



University  
of Victoria  
Retirees  
Association

# Modern Day Democracy: Current Perspectives

## AN ELDER ACADEMY EVENT

Thanks to populism, presentism, extremism and the pandemic, the face of democracy looks much different today than ever before. This series offers four topics which explore the impact of these forces not only on our present context but on the past and the future as well. Our presenters will share their insights and perspectives on these timely issues.

## WHEN, WHERE, HOW MUCH?

**DATES:** Saturdays, May 1,8,15,22, 2021

**TIME:** 10:00am to Noon. Entry to meeting starting at 9:45am for all 4 events

**WHERE:** Online via Zoom

**LINK TO JOIN THE SESSIONS:** Emailed to registrants, via Eventbrite, two days before **first** session

**COST:** \$20.00 for the four sessions.

### May 1: **“Truth, Reason and Democracy”**

**Presenter:** Colin Macleod, PhD, UVic Dept. of Philosophy

### May 8: **“Restoring Democracy in an Age of Populists and Pestilence”**

**Presenter:** Jonathan Manthorpe, Author and Journalist

### May 15: **“Democracy and Colonialism in Canada: A Long-term Perspective”**

**Presenter:** Peter Cook, PhD, UVic Dept. of History

### May 22: **“Extremist Politics, the “Culture War”, and the Annihilation of History”**

**Presenter:** Edwin Hodge, PhD, UVic Dept. of Sociology

## REGISTRATION AND PAYMENT

Registration, payment and presenters' bios and abstracts at EventBrite.  
Please click on: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/democracy-tickets-134224598387>

Students attend free but need to register by emailing  
[UVRAElderAcademyevents@uvic.ca](mailto:UVRAElderAcademyevents@uvic.ca) to get Zoom link

Questions? Please email [UVRAElderAcademyevents@uvic.ca](mailto:UVRAElderAcademyevents@uvic.ca)

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**“Truth, Reason and Democracy”**

Saturday, May 1, 2021 – 10:00am to noon

**Presenter: Colin Macleod, PhD, UVic Dept. of Philosophy**



**Biography:** Colin Macleod B.A. (Queens), M.A. (Dalhousie), Ph.D. (Cornell) is a Professor of Philosophy and Law. He has been at University of Victoria since 1998. His research focuses on issues in contemporary moral, political and legal theory with a special focus on the following topics: (1) distributive justice and equality (2) children, families and justice and (3) democratic ethics. He is the author of *Liberalism, Justice, and*

*Markets: A Critique of Liberal Equality*, co-editor with David Archard of *The Moral and Political Status of Children* and co-author with Ben Justice of *Have a Little Faith: Religion, Democracy and the American Public School*. He is one of the founders of the Consortium on Democratic Constitutionalism (Demcon) and the Victoria Colloquium in Political, Social and Legal Theory.

**Description:** In January of 2021, a huge mob of supporters of Donald Trump stormed the U.S. Capitol, which many commentators labelled as an attempted coup. This assault on American democracy was fueled by a systematic campaign of lies, distortion, and misinformation orchestrated by Trump and his political allies. Many parts of the American media aided and abetted this undemocratic campaign by peddling falsehoods to gullible audiences and by failing to challenge dubious claims made by politicians and their spokespeople. These shocking events remind us of the potential fragility of democratic politics and the importance of ensuring that democratic debate and argument is grounded in truth and reason. Although Canadian political culture, history, and institutions are different from those in the U.S., we should not assume that truth and reason prevail in Canadian politics. Of course, what is true and what is reasonable are often matters of contestation in modern politics. And politics is full of partisan disagreement that may seem hostile to ideals of rational discourse. How can we sustain our democratic ideals in the face of heated bickering and widespread dishonesty? In this talk, I will explore the role of a commitment to truth and reason in a successful democracy. I will consider various threats to this commitment we face and how we, as citizens, should try to respond to such threats.

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**” Restoring Democracy in an Age of Populists and Pestilence”**

Saturday, May 8, 2021 – 10:00am to noon

**Presenter: Jonathan Manthorpe, Author and Journalist**



**Biography:** Jonathan Manthorpe has been a foreign correspondent, political reporter, and international affairs columnist for nearly forty years, with extensive TV and radio interview experience.

His last book, *Claws of the Panda: Beijing's Campaign of Influencer and Intimidation in Canada*, was one of the *Globe and Mail* Top 100 Books of 2019 and was also shortlisted for the Hubert Evans Non-Fiction Award. He is based in Victoria, BC.

**Description:** On the heels of the success of *Claws of the Panda* (Shortlisted for the 2020 Shaughnessy Cohen Prize for Political Non-Fiction), veteran journalist Jonathan Manthorpe's new book delves into an equally important and timely subject: the corruption of democratic ideals and institutions, of what went wrong, and what we can do to get back on track. In a time when trust in our institutions is falling, and a pandemic forecasts an economic and social fallout for which many are unprepared, *Restoring Democracy in an Age of Populists and Pestilence* defends and charts a plan to overcome the prospect of democratic decay.

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**“Democracy and Colonialism in Canada: A Long-term Perspective”**

Saturday, May 15, 2021- 10:00am to noon

**Presenter: Peter Cook, PhD, UVic Dept. of History**



**Biography:** Dr. Peter Cook grew up in the Ottawa Valley and attended the University of Toronto, Université Laval, the University of Ottawa, and McGill University. His research examines alliances and treaty making between Indigenous nations of North America and European colonies before 1850. He is currently co-authoring a case study of Indigenous-

settler relations in Upper Canada and is most recently a co-editor of *To Share, Not Surrender: Indigenous and Settler Perspectives on Treaty Making in the Colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia* (UBC Press, forthcoming May 2021).

**Description:** Triumphant historical narratives of building the Canadian nation-state often emphasize progress toward liberal democracy, with one key moment being the achievement of responsible government in parts of nineteenth century British North America. But such feel-good narratives are difficult to reconcile with the history of colonialism in Canada, insofar as progress toward democracy has too often coincided with a worsening of colonial conditions imposed upon Indigenous peoples. This talk takes a long-term view of several centuries of Indigenous-settler relations in what is now Canada and invites reflection on what emerges when we juxtapose Indigenous historical experience with moments of transformation in the politics of the settler colonial and national state.

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**“Extremist Politics, the “Culture Wars”, and the Annihilation of History”**

Saturday, May 22, 2021 – 10:00am to noon

**Presenter: Edwin Hodge, PhD, UVic Dept. of Sociology**



**Biography:** Dr. Edwin Hodge is a researcher at the Centre for Global Studies at the University of Victoria, where he studies the changing nature of borders and border processes in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. He is also an assistant professor in the department of Sociology at the University of Victoria, where his research focuses on radicalization, extremist ideologies of the political Far Right, and conspiratorial thinking.

**Description:** When extremist groups form, they often do so with their own interpretations of history – not just about their movement or group, but about history in general. Rather than rely on the perspectives of historians, extremist groups often choose instead to reinterpret history in ways that grant their worldview legitimacy.

Often, this pattern of ideologically driven historical reinterpretation takes on a conspiratorial edge that positions established historical understandings as lies perpetrated by "elites" (often of the "liberal" variety). Yet this kind of conspiratorial thinking is about more than historical reinterpretation: it is about the annihilation of history.

This short talk will examine the patterns of behaviour in extremist and radicalized groups, in order to better understand how for them, history is often more about narrative than fact, and how their efforts to "preserve" history threaten to destroy it.