

JAMES R. ZINK
Department of Political Science
University of California, Davis
One Shields Avenue
Davis, CA 95616
jrzink@ucdavis.edu

EDUCATION

Political Science, University of California, Davis (*Ph.D. expected 6/2010*)
Major Field: Political Theory
Secondary Field: American Politics

J.D., DePaul University College of Law (1999)

B.A., Government and International Studies, University of Notre Dame (1995)

PUBLICATIONS

“The Language of Liberty and Law: James Wilson on America’s Written Constitution,” forthcoming in
American Political Science Review

“Courting the Public: Judicial Behavior and Individuals’ Views of Court Decisions” (with James F. Spriggs, II
and John T. Scott), forthcoming in *Journal of Politics*

“Race and Foreign Policy in Refugee Law: A Historical Perspective of the Haitian Refugee Crises,” 48 DePaul
Law Review 559 (1998)

WORKS IN PROGRESS

“The Priority of Self-Respect in Rawlsian Fair Equality of Opportunity,” revise and resubmit, *Journal of
Politics*

“A Wild Litigious Spirit: Edmund Burke’s Critique of the Natural Rights Political Order,” in progress

“Debating the French Revolution in America: Forging a Constitutional Identity,” in progress

“The Independence of the Declaration and the Constitution? Reconciling Principle and Practice during the
Missouri Compromise Debates (1819-1820),” in progress

DISSERTATION

Title: “*Constituting a People: Modern Constitutionalism and the Possibility of Community in a Natural Rights
Republic*”

Committee: John T. Scott (chair), Robert S. Taylor, Michael P. Zuckert

Dissertation Abstract:

My dissertation traces the emergence of modern constitutionalism as a significant companion to the increasing influence of the natural rights political philosophy during the 18th century. In particular, I highlight the *written* constitution as an important development for moderating the potentially divisive spirit of individualism that many critics thought would necessarily undermine the natural rights political order. In order to explore this theme, I study the Anglo-American theoretical debates surrounding those two notable “rights revolutions” of the 18th century, the American and French revolutions. These debates center on a question that persistently confronts even contemporary liberal democracies: How can a political order in which individual rights are seen as virtually sacrosanct avoid the divisiveness that so often results from conflicting rights-claims? This challenge was first confronted in earnest by the prominent statesmen of America’s founding era, as they sought to develop a constitutional solution to the problems associated with a rights-centric political order. I argue that the very written-ness of a constitution, a novel and distinctly American innovation, was seen as important for keeping individual rights central to politics while simultaneously structuring political debate in a way that minimizes the societal discord resulting from conflicting rights claims.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

“James Wilson on America’s Written Constitution,” Midwest Political Science Association annual meeting (2009)

“Burke on the Possibility of a Natural Rights Political Order,” American Political Science Association annual meeting; organizer and chair of panel, “Burke’s Defense of Inequality” (2008)

“The Language of Liberty: James Wilson and America’s Written Constitution,” American Political Science Association annual meeting (2007)

“Beyond Status: Reconsidering Rawls’s Definition of Self-Respect,” Midwest Political Science Association annual meeting (2007)

“Courting the Public: An Experimental Study of Institutional Specific Support for Supreme Court Decisions” (with John T. Scott and James F. Spriggs II), Southern Political Science Association annual meeting (2007)

“The Independence of the Declaration and the Constitution? Reconciling Principle and Practice during the Missouri Compromise Debates (1819-1820),” Midwest Political Science Association annual meeting (2006)

“An Experimental Study of the Influence of Precedent on Views of Legitimacy of Supreme Court Decisions” (with John T. Scott and James F. Spriggs II), Midwest Political Science Association annual meeting (2006)

HONORS & AWARDS

UC Davis, Department of Political Science Marvin Zetterbaum Teaching Award (2008)

American Political Science Association Travel Grant (2008)

UC Davis, Graduate Student Association Travel Grant (2008)

UC Davis, Department of Political Science Dissertation Fellowship (2008)

UC Davis, Office of Graduate Studies Travel Grant (2007)

Recipient of Time-Sharing Experiments for the Social Sciences (TESS) Award (funded by the National Science Foundation), “Courting the Public: An Experimental Study of Institutional Specific Support for Supreme Court Decisions,” with John T. Scott and James F. Spriggs II (2006)

UC Davis, Department of Political Science Travel Grants (2006, 2007, 2008, 2009)

UC Davis & Graduate Humanities Research Fellowship (2005, 2006)

UC Davis, Department of Political Science Faculty-Student Research Collaboration Grant (with John T. Scott and James F. Spriggs II) (2005)

DePaul University Law Review (1997-1998)

TEACHING AND RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Instructor, University of California, Davis

POL 113—“American Political Thought” (Spring 2008, Spring 2009) (syllabus available)

Teaching Assistant, University of California, Davis

Courses in Political Theory:

Contemporary Political Theory (Rawls, Nozick, Roemer, Hayek)

Ancient Political Theory (Plato and Aristotle)

Basic Concepts in Political Theory (introductory/survey course)

Courses in American Politics:

Constitutional Interpretation

Judicial Processes and Behavior

Elections and Voting Behavior

Political Psychology

Introduction to American National Government

Research Assistant, University of California, Davis

Professor James F. Spriggs, II: Summer 2004, Summer 2005, Fall 2005

Professor John T. Scott: Summer 2005, Winter 2006, Summer 2006

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Attorney, Indiana Legal Services, Inc. (1999-2003)