



**The Program in Hellenic Studies  
at Columbia University**

Cordially invites you to

**The Kyriakos Tsakopoulos Lecture  
On Aristotle and the Moderns**

**“Wise Crowds: Aristotle, Athens & the Marquis de Condorcet”**

by

**Professor Josiah Ober**  
*Constantine Mitsotakis Professor of  
Political Science & Classics, Stanford University*

Thursday, September 28, 2006

6:30p.m. - Lecture

7:30p.m. – Reception

Rotunda of Low Library,  
Columbia University,  
116th Street and Broadway  
New York, NY

*For reservations, please call: 212.870.2443*

## Lecture

The practice of democracy assumes that under the right conditions, large bodies of people can make good decisions – but what are the right conditions? Do the individuals making up the crowd need to be expert decision-makers? Three different answers are offered by the Marquis de Condorcet (an 18th-century mathematician), by Aristotle in a famous passage of the *Politics*, and by the Athenians in their network-based design of deliberative institutions. These classical solutions to the problem of how crowds may be wise can help us to better understand the potential of democracy today.

## Our Speaker



**JOSIAH OBER** (B.A. Minnesota, '75, Ph.D. University of Michigan, '80) is Constantine Mitsotakis Professor of Political Science and Classics at Stanford University. Prior to this recent appointment, Professor Ober was David Magie '97 Class of 1897 Professor at Princeton University where he held a joint appointment in Classics and the University Center for Human Values. Professor Ober is the recipient of numerous awards that include a Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship, an NEH Fellowship for University Teachers, and a residential fellowship at the Center for the

Advanced Study of the Behavioral Sciences. He has published a number of books on various aspects of ancient Greek history: *Fortress Attica: Defense of the Athenian Frontier Land, 404-322 B.C.* (1985); *Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens: Rhetoric, Ideology, and the Power of the People*, which won the American Philological Association's Charles J. Goodwin Award of Merit in 1989; *The Athenian Revolution: Essays on Ancient Greek Democracy and Political Theory* (1996); *Political Dissent in Democratic Athens* (1998), and other books and articles on Greek history, culture, and political thought. In recent years his interests have centered on Athenian democracy and Greek political thought. His current research includes projects on self-governing organizations (ancient and modern), on the circulation of social and technical knowledge in democratic societies, and on the interplay between political philosophy and culture.

## Our Donor



In June 2004, **KYRIAKOS TSAKOPOULOS '93** presented a generous gift to Columbia University to establish the Kyriakos Tsakopoulos Chair in Hellenic Studies, in the Classics Department. This gift as well as a subsequent gift in 2005 were made as a tribute to his grandfather—for whom the Chair is named: “My grandfather exemplified what it was to have character and be a good man, and that’s what Aristotle teaches,” said Mr. Tsakopoulos. Kyriakos Tsakopoulos is the President and CEO of KT Communities, a diversified land development company headquartered in

Roseville, California. He is responsible for the management and operation of several real estate, farming, building and land development projects and investments. Mr. Tsakopoulos is a California native and is active in regional and national civic, charitable and political affairs. He is a member of the Board of Trustees of the California State University system and sits on the boards of several institutions, including the University of California MIND Research and Development Institute, Crocker Art Museum in Sacramento, California and the Sutter Roseville Hospital Medical Foundation. Mr. Tsakopoulos is also a member of Columbia College’s Board of Visitors. Mr. Tsakopoulos trained as an attorney and is a member of the California and United States Supreme Court Bars.

## ‘Aristotle and The Moderns’ Lecture Series

With the announcement of the Kyriakos Tsakopoulos Chair, Mr. Tsakopoulos also established an annual lecture series entitled “Aristotle and the Moderns.” The series focuses on the importance and relevance of Aristotle’s teachings in today’s world, particularly with regard to his books, the *Politics* and the *Nicomachean Ethics*. “Our notions of justice and the importance of the rule of law, the definition of what it is to be a good person and a good citizen, are most eloquently and accurately described by Aristotle in these two books,” Mr. Tsakopoulos affirmed at the time of the establishment of the series. The annual public lecture considers contemporary debates in broadly conceived, innovative, and multidisciplinary ways. The series was inaugurated in November 2005 by the European Ombudsman, Professor Nikiforos Diamandouros, who spoke on the ‘Rule of Law, Democracy and the Ombudsman in Contemporary Europe.’