



The Professions and Civic Life

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Professions are institutions which, through their small size, self-governing elements, and sense of social mission, can assist in maintaining a sound civic culture. As mediating institutions in our democratic society that are neither entirely birthed by the state nor are entirely private, the individual professions—such as the legal and education professions, journalism, economics, architecture, or the military—arguably present practical avenues through which to teach civic behavior and to restore Americans' broken trust.

This volume on the professions and civic life undertakes a unique and timely examination of twelve individual professions to see how each affects the character of American citizenship and the civic culture of the nation through their practices and ethos. Among the questions each essay in the volume addresses are: What is distinctive—or not—about the specific profession as it came to be practiced in the United States? Given the specialized knowledge, training, and sometimes licensing of a profession, what do the professions perceive to be their role in promoting the larger common good? How can we bring professionals' expert knowledge to bear on social problems in an open and deliberative way? Is the ethic of a particular profession as it understands itself today at odds with the American conception of self-government and a healthy civic life?

Through analysis of these questions, each chapter presents a rich treatment of how the twelve longstanding professions of political science, teaching, the law, the military, economics, medicine, journalism, literature, science, architecture, music, and history help support and challenge the general public's civic behavior in general and their attachment to the American regime in particular.

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