

The GW Department of Philosophy presents the 2012 Goutman Lecture

David Cole

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Accounting for Torture after 9/11: The Challenge of Looking Backwards

Friday, February 3rd at 5:00 p.m.

Duques Hall, 2201 G Street, Room 151

David Cole is a professor at Georgetown University Law Center, a volunteer staff attorney for the Center for Constitutional Rights, the legal affairs correspondent for *The Nation*, and a regular contributor to the *New York Review of Books*. He is the author of six books. *Enemy Aliens: Double Standards and Constitutional Freedoms in the War on Terrorism* received the American Book Award in 2004. His most recent book, published in 2009, is *The Torture Memos: Rationalizing the Unthinkable*. He has litigated many significant constitutional cases in the Supreme Court, including *Texas v. Johnson* and *United States v. Eichman*, which extended First Amendment protection to flagburning, *National Endowment for the Arts v. Finley*, which challenged political content restriction on NEA funding, and *Holder v. Humanitarian Law Project*, which challenged a federal law that makes it a crime to advocate for peace and human rights if done to or for a group designated as “terrorist.” He has received numerous awards for his human rights work, including from the Society of American Law Teachers, the National Lawyers Guild, the ACLU of Southern California, the ABA Section on Individual Rights and Responsibilities, and the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee.

Abstract: In the wake of September 11, the President and Vice-President of the United States, along with several members of their Cabinet, authorized the systematic use of torture and cruelty against terror suspects. Since leaving office, both former President Bush and former Vice-President Cheney have boasted of authorizing waterboarding, a tactic the U.S. has in the past prosecuted as torture. Yet there has been no accountability for these crimes. President Obama has said that he wants to look forward, not backward. This lecture will address the necessity -- and the challenge -- of looking backward and holding to account those who authorized such conduct.