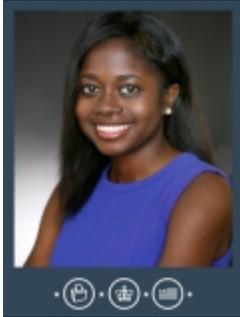


David Dinkins - City of New York's 106th Mayor, SIPA Professor in the Professional Practice of Public Affairs

Mayor Dinkins served as the 106th Mayor of New York City, from 1990 to 1993. He was NYC's the first and only African American mayor. He is currently a professor in SIPA's Professional Practice of Public Affairs and serves on several boards, including the New York City Global Partners, the Children's Health Fund, the Association to Benefit Children, and the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund. Dinkins is also on the Advisory Board of Independent News & Media and the Black Leadership Forum, is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and is Chairman Emeritus of the Board of Directors of the National Black Leadership Commission on AIDS.



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Joelle Gamble - National Director of the Roosevelt Institute Campus Network

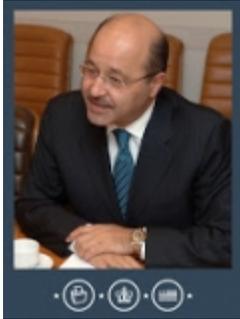
Joelle Gamble guide the national effort for the Roosevelt Institute Campus Network. Previously she served as the Roosevelt Campus Network's Field Strategist for two years. Joelle has worked to bring Roosevelt to a greater diversity of campuses across the country. She has been key in expanding the Network's presence on community college campuses. She updated the Network's approach to new chapters, and has played a pivotal role in creating its media presence and engagement. As an undergraduate, Joelle founded the Campus Network chapter at the University of California, Los Angeles.



Elizabeth R. OuYang - President, Organization of Chinese Americans (OCA) New York chapter. Under Elizabeth OuYang's leadership, OCA-NY led the fight for justice for Private Danny Chen, a 19 year old American soldier who died in Afghanistan after being racially taunted and hazed by his superiors and secured a governor's pardon for Qing Wu, a lawful permanent resident facing removal from the U.S. because of an old and minor teenage criminal record. Her article, "Can Military Courts Deliver Justice to A Subordinate Hazed by Superiors?" was recently published in the Spring 2013 issue of the *Asian American Policy Review Journal*, a publication of Harvard Kennedy School of Government.

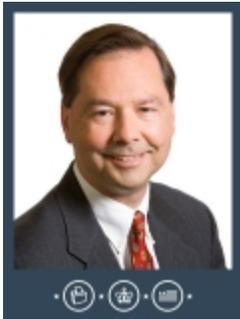


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Barham Salih - *Former Prime Minister, Iraqi Kurdistan*

As the Prime Minister of Iraqi Kurdistan, in office from 2009 to 2012, and the Deputy Prime Minister before that, Dr. Barham Salih helped to oversee the transition of the Iraqi government after 2004 and led the region through almost a decade of economic, political, and military pressures. Now an outspoken voice on the future of Iraq and Kurdistan, Salih continues to be a driving force in the region's political future. Salih currently serves as chair of the Board of Trustees for American University of Iraq.



Hans von Spakovsky - *Senior Fellow, Heritage Foundation*

Hans von Spakovsky is an authority on a wide range of issues – including civil rights, civil justice, the First Amendment, immigration, the rule of law and government reform -- as a senior legal fellow in The Heritage Foundation's Edwin Meese III Center for Legal and Judicial Studies. As manager of the think tank's Election Law Reform Initiative, von Spakovsky also studies and writes about campaign finance restrictions, voter fraud and voter ID, enforcement of federal voting rights laws, administration of elections and voting equipment standards.

Panelists



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Sayu Bhojwani - *Founding Director of the New American Leaders Project*

Sayu is an immigrant rights and social justice advocate. She served as New York City's first Commissioner of Immigrant Affairs and has founded two nonprofit organizations. Her professional record and service reflect her commitment to leveling the playing field for immigrants, women and youth. Sayu has worked on immigrant integration, civic engagement and leadership development for over 20 years, in the nonprofit sector, in government, and in philanthropy. She is the Founder and President of the New American Leaders Project and Visiting Scholar at the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University.



Marcia Bystryn - *President, New York League of Conservation Voters*

Since 1999, Marcia Bystryn has worked to elect "strong environmental candidates to office" as the Executive Director, and later President, of the New York League of Conservation Voters. The League has worked in recent years to encourage environmentally conscious candidates to run and hold politicians accountable for their promises on environmental issues. Before the league, Bystryn worked for the New York City Department of Sanitation where she designed and implemented New York City's hugely successful recycling program.

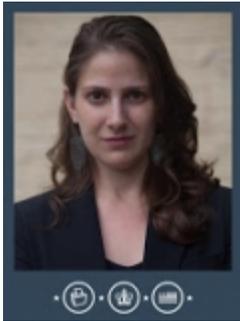




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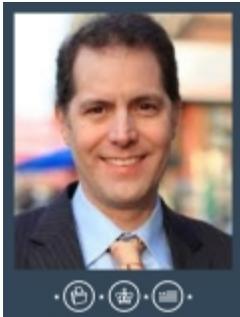
Dick Dadey - Executive Director, Citizens Union

Constituted as a non-partisan organization in 1908, Citizens Union has worked in the over a century since as a “watchdog for the public interest and an advocate for the common good”. In recent years Dick Dadey has led Citizens Union headfirst into movements supporting instant runoff voting, age limits for judges, reforms to the New York vote counting system, redistricting, and more in an effort to promote good government and increase New Yorkers' participation in the political and policymaking system.



Alexis Grenell - Independent Political Consultant

A political strategist, a SIPA student, and a campaign organizer to name just a few, Alexis Grenell has played a multitude of roles in media relations, crisis communications, public affairs, and community outreach for a number of causes. In 2009, Grenell was one of the first notable hires by then Attorney General Andrew Cuomo to serve as his deputy director of intergovernmental affairs. Grenell also is a columnist for *City & State*, a news magazine that closely covers politics and government in New York at the city and state level.



Mark Levine - New York City Councilmember, the 7th District in Northern Manhattan

Mark Levin is a progressive policy leader on housing, education, economic justice, transportation, environmentalism, and more. He has been a strong advocate for addressing inequality in New York City. He chairs the City Council's Committee on Parks and Recreation, where is pushing for greater equity for parks in New York's low- and moderate-income neighborhoods. He is also a leading voice on affordable housing issues, including the fight to get legal representation for all tenants in housing court. As chair of the City Council's Jewish Caucus he is focused on combating Jewish poverty in New York City and fostering inter-group relations.



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Lincoln Mitchell - *Assistant Professor, School of International and Public Affairs*

Dr. Lincoln Mitchell's decade of experience in political development has spanned positions in the National Democratic Institute, democracy and governance throughout the former Soviet Union, the Middle East, the Caribbean, Africa, and Asia as well as domestic political campaigns throughout the United States. Mitchell has also headed research into US-Georgia relations, political development in the former Soviet Union, and democracy in American foreign policy. In 1996, he received his Ph.D. in Political Science from Columbia University.

Jamaal Nelson - *Senior Director, Regional Impact, Leadership for Educational Equity*

Jamaal was born and raised in the South Bronx. Growing-up he faced many of the well known challenges endemic to inner-city living: drugs, gangs, and crushing poverty. Despite these challenges, including a severe learning disability, Jamaal was able to earn an undergraduate degree from Vanderbilt University and an M.Div from Harvard University. Jamaal has a deep passion to make a positive difference in his community and was recently elected to the office of District Leader serving the West Harlem community. Jamaal is an ordained clergy-person.



Jef Pollock - *Founding Partner and President, Global Strategy Group*

Recently named "Pollster of the Year" by the American Association of Political Consultants, Jef Pollock's Global Strategy Group has quickly risen to prominence as a leading public affairs firm for a wide variety of fields including political campaigns and corporate reputation management. Global Strategy Group's portfolio includes clients ranging from politicians like Governor Andrew Cuomo and Senator Kirsten Gillibrand to organizations like the American Red Cross and the City of New York.



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Lincoln Restler - *Senior Policy Adviser, Mayor Bill de Blasio*

Lincoln Restler gained major press attention in 2010 when, as part of a grassroots campaign for District Leader, he beat out the favorite of former Democratic Party boss Vito Lopez in an upset victory for the seat. Since then, Restler has gone on to work to reform the Brooklyn Democratic Party and support Mayor Bill de Blasio's campaign as campaign strategist for Brooklyn. Restler has also worked as the Managing Director of the New York City Employment and Training Coalition.



Nily Rozic - *Assemblywoman, New York's 25th District*

From the Van Wyck Expressway to the Cross Island Parkway, Nily Rozic's district encompasses the northeastern Queens neighborhoods of Flushing, Queensboro Hill, and Douglaston among others. Elected in 2012, Rozic has since worked to focus on quality of life issues in her district, advocating for environmental, government transparency, and workforce development among other issues. Before 2012, Rozic worked as Chief of Staff to Assemblyman Brian Kavanagh and member of Community Board 8.





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Basil Smikle - *Adjunct Professor, School of International and Public Affairs*

For 20 years, Basil Smikle has worked in government and politics advocating for public service and education equity. Smikle's career has included such diverse clients as Hillary Clinton's Senate campaign, Mayor Michael Bloomberg, Senator Joe Lieberman, and the William Jefferson Clinton Foundation. He was featured by *City Hall* magazine as one of 50 rising stars in New York politics and *The Los Angeles Times* as "Harlem's New Political Elite". Smikle received a Masters in Public Policy from Columbia University in 1996.



Paul Steely White - *Executive Director, Transportation Alternatives*

At the forefront of the debate over the future of New York City's transportation system is Paul Steely White, Executive Director of the organization Transportation Alternatives, who has driven debate and reform with the City of New York to improve cycling, pedestrian, and mass transit infrastructure. During his tenure as Executive Director, White has pushed to "reclaim New York City's streets from the automobile" through increased space, opportunities, and incentives like bike lanes, greater public transit usage, and more pedestrian spaces.