Campus Theme 2021-22

Disagreement

We find ourselves in disagreement with others on all sorts of issues, from the safety of vaccines and how to manage public health, to the severity of anthropogenic climate change and what to do with public lands. Far from reducing disagreement, the ongoing proliferation and increasing accessibility of information only seems to exacerbate it.

Awareness of disagreement, in some cases, may give us reason to think or rethink our attitudes and beliefs. Given the number and gravity of intractable "wicked problems" afflicting our world, a diversity of interpretations and responses is to be expected and embraced as symptomatic of a healthy democracy. But disagreements have serious consequences, both in the public sphere and in our personal lives. Under societal conditions marked by growing tribalism, reductive ideological language, and the rapid politicization of virtually every problem, disagreement can present an existential threat.

While disagreement abounds in virtually every aspect of our lives, how well do we really understand it? In the interest of developing a more nuanced and fruitful grasp of the phenomenon, the 2021-22 SOU Campus Theme will be *Disagreement*.

Taking a multidisciplinary approach the theme of Disagreement, we hope to explore among other questions: *What is disagreement? Why do we disagree? To what extent is disagreement good for democracy? Is disagreement essential for dialogue? Is it possible to overcome the intransigence that continues to stymie progress in the face of major global concerns, from institutional racism and police violence, to global heating and mass migration?*

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