Have a Little Faith: Religion, Democracy, and the American Public School

Colin Macleod

Thursday, November 2nd
4:30- 5:30 pm
UVic, David Turpin Building, Room A110

This lecture explores the place of religion in public education in the United States. The separation of church and state is often portrayed as a defining feature of American democracy. But the history of American public education shows that American governments frequently permitted and encouraged the promotion of Christianity in public schools. Even today many Americans believe that schools should be permitted to encourage religious faith. But the topic of the place of religion in schools often divides citizens and creates conflict. I consider how democratic ideals of equality, toleration and legitimacy are relevant to determining how schools should respond to religious diversity and the degree to which they should address potentially contentious matters of faith.

Colin Macleod is Professor of Philosophy and Law at the University of Victoria. He is Chair of the Philosophy Department. His research focuses on issues in contemporary moral, political and legal theory with a special focus on distributive justice and equality; children, families and justice; and democratic ethics. He is the author of Liberalism, Justice, and Markets (1998), co-editor with David Archard of The Moral and Political Status of Children (2002), and co-author with Ben Justice of Have a Little Faith: Religion, Democracy, and the American Public School (2016).