Center for Global Culture and Communication

An Interdisciplinary Initiative of Northwestern University School of Communication

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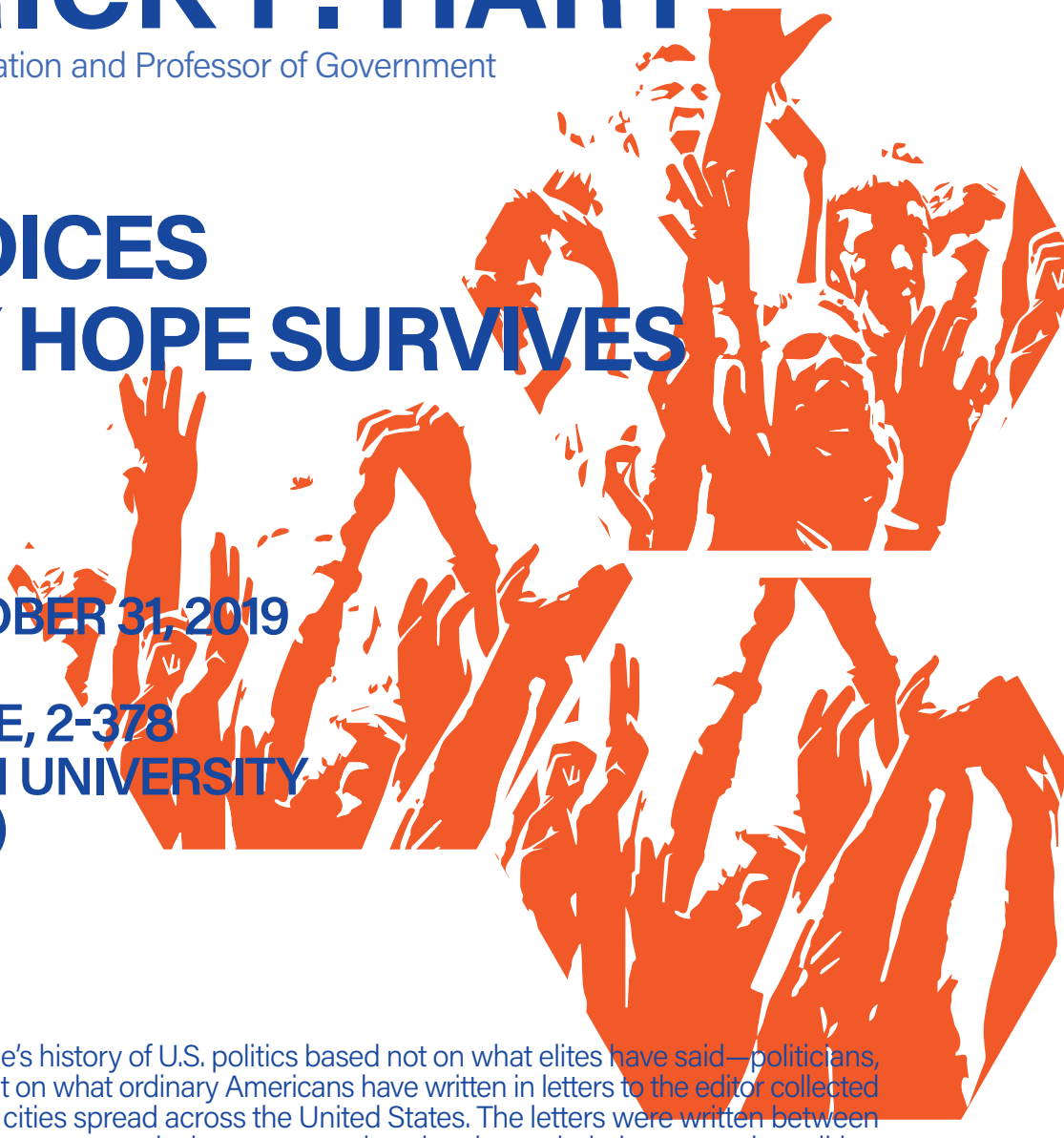
LOCAL VOICES AND WHY HOPE SURVIVES



THURSDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2019
12:00 – 1:30PM
FRANCES SEARLE, 2-378
NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY
(LUNCH SERVED)

This talk presents a people's history of U.S. politics based not on what elites have said—politicians, scholars, and pundits—but on what ordinary Americans have written in letters to the editor collected in twelve small American cities spread across the United States. The letters were written between 1948 and the present and were extensively content analyzed to detect their themes and tonalities. In addition, six surveys of everyday citizens and eighty interviews with letter writers and newspaper editors were conducted over a twenty-year period. The result is a fresh understanding of civic hope, a belief that democratic politics still works despite its well-known infirmities. But who believes in such ideals today? Who will admit to such feelings in the presence of others? Are there enough such admissions to sustain a polity? Does civic hope abide? Hart's talk answers those questions.

For more information, please email Gabriela Mayes at g-mayes@u.northwestern.edu.