

IHS Guidelines for Event Speakers

The Institute for Humane Studies (IHS) is committed to supporting exploration, discussion, and civil debate around ideas and issues important to the classical liberal intellectual tradition. We work with professors to identify appropriate scholars who foster productive and informed discussion in a context of civility and mutual respect. To that end, we expect that all speakers at IHS-supported programs and events, whether invited by IHS or the faculty partner, meet the following standards:

Academic Credibility

Every IHS-sponsored event is an opportunity to engage in an open exchange of important ideas. Every event IHS supports, therefore, is designed to be academic in its content and tone, not politically partisan or polemical. Our default standard is that speakers possess a full-time academic affiliation and/or scholarly credentials. Exceptions may include professional journalists and non-academic public intellectuals who are affiliated with reputable media, research, or policy organizations and who are routinely read and cited by scholars in the relevant field.

Civil and Respectful Engagement

Tolerance, pluralism, intellectual humility, and a belief that all individuals possess inherent dignity are core values for IHS. While we invite intellectual challenge and debate, featured speakers at IHS-supported programs and events must adhere to and consistently demonstrate these core values. While we invite disagreement and debate about important issues, we select speakers with reputations for engaging their audience and fellow speakers with respect and civility. Speakers who advocate for bigotry or violence are not acceptable IHS partners. Nor are speakers who treat their intellectual opponents with contempt or scorn.

Disciplinary and Topical Expertise

Speakers featured at IHS programs and events must possess the disciplinary and topical expertise required to speak authoritatively on subjects broadly related to the classical liberal intellectual tradition. Typically, this means that we engage speakers from the social sciences and humanities.



That said, we do not assess this criterion narrowly. A scholar of physics, for example, may have a great deal to contribute to a topic such as “the republic of science,” a relevant theme within the classical liberal tradition. IHS-supported events are intended to advance an academic debate or otherwise add value to a topic associated with the classical liberal tradition, while helping attendees to become deeper and better thinkers.

Positive Campus and Community Impact

IHS events are designed to contribute to a positive campus climate of open and civil intellectual discourse. Programs designed to spark protest and speakers selected to incite a hostile reaction are not in line with this goal and are not supported by IHS.