

# THE GATEWAY

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## colophon

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# Poli sci lecture explores politics of open borders

JENNIFER HUYGEN  
News Staff

Modern practices of citizenship and immigration were questioned on the basis of their morality during the twelfth annual Distinguished Lecture in Political Science, which took place in the Humanities Centre on 27 March.

The academic discourse, led by Dr Joseph Carens, a professor at the University of Toronto, marked the end of the 2007/08 Voices from the Cutting Edge speaker series hosted by the University of Alberta political science department.

In his presentation, entitled Who Belongs? Immigration, Democracy and Citizenship, Carens explored current immigration policies in post-industrial societies and advocated for an opening up of global borders.

"The question here is, 'Who should be granted citizenship and why?' and 'Who's morally entitled to be a citizen?'" Carens asked while introducing his topic.

According to Carens, citizenship should be readily accessible for those born or raised in a country, as well as for legal adult immigrants who live in a state for an extended period of time.

Carens pointed to the relatively clean records of Canada and the United States on recent policies regarding access to citizenship. But he stopped short of praising these systems because of their treatment over issues of deportation,

irregular migrants, and refugees.

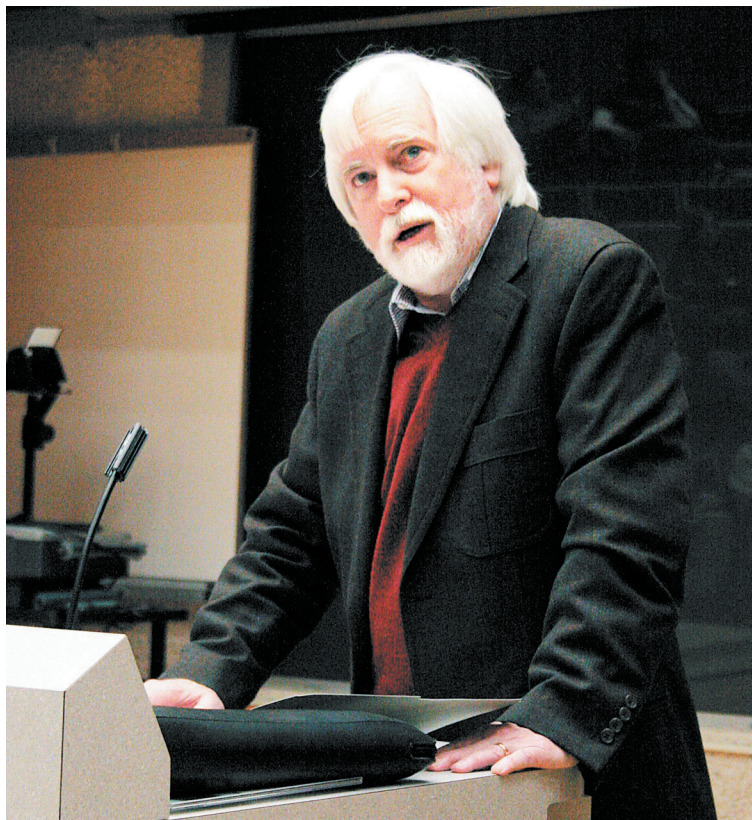
"There's a wide range of legal rights that people ought to possess and normally do possess, as a matter of law, simply [by] virtue of being within the jurisdiction of the state," he observed. "Whether they have permission to be there or not, whether they're obeying the laws or not, we can lump these rights under the heading of basic human rights."

An author of numerous books and scholarly articles, Carens spent much of his time detailing the relationship between states and immigrants, emphasizing certain contradictions in state-based values of liberalism and democracy.

He pointed to the recent debates taking place in Quebec over reasonable accommodation, as well as the decision to ban hijabs in public schools in France.

"It's surprising how often contemporary liberal democratic states are willing simply to override their own principles out of fear and anxiety about differences of culture and identity," he said.

"As with citizenship rights and so on, people sometimes say, 'Well, control over immigration is a fundamental feature of sovereignty and self-determination and can't be subject to any normative constraints external to the community's will,'" Carens stated. "There's no such thing as moral carte blanche when it comes to the exercise



KATIEMOONEY

**FREE FLOW** Dr Joseph Carens discusses issues of immigration and citizenship.

of state power."

In arguing for the validity of his open borders theory, where citizenship should be universally available and protected, Carens likened current policies of citizenship in the contemporary international system to the medieval practice of feudalism, where the global north and global south represent the nobility and peasantry respectively.

"Citizenship in western democracies is the modern equivalent of feudal privilege," he noted. "Like feudal birthright privileges, restrictive citi-

zenship is hardly justified."

However, Carens recognizes the difficulties inherent in his self-described "generous" policy proposals towards immigration, but challenged the audience to accept that generous behaviour is necessary to combat complacency and the injustices between "haves" and "have-nots."

"The idea of opening borders does defy common sense. That is precisely the point of the argument. It aims to challenge the conventional understanding and background pre-suppositions of our world."

# STREETERS

Compiled and photographed by  
Jen Huygen and Sam Brooks

As you may be aware, Tuesday is April Fools' Day.

## What's the best prank you've ever been involved in?



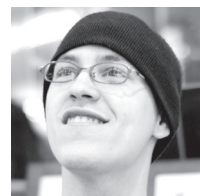
**Evan Rogers**  
Kinesiology IV



**Katherine Jonsson**  
Engineering IV



**Ally Cowan**  
Arts II



**Dustin Miller**  
English V

"I got home late after work; it was like four in the morning, and I got my friend [...] out of bed, and I was like, 'Man, your car got broken into; someone broke into your car; your back window's all smashed in and everything,' and he [...] got out of bed and got all mad and stuff and went outside, and I locked him out for a bit in his underwear."

"Me and my roommate played a prank on her boyfriend. We made him cookies, and instead of just making them all nice and yummy, we added crushed garlic and chili peppers and a bunch of really raunchy stuff that he wasn't aware of until he actually took a bite."

"We took my brother's car, and we parked it at the community centre, and he thought it was stolen. We thought it was pretty slick." [What happened next?] "He found it. So it wasn't too exciting—no purpose really."

"I know somebody who went through the trouble to do a complete April Fools' prank. They changed all the clocks by an hour, they put Saran wrap on the toilet seat, and it wasn't April Fools' day; it was the wrong day."

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