



University  
of Victoria



# *Conscience and Democracy*

Brian Bird

Thursday, February 9

5:00-6:00 p.m.

DTB A110 and online

Join via Zoom at [uvic.ca/csrs/events](https://uvic.ca/csrs/events)

Section 2(a) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms protects freedom of conscience and religion. These freedoms are closely related, but freedom of conscience has received far less attention to date. In this talk I argue that elected representatives in liberal democracies ought to be free to vote on legislation in accordance with their conscientious convictions. I argue that granting this freedom (1) respects the complexities that confront elected representatives in a liberal democracy, (2) reflects the close relationship between law and normative considerations, and (3) facilitates robust debate on issues that are proposed to form the substance of legislation and thereby influence the shape and trajectory of a society.

**Brian Bird** is an Assistant Professor in the Allard School of Law at UBC. Brian's scholarship focuses on fundamental rights and freedoms as well as constitutional law and theory.