



Hear All Sides

www.yale.edu/ip

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The Independent Party

of the Yale Political Union

founded 1934

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Welcome to Yale! I'm Geoff Shaw, Chairman of the Independent Party of the Yale Political Union, and I want to ask you a ridiculously simple question: *What do you want out of the next four years?*

Academic planning – flipping through the bluebook, picking classes, choosing a major – is a big part of answering that question. But it's only a part. I have learned much more from my classmates than from my professors, courses, or books. Interacting with other students is the most formative component of a Yale education.

The Independent Party is an undergraduate debating society dedicated to promoting these intellectual and social interactions. Our weekly debates draw students from all walks of life into thoughtful, articulate, and at times combative discourse over divisive political and philosophical issues.

We take our motto, "Hear All Sides," very seriously. One could say that the IP is home to libertarians, socialists, neo-conservatives, hard-line moderates, and almost everything in between – but in fact, we are a group of students who resist the claustrophobic categories of "liberal" and "conservative" and reject the partisan pressures that demand adherence to a mass-produced political platform. We believe that an open mind is the hallmark of a well-educated person.

You may already have heard of the Yale Political Union, the oldest and most respected student debating society in the country. The IP is the largest party in the YPU, and the only one that adheres to no specific ideology or political viewpoint. IPsters will argue with equal vigor against Howard Dean one week and Antonin Scalia the next. Dean and Scalia each keynoted a YPU debate last year.

An old Yale song says that "time and change shall naught avail, to break the friendships formed at Yale." This line is true indeed. Of the friendships I have made, the ones formed through friendly disagreement in the IP are the strongest of all. The IP gathers for lunch on Fridays, dinner on Sundays, several times each semester for a Mory's toasting session (an old Yale tradition), and for a variety of low key and fun social events. Once every semester we get up early and trek to New York City to meet with prominent politicians, journalists, business people, artists, and media personalities. Governor Mario Cuomo, Rep. Pat Schroeder, former UN Ambassador John Bolton, and the late public intellectual William F. Buckley, Jr. have been some of our most interesting New York trip guests.

However you spend your time at Yale, it will challenge, enrich, and surprise you. More information about the IP is available online at www.yale.edu/ip, and I have enclosed the summer edition of our newsletter, The Spectrum. The first few weeks at school go by in a flash, so please remember to join us at a mixer, a television viewing, a debate, or any other event. Look out for IP flyers, emails, and Facebook invitations. If you have any questions about the IP or about Yale in general, feel free to contact me at geoffrey.shaw@yale.edu or the Chief Whip, Meredith Morrison, at meredith.morrison@yale.edu. I'm looking forward to meeting you, and perhaps disagreeing with you, soon.

Sincerely,

Geoff Shaw

Chairman of the Independent Party