GW Alumni Weekend 2012
“Classes Without Quizzes”

University Professor Peter Caws: “Left, right, and center: the shifting ground of 21st-century politics”

**ABSTRACT:** This lecture will take a good-humored look at the current political scene from a philosophical point of view, asking how the contrast between left and right has changed over time and how some of the markers of these positions now play out in relation to one another. The old ideal of a loyal opposition curbing the excesses of the ruling party and cooperating in bringing policy back towards a stable center is in danger of succumbing to intractable ideological conflicts. How seriously should we take these conflicts and how can they be defused? Philosophy suggests that we should all be a little less sure of how right we are, and a little more ready to embrace one another’s worries and uncertainties.