



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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CONTACT: Emily Stack Davis  
517-803-3745  
[PR@hillsdale.edu](mailto:PR@hillsdale.edu)

***Wall Street Journal Editorial Page Writer Speaks at Hillsdale College***  
*Author and journalist Barton Swaim gives lecture as part of spring Pulliam Fellowship*

Hillsdale, Mich. — From April 11-22, Hillsdale College hosted Barton Swaim, editorial writer for *The Wall Street Journal* and this spring's Eugene C. Pulliam Distinguished Visiting Fellow in Journalism. Swaim's public lecture on April 20 addressed the transmutation of American liberalism into progressivism and the irony of the movement's unsustainability.

"The American left doesn't know what it wants either for itself, for the nation, or for the world," Swaim said. "It searches for a way to define itself but finds satisfaction only in the creation of mythical enemies and bizarre causes. The reality I want to emphasize here is this: liberalism has long-since accomplished whatever it was going to accomplish. It has failed at whatever it was going to fail at. And there is nothing left for it to do."

The lecture, titled "You Can't Argue with the Righteous: Is Political Debate a Thing of the Past?" suggested that much of what motivates young progressives is a desire to connect with metaphysical truth, "hence the harrowing spectacles of public confessions in the absence of wrongdoing and the promulgation of strict codes of speech and conduct," Swaim said.

Swaim pointed to ancient traditions as a possible path forward, arguing that if churches and synagogues proclaim their distinctive messages rather than try to keep up with the times, the cultural and political landscape could change.

While on campus, Swaim also taught a one-credit course to journalism students. Topics included diversity in the newsroom, practical writing advice, and an encouragement to students to stay the course in an industry that is experiencing a lot of change.

"It's probably not going to go the way you think it will," he said. "But wherever you find yourself, do the best you can do to make the circumstances around you better; give yourselves entirely to the work, even if it's not what you may want to do right now. If you do that, in this world, people notice."

Swaim met with students and faculty on and off campus and communicated his commitment to help Hillsdale College's journalism students in any way he can.

"There's nothing like Hillsdale College in American higher education," Swaim said. "Hillsdale gives such close attention to the American Founding, the American experience, and its constitutional documents, which sets it apart. And what a service to provide at this moment in American history when who knows what we will become as a country."

Swaim specializes in writing about political books and ideas and is the author of *The Speechwriter: A Brief Education in Politics*.

Find photos of the event [here](#).

### **About Hillsdale College**

Hillsdale College is an independent liberal arts college located in southern Michigan. Founded in 1844, the College has built a national reputation through its classical liberal arts core curriculum and its principled refusal to accept federal or state taxpayer subsidies, even indirectly in the form of student grants or loans. It also conducts an outreach effort promoting civil and religious liberty, including a free monthly speech digest, *Imprimis*, with a circulation of more than 5.6 million. For more information, visit [hillsdale.edu](http://hillsdale.edu).

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