



**HILLSDALE COLLEGE**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Feb. 20, 2023

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### **Hillsdale College Ph.D. Candidate Bruno Cortes Presents Doctoral Research**

HILLSDALE, Mich. — Hillsdale College doctoral student Bruno Cortes gave a research presentation on his dissertation titled “The Conquest of Space: American Expansion in the Northwest Territory” on Feb. 16. Cortes made this presentation after successfully defending his dissertation before a faculty panel.

Cortes argued the principles of the American founding — not manifest destiny — guided most of America’s expansion during the 18th and 19th centuries. “Expansion as a government policy during the founding era was done with the view to securing American rights,” said Cortes. “It also involved acquiring the land needed to make America as economically independent as possible of Europe.” Cortes also argued that westward expansion in 1787 was justified because European countries threatened American sovereignty. “As Monroe explains it, it’s not just that these countries are seeking to control the New World, but that the Europeans involved...possess a political system, essentially different from that of America,” said Cortes. “It was an extension of these antagonistic European powers to America’s near abroad that posed the greatest threat to American rights at the time and which made western expansion the most important foreign policy during the founding era.”

The presentation took place in Lane Hall and was followed by a brief reception. John Grant, professor of politics, served as Cortes’s dissertation chair and provided introductory remarks. “No one else has treated this material in this way or even really treated this much at all,” said Grant. “Bruno does a very nice job of integrating the study of principles, policy, geopolitics, and political history. His dissertation is a noteworthy accomplishment.”

Cortes entered the Graduate School of Statesmanship in 2014 after receiving his undergraduate degree from the University of Connecticut and a master’s degree from St. John’s College. Upon successfully defending his dissertation, he earned a Doctor of Philosophy in Politics and will receive his degree at Hillsdale College’s Commencement Ceremony in May 2023.

For a headshot of Cortes, click [here](#). For Cortes’s student profile, click [here](#). To view the poster for the event, click [here](#).

For a high-resolution copy of the Hillsdale College clocktower logo, click [here](#).

### **About Hillsdale College Graduate School of Statesmanship**

The Van Andel Graduate School of Statesmanship was founded in 2010 “to educate students in the language of American constitutionalism and to place its graduates in positions of public service in politics, in journalism, in the Academy, and elsewhere.” Its courses of study, which culminate in either a Master of Arts or a Doctor of Philosophy in Politics, are centered around the core texts from the Western and American traditions of political thought — what Thomas Jefferson called the “elementary books of public right.” All admitted students received a full-tuition scholarship and admitted Ph.D. students receive an additional living stipend. For more information, visit [gradschool.hillsdale.edu](http://gradschool.hillsdale.edu).

### **About Hillsdale College**

Hillsdale College is an independent, nonsectarian, Christian 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 6.2 million. For more information, visit [hillsdale.edu](http://hillsdale.edu).

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