

## Call for Papers

# Constitution Writing and State Government in the American West



Paper proposals are invited for a conference to be held at **Oxford University on Friday, 28th July, 2023**, that will explore the history and significance of state-level constitution-writing in the western United States.

Since 2020, the Quill Project has worked with Utah Valley University's Center for Constitutional Studies on a project to digitize and present the records relating to the constitutional conventions held in Idaho, Washington, Wyoming, North Dakota and South Dakota at the end of the nineteenth century, which was funded by a Digital Advancement Grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. This conference is intended in part to celebrate the publication of the digital collection resulting from this work.

It is hoped that the mix of papers presented at this conference will explore the evolution of state government and attitudes to Federalism in the American west more generally, and papers are not restricted to a focus on any particular period or place. We welcome suggestions for papers that will explore both continuities with the broader American tradition of government at state and federal level, and ways in which the state governments of the American west have been sites of innovation and transformation.

We actively encourage proposals from more junior scholars, and from members of groups that have been under-represented in the academy.

### Paper Submissions

We will interpret the theme of the conference broadly, as an opportunity to examine the distinctive constitutions and political systems of the western United States, and will welcome papers on topics such as (but not limited to):

- The distinctive way that state government has developed in the American west.
- The operation of state legislatures and other branches of government in western states.

- The development of case-law in the American west and the functioning of state courts.
- The way in which Federal politics, legislation, agencies and executive actions have shaped politics in western states.
- Popular control, regulatory capture and political corruption in western states.
- Party politics in western states.
- Trends in constitutional revision and amendment in western states.
- Grassroots organizing in western state politics.
- State-government relations with native peoples.
- Civil rights campaigns and state government in the American west.
- Bills of Right and the protection of liberty in the western United States

To propose a paper please submit:

a summary of up to 300 words outlining the proposed paper, together with a 2-page curriculum vitae

The proposals for papers should be sent to [quill@pmb.ox.ac.uk](mailto:quill@pmb.ox.ac.uk) by **Monday, February 27, 2023**

### **Conference Format**

The full day conference will take a hybrid format with in-person speaker events with a virtual participant option. The Oxford University is equipped to support a mixed in-person and remote format in order to support greater access opportunities for participants and those who are unable to travel, especially from outside the United Kingdom.

---

### **About the Quill Project**

The Quill Project is a centre based at Pembroke College Oxford that explores the negotiation of legal texts, most especially the various constitutional conventions that have shaped American state and federal constitutional law. The project publishes interactive digital editions that help us understand how large groups of people have collectively drafted legal texts. The research centre emphasizes multi-disciplinary approaches, the development of digital approaches that enhance our understanding of legislative history, and collaborative methods of working that include partnerships with other institutions and the involvement of undergraduate and graduate students in its research projects.

More details about the Quill Project can be found at [www.quill.pmb.ox.ac.uk](http://www.quill.pmb.ox.ac.uk).

You can explore the research platform developed by the centre at: [www.quillproject.net](http://www.quillproject.net).

In the summer of 2022, the project published a major new digital collection that explores the congressional history of proposals constitutional reform and related legislation in the period 1860-1875, from the Corwin Amendment to the 1875 Civil Rights Act. This project is being completed in conjunction with the Center for Constitutional Studies at Utah Valley University.

A pre-release preview of the collection is available:

[https://www.quillproject.net/library\\_collection/3](https://www.quillproject.net/library_collection/3).

### **About the Utah Valley University's Center for Constitutional Studies**

The Center for Constitutional Studies (CCS) at Utah Valley University is a nonpartisan academic institute that promotes the instruction, study, and research of constitutionalism. The Center employs conferences, university curriculum, faculty scholarship, a robust research agenda, strategic partnerships, and K-12 initiatives to engage students, scholars, educators, leaders, and the public on important constitutional issues found at the intersection of political thought, public policy, religion, law, history, education, and economics. The Center prepares citizens with the broad understanding of thought and practices critical to the perpetuation of constitutional government, ordered liberty, and the rule of law.

More details about the CCS at Utah Valley University can be found at <https://www.uvu.edu/ccs/>

### **About the Rothermere American Institute**

The Rothermere American Institute is the University of Oxford's centre for the study of the United States and its place in the world, supporting world-leading scholarship from a range of disciplines and communicating that scholarship to a wider public.

More details about the Rothermere American Institute can be found at <https://www.rai.ox.ac.uk>.



**NATIONAL ENDOWMENT  
FOR THE HUMANITIES**