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### **Hillsdale College Visiting Fellow Delivers Public Lecture**

*Washington Free Beacon Editor Matthew Continetti Speaks on Identity Politics*

By Maureen Collins

Matthew Continetti, editor-in-chief of the *Washington Free Beacon*, delivered a public lecture on Tuesday, Oct. 24 on the “Influence of Identity Politics on American Life and Culture” in Phillips Auditorium. The lecture is a key part of Continetti’s tenure on campus as Hillsdale’s Eugene C. Pulliam Fellow in Journalism, for which he also served as a guest instructor in the journalism department and consultant to Hillsdale’s student newspaper, *The Collegian*.

In his speech, Continetti explained how the Left’s obsession with identity politics came to be, and how it will ultimately hurt their electoral prospects in the long run.

“Seeing our fellow Americans not as individuals but as members of groups—some of which are worthy of support and some hostility,” he said, “is the rage among our elites.”

According to Continetti, once the failures of socialism became evident after stories from the U.S.S.R. became available, the Left needed a new ideology in order to continue the fight against capitalism. “The Left found its answer in an identity politics that grew out of anti-colonialism,” he said. “Marx’s class struggle was reformulated into an ethno-race struggle.”

However, there are major problems with this reformulation. According to Continetti, multiculturalism drives a wedge between liberals, and is “an electoral dead-end.” Especially in light of the 2016 election, it has become clear that the Democrats cannot rely on the politics of identity alone to win them elections, he noted.

Continetti says this is because “identity politics is a veneer over the class politics that divides our society” and an overemphasis on racial, ethnic, and social divides leaves the democrats puzzled when voters go to the polls for economic reasons.

Worse, coastal elites who hold this identity politics worldview often overlook struggling working class voters. “As Democrats become more closely identified with identity politics, non-minority voters may swing even more decisively to the Republicans.” He cited this as one of the reasons President Donald Trump won the 2016 elections.

“I was interested in what Continetti had to say about identity politics shaping the 2016 election,” said attendee Jill Buccola.

Bryce Ashberg, a college sophomore, said he was interested in “the idea that identity politics is a cover-up for class conflict.”

Before becoming editor of the *Free Beacon*, Continetti worked as a writer and editor for *The Weekly Standard*. His work has appeared in several publications including *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*. Continetti is also the published author of two books *The K Street Gang: The Rise and Fall of the Republican Machine* and *The Persecution of Sarah Palin: How the Media Tried to Bring Down a Rising Star*.

Photos from the lecture [are available here](#).

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