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February 10, 2016

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Prof. Alexander Tsesis on Terror speech, the Internet, and the First Amendment

Time: 12:00pm - 1:30pm

Location: Silverman 240A

Professor Tsesis will analyze existing Supreme Court free speech doctrine with an eye to designing a constitutionally permissible anti-terrorism statute providing latitude to restrict certain utterances on the Internet while preserving core First Amendment rights. He argues that legislators should base their policy efforts and judges their adjudications on the imminent threat of harm, true threats, and material support doctrines. These three provide the necessary constitutional latitude to pursue dangerous terrorist speech on social media, providing speakers with ample notice and the public with necessary security.

The presence of terrorism on the Internet tests the limits of the First Amendment's protections on free speech. The widespread availability in cyberspace of terrorist sermons, instructional videos, and interactive sites raises complex expressive concerns. On the one hand, statements that support nefarious and even violent movements are constitutionally protected against totalitarian-like repression of civil liberties. On the other hand, the protection of free speech has never been an absolute bar against the regulation of low value expressions, such as calls to violence and destruction.

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Free! Mama's Vegetarian will be served!

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