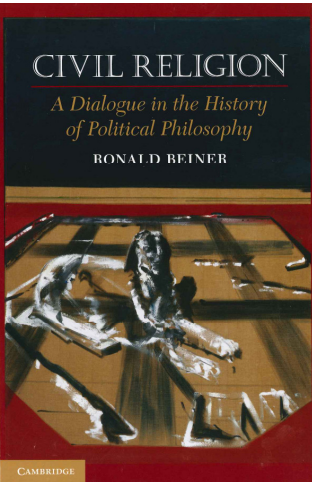




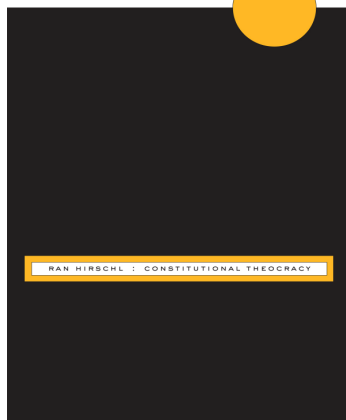
Political Science
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

The Department of Political Science is pleased to
announce a double Book Launch for
Ronald Beiner and Ran Hirschl
A wine & cheese Reception to follow in SS 3037



Civil Religion: A Dialogue in the History of Political Philosophy by Ronald S. Beiner (Cambridge University Press)

Civil Religion offers philosophical commentaries on more than twenty thinkers stretching from the sixteenth to the twentieth century. The book examines four important traditions within the history of modern political philosophy and delves into how each of them addresses the problem of religion. Two of these traditions pursue projects of domesticating religion. The civil religion tradition, principally defined by Machiavelli, Hobbes, and Rousseau, seeks to domesticate religion by putting it solidly in the service of politics. The liberal tradition pursues an alternative strategy of domestication by seeking to put as much distance as possible between religion and politics. Modern theocracy is a militant reaction against liberalism, and it reverses the relationship of subordination asserted by civil religion: it puts politics directly in the service of religion. Finally, a fourth tradition is defined by Nietzsche and Heidegger. Aspects of their thought are not just modern, but hyper-modern, yet they manifest an often-hysterical reaction against liberalism that is fundamentally shared with the theocratic tradition. Together, these four traditions compose a vital dialogue that carries us to the heart of political philosophy itself.



Constitutional Theocracy by Ran Hirschl (Harvard University Press)

At the intersection of two sweeping global trends - the rise of popular support for principles of theocratic governance, and the spread of constitutionalism and judicial review - a new legal order has emerged: constitutional theocracy. It enshrines religion and its interlocutors as "a" or "the" source of legislation, and at the same time adheres to core ideals and practices of modern constitutionalism. A unique hybrid of apparently conflicting worldviews, values, and interests, constitutional theocracies thus offer an ideal setting - a "living laboratory" as it were - for studying constitutional law as a form of politics by other means. Ran Hirschl undertakes a rigorous comparative analysis of religion-and-state jurisprudence from dozens of countries worldwide to explore the evolving role of constitutional law and courts in a non-secularist world. Counter-intuitively, Hirschl argues that the constitutional enshrinement of religion is a rational, prudent strategy that allows opponents of theocratic governance to talk the religious talk without walking most of what they regard as theocracy's unappealing, costly walk. Many of the jurisdictional, enforcement, and cooptation advantages that gave religious legal regimes an edge in the pre-modern era, are now aiding the modern state and its laws in its effort to contain religion. The "constitutional" in a constitutional theocracy thus fulfils the same restricting function it carries out in a constitutional democracy: it brings theocratic governance under check, and assigns to constitutional law and courts the task of a bulwark against the threat of radical religion.

Friday, January 28, 2011

2:00- 4:00 p.m.

SS 3130