

# CONSTITUTING THE U.S. IN THE 21ST CENTURY

A CONFERENCE  
ON POWER, EXCLUSION,  
AND THE PROMISE  
OF DEMOCRACY

ASANOR  
KRISTIANSAND, NORWAY  
JUNE 4-6, 2026

# Conference Program

## THURSDAY 4 JUNE (DAY 1)

**8:45–9:30 REGISTRATION (Vrimlehallen, Building D)**

**9:30–9:45 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS (Room B2 003)**

### **9:45–11:15 PARALLEL SESSIONS I**

#### **Panel 1: Visions of Different Americas (Room D3 013)**

“*Myra Breckinridge* and the Limits of Constitutional Freedom”

Jessica Allen Hanssen, Nord University

“Elsa Gidlow’s Garden: Queer Counter-Visions of America”

Aurora Eide, University of Agder

“Constituting Narrative Empathy: George Saunders’ (Crisis) Narratives of Masculinity”

Peter Paul Ferry, University of Stavanger

#### **Panel 2: Threats to Democracy (Room D3 016)**

“The Roots of Anti-Muslim Hate in America”

Fadime Apaydin, University of California, Riverside

“Security at Risk, Safety at a Crossroads”

Adam Głaz, Maria Curie-Skłodowska University

**11.15–11:30 COFFEE BREAK**

**11.30–13.00 PARALLEL SESSIONS II**

**Panel 3: Fictions of US Spaces (Room D3 013)**

“Cartographies of Exclusion: Migrant Re-Mappings of the ‘American Dream’ in Imbolo Mbue's *Behold the Dreamers*”

Oksana Starshova, Petro Mohyla Black Sea National University

“Cats and the Constitution”

Ida M. Olsen, University of Agder

“Dangerous Spaces: Constituting (In)Security in Literary Spatial Imaginations of the US–Mexican Border”

Gabriele Pizarz-Ramirez, Leipzig University

**Panel 4: Music, Film, and Democratic Fragility (Room D3 016)**

“‘If the First Amendment Will Protect a Scumbag Like Me, It Will Protect All of You’: Lessons from *The People vs. Larry Flynt* for the 21st Century”

Milan Hain, Palacký University

“The Border as Constitution: Cinematic Imaginaries of Sovereignty and Exclusion in American and Polish Film”

Zbigniew Mazur, Maria Curie-Skłodowska University

**13:00–14:00 LUNCH**

**14.00–15.30 PARALLEL SESSIONS III**

**Panel 5: Empire and Colonial Legacies (Room D3 013)**

“Anthropology and the Constitution: A History of Sexuality, Race, and the Colonial Philippines around 1900”

Christa Wirth, University of Agder

“Constituting the US: Liberty, Property, and the Racial Foundations of the American Republic”

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Jee An, Seoul National University

“Refugee Narrative and the Reimagining of U.S. Belonging”

Claudia Sadowski-Smith, Arizona State University

**Panel 6: Illiberalism, Constitutional Exclusions, and the Struggle for Rights (Room D3 016)**

“Constituting Freedom: Phillis Wheatley and the Reimagining of US Citizenship in

Honorée Fanonne Jeffers’s *The Age of Phillis*”

Sabrina Vellucci, Roma Tre University

“Raising Voices and Awareness: Women’s Struggle for Equal Rights in the U.S.A.”

María Luz Arroyo Vázquez, UNED, The Spanish National Distance Learning University

“Constitutional Contradictions: Racialized Power and the Enduring Illiberalism of U.S. Democracy”

Navneet Kumar, Mount Royal University, Calgary

**15.30–15:45 COFFEE BREAK**

**15:45–16:45 KEYNOTE ADDRESS I (Room B2 003)**

“The Many Constitutions of the American Founding”

Sarah Gronningsater, University of Pennsylvania

**EVENING**

Optional activity: walk from campus to city centre through the botanic gardens/Gimle gård grounds

**18.00–19:15 DRINKS AT CLUB21 (Radisson Blue Caledonien Hotel)**

**19.30 KILDEN CONCERT (for ticket holders)**

## **FRIDAY 5 JUNE (DAY 2)**

### **8.30–10:00 PARALLEL SESSIONS IV**

#### **Panel 7: Law and Outlaws (Room D3 013)**

“Marlowe v. Brass Knuckles: Constituting Law in Raymond Chandler’s *The Long Goodbye*”

Ken R. Hanssen, Nord University

“Once an outlaw always an outlaw: law, democracy, and the origins of the United States in William C. Williams’ *In the American Grain*”

Fiorenzo Iuliano, University of Cagliari

#### **Panel 8: The Constitution in the Classroom (Room D3 016)**

“Pedagogies of Resistance: Teaching Dystopian American Literature as a Civic Practice”

Eir-Anne Edgar, Norwegian University of Science and Technology

“Conflicts, Contents, and Contexts: Teaching the Constitution as a ‘Foundation of American Democracy’”

Anne S. Agbe-Davies, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

“...if you can keep it”

David Gerwin, Columbia University

### **10.00–10:15 COFFEE BREAK**

### **10.15–11:45 PARALLEL SESSIONS V**

#### **Panel 9: Aesthetic Instantiations of the Constitution (Theatre, Architecture, Poetry) (Room D3 013)**

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“Constitutional architecture”

Timothy Saunders, Volda University College

“Staging the Constitution: The Living Newspaper and Constitutional Critique”

Erin Small Capistrano, University of Oslo

“‘There is a pain – so utter’: Emily Dickinson’s Political Ontology of Pain”

Harrison F. Dietzman, George Fox University

**Panel 10: Who Counts? Constitutional Personhood from Corporations to Criminalized Bodies (Room D3 016)**

“Cruel and Unusual: Race, Gender, Capital Punishment, and the US Constitution”

John A. Kirk, University of Arkansas at Little Rock

“Gay Rights on the Front Range: The 1990s Culture Wars over City Ordinances in Colorado”

Hilde Løvdal Stephens, University of Oslo

“Persons, Corporations, Group Minds, and Replicants: The Science Fiction of the Fourteenth Amendment”

Stephen Dougherty, University of Agder

**11.45–12:30 LUNCH**

**12.30–13.00 CONCERT: ‘One-Man Punk Band’ – James Marinelli**

<https://www.jmarinelli.org/>

**13.00–14:15 PARALLEL SESSIONS VI**

**Panel 11: Authoritarianism and Fascist Imaginaries (Room D3 013)**

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“First as Alternative History, Then as Reality: Philip K. Dick and Corporatist Fascism in US Culture”

Richard Hardack, Independent scholar

“Donald Trump's place in the authoritarian traditions in American life”

Fabrizio Tonello, University of Padua

**Panel 12: Threats to Indigenous Sovereignty (Room D3 016)**

“Terminating and Restoring Wisconsin’s Menominee Tribe: Indigenous and Government Responses to Assimilation Pressures”

Dean J. Kotlowski, Salisbury University

“Indigenous Reactions to U.S. constitutional frameworks of sovereignty and land rights: The Case of Tommy Orange’s *There There* (2018)”

Hamid Masfour, Sultan Moulay Slimane University

**14.15–14:30 COFFEE BREAK**

**14:30–15:30 KEYNOTE ADDRESS II (Room B2 003)**

“Liberalism and Its Discontents: Dragging America in the Wake”

Xine Yao, University College London

**15.40–17:10 ASANOR BOARD MEETING**

**EVENING**

**19.00– CONFERENCE DINNER AT SJØHUSET RESTAURANT**

**SATURDAY 6 JUNE (DAY 3)**

**9.00–10:00 ASANOR BUSINESS MEETING**

**10.00–11:30 PARALLEL SESSIONS VII**

**Panel 13: Faith, Ideology, and Constitutional Interpretation (Room D3 013)**

“‘We Need God in Our Country’: The Quest to Christianize the Constitution”

William R. Glass, University of Warsaw

“Reds Under the Bed: Conservative Protestants, Race, and Anti-Communism”

Randall Stephens, University of Oslo

“New-fangled Treasons: Non-violence, the American Revolution, and the Treason Clause”

Susan Erdmann, University of Agder

**Panel 14: American Violence and Musical Memorials (Room D3 016)**

“Softening the Imperial Blow: 9/11’s Musical Memorials during the Global War on Terror”

Abigail Shupe, Colorado State University, Fort Collins

“Run Into the Arms of America: U2 and the Ambiguity of the Promised Land”

Ingunn Røysland, Setesdal videregående skule, Hovden

“‘This Is Not America’: Violence, Guns, and the Second Amendment in David Bowie’s Lyrics”

Charles I. Armstrong, University of Agder

**11.30–12:15 LUNCH**

**12.15–12.45 LIVE POETRY**

Alisha Dietzman Reads from *Sweet Movie* and *XOXO*

<https://www.alishadietzman.com/>

**12.45–13:45 ROUNDTABLE (Room B2 003)**

“America250 and the Uses of the Founding”

**13.45–14:00 COFFEE BREAK**

**14.00–14:30 GUIDED TOUR OF UIA ART COLLECTION**

**15.00–17:00 KUNSTSILO (optional activity)**

***ASANOR would like to thank the Humanities and Education Faculty at UiA and Fulbright Norway for their generous financial support. Fulbright Norway released America250 federal funding for our visiting keynote speaker from stateside, and UiA HumPed took care of most of the rest. We're very grateful!***

## **PRACTICAL INFORMATION**

### **Locations**

The conference takes place at the university campus in Gimlemoen, approximately a 30–40-minute walk from the city centre of Kristiansand. To find your way around campus, you can use MazeMap: <https://www.uia.no/english/about-uia/getting-here-and-around/mazemap.html>

The main entrance is located at the front of Building D (between Buildings A and C). Building D also houses the university library, a coffee shop, and a bookshop. The student cafeteria and kiosk are in the basement of Building F. The conference opening

and keynote sessions will take place in Auditorium B2 003. Panels sessions will be held in rooms D3 013 and D3 016.



### Wi-Fi information

Eduroam is available across campus. If you do not have access to Eduroam, you connect to the UiA guest network, “UiAGuest.” This will open a browser where you can register using your phone number and receive an SMS with your login details. It gives you access for 12 hours.

### Public transport in Kristiansand

There are frequent bus connections between the university and the city centre (approximately 20 buses per hour in each direction). AKT is the local public transport provider. See [akt.no](http://akt.no) for routes and schedules. The bus stop closest to campus is Universitetet. The easiest way to purchase bus tickets is to download the app AKT Billett and buy your ticket in advance before boarding. Tickets can also be purchased on the bus, but this option is more expensive than buying a ticket through the app.

#### *Travel to and from Kjevik Airport:*

Bus number 35 runs between Kjevik Airport, the university, and the city centre. The journey between the city centre and the airport takes approximately 30 minutes.

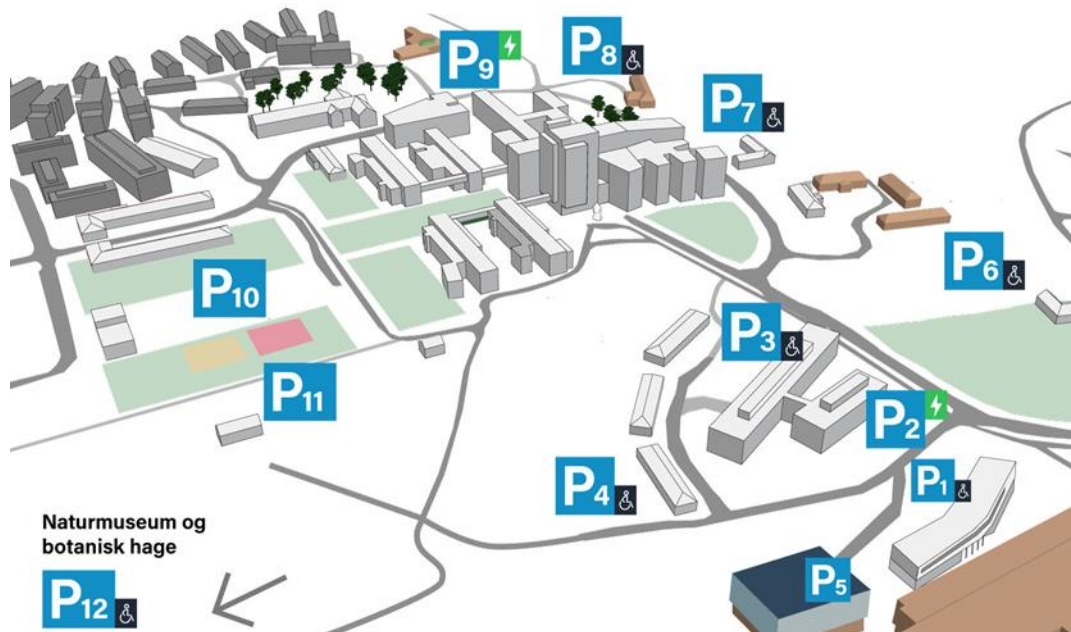
*Taxi:*

Agder Taxi, tel.: 07000, or see [agdertaxi.no](http://agdertaxi.no)

Please note that taxi services can be expensive in Norway.

## Parking

Parking spaces on campus are limited, and we recommend arriving early if you plan to travel by car. Payment is made using the EasyPark or APCOA app. You can use payment machines at P1, P4, P6, P9, and P12. Prices apply every day, around the clock. P2 and P9 offer parking spaces with charging stations for electric vehicles.



## About Kristiansand

Kristiansand is a fast-growing, modern city and the largest urban area in Southern Norway. It is the regional centre for business, administration, and culture, and has close to 110,000 inhabitants. The city centre is known as “Kvadraturen” (the Quarters) because the streets are laid out in a grid plan.

A selection of good restaurants and cafés includes: TilStede mat og mer, Spiren kafé, Flua pizza, Fiftyfive Pizza & Coffee, Mother India, Smag & behag (fine dining), and Bønder i byen.

*What to do in your free time:*

Kristiansand offers several idyllic nature areas close to both the city centre and the university campus. These include Jegersberg, Baneheia, Ravnedalen, and Odderøya. The city also has several lovely beaches, such as Bystranda, Bertesbukta, Bendiksbukta, and Hamresanden. A three-kilometre beach promenade runs along the shore and is ideal for a leisurely walk by the sea. Fiskebrygga is a good place to enjoy ice cream from the local producer Hennig-Olsen. Posebyen is a particularly charming part of the city centre, known for its white wooden houses, some of Kristiansand's oldest. Posebyhaven is home to the popular sourdough bakery The ODD Bakery. Markens gate is the city's main shopping street.

Kunstsilo is a newly opened art museum in Kristiansand. The building is a former grain silo in Odderøya, and since its opening in 2024, Kunstsilo has received numerous awards and recognitions, including the Prix Versailles Museums award for the world's most beautiful museum.

For more information on what to see and do as a visitor to Kristiansand and Southern Norway, visit [visitorslandet.com](https://visitorslandet.com).

