

# UNH Hosts Alexander Heffner of PBS' The Open Mind Oct 16

**Heffner to deliver lecture on civil discourse in an uncivil age**

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Monday, September 9, 2019

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**ALEXANDER HEFFNER, HOST OF “THE OPEN MIND” ON PBS.**

Alexander Heffner, host of “The Open Mind” on PBS, will deliver a lecture at the University of New Hampshire on Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2019, from 6:30-8:30 p.m. in 210 Hamilton Smith Hall. His talk, “Civil Discourse in an Uncivil Age,” is free and open to the public.

A panel of experts in politics, dialogue/civil discourse and the NH Primary will respond to Heffner’s presentation, including former NH Congressional Representative Carol Shea-Porter, former NH Attorney General and GOP strategist Tom Rath, Professor of Communication Sheila McNamee, and Professor of Political Science/Carsey Fellow Dante Scala.

Heffner’s lecture will deal with the role of civil discourse across academic, political and American life, considering the ways in which it can foster civic action, consensus building and civil society in local and national communities. He will explore the increasing divisiveness in American discourse and the toxic climate of political rhetoric and violence as well as suggest steps that might improve this threat to democracy.

“It’s critical to focus on how we together as citizens, officeholders, journalists and digital platforms can work to reverse the disunity,” says Heffner.

“The Open Mind” is the longest-running nationally broadcast public affairs interview program in U.S. television history. The program focuses on the world of ideas across politics, media, science, technology, the arts and civic life. Heffner is also coauthor of “A Documentary History of the United States” (Penguin). He has covered American politics, civic life and Millennials since the 2008 presidential campaign. His work has been profiled in The Washington Post, New York Times, Los Angeles Times, Des Moines Register, Christian Science Monitor, Variety, Medium, and on NBC News, MSNBC, C-SPAN, NPR, CNN, BBC, ABC, and elsewhere. His writing has appeared widely in major media outlets.

This lecture is sponsored by the Civil Discourse Lab at the University of New Hampshire, an initiative of the Communication Department that uses teaching, research and practice to strengthen the ability of students and community members to conduct meaningful conversations, collaborate and make decisions about difficult but important topics to a civil society. The event is co-sponsored by The Carsey School of Public Policy, The NH Humanities Collaborative, the UNH Parents’ Association and the Class of 54 Academic Enrichment Fund.

- **WRITTEN BY:**  
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