



**COLLEGE DEBATE AND DISCOURSE PROGRAM AT  
VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE**

supported by Braver Angels, ACTA, BRIDGE USA and a grant  
from the John Templeton Foundation

# The evolution of the program

David Blankenhorn, founder of Braver Angels, invited by CLE to speak at VMI in 2017.

CLE hosted four concurrent Braver Angels debates in the Leadership conference in 2021.

Collaboration between Building BRIDGEs Club and CLE (starting in 2021); invitation to be a community of practice for the Templeton Project in Fall 2021.

Since then, 5 Post-wide debates (one of which intercollegiate), lunch debates, introductory training about Braver Angels debates.



## DOES A COMMITMENT TO CIVILITY TAKE CARE OF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION ISSUES?

A Braver Angels debate open to the VMI community – cadets, faculty, staff and alumni

When: September 25, 2023 from 1900 to 2100  
Where: Hall of Valor, CLE


For more information, contact:  
COL Dimitrova-Grajzl / Dimitrova-grajzlv@vmi.edu

To register, use the QR code on this flyer




## SHOULD WOMEN BE ASSIGNED COMBAT ROLES?



A Braver Angels college debate, sponsored by the VMI Building BRIDGES Club in collaboration with the VMI Center for Leadership and Ethics



When: Monday, February 28 / 7:00 - 9:00 PM  
Where: Hall of Valor, CLE – Dinner will be provided

To sign up for the debate, use the QR code on this flyer. Deadline to register: February 21.

For info, contact:  
COL Dimitrova-Grajzl – dimitrova-grajzlv@vmi.edu  
LTC Whipple – whipless@vmi.edu

## IS SOCIAL MEDIA A THREAT TO DEMOCRACY?

A Braver Angels college debate, sponsored by the VMI Building BRIDGES Club in collaboration with the VMI Center for Leadership and Ethics. Students, faculty and staff are welcome to join this Braver Angels debate.



When: Wednesday, September 28 – 6:00 - 9:00 pm  
Where: Hall of Valor, CLE – dinner will be provided


To sign up for the debate, use the QR code or this registration link:  
[https://vmi.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_bk62Mev02107Y46](https://vmi.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bk62Mev02107Y46)

For info, contact:  
COL Dimitrova-Grajzl – dimitrova-grajzlv@vmi.edu  
LTC Whipple – whipless@vmi.edu



## THE ATHLETE/NON-ATHLETE DIVIDE AT VMI

A Braver Angels Debate – by Cadets, for Cadets  
Sponsored by the Building BRIDGES Club in collaboration with the VMI Center for Leadership and Ethics





When: Thursday, March 2 – 1930 to 2100  
Where: CLE, Hall of Valor

Make your own smores bar!

To register, use the QR code on this flyer.  
[https://vmi.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_1RZPNM8EvVOZ4hM](https://vmi.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_1RZPNM8EvVOZ4hM)

For info, contact:  
COL Dimitrova-Grajzl - Dimitrova-grajzlv@vmi.edu  
Katie Lloyd - lloydke23@mail.vmi.edu  
Devin Thomas - thomasds24@mail.vmi.edu

## SHOULD K-12 SCHOOLS BAN CONTROVERSIAL BOOKS?

A Braver Angels Intercollegiate Debate

SPONSORED BY THE VMI BUILDING BRIDGES CLUB, IN COLLABORATION WITH THE CENTER FOR LEADERSHIP AND ETHICS


Hosted at VMI and open to students, faculty, and staff at Washington and Lee University, Mountain Gateway Community College, and Southern Virginia University

When: November 28 — 7:00-9:00 PM  
Where: Hall of Valor, Marshall Hall, VMI

Dessert will be provided

For more information, contact:  
COL Dimitrova-Grajzl: Dimitrova-grajzlv@vmi.edu  
Cadet Devin Thomas: thomasds24@vmi.edu

To register:  
use the QR code on this flyer




- **Our goals**

- Create a brave space for meaningful and genuine conversations on important and sometimes challenging topics
- Enhance our students' listening skills
  - Good leaders are also good listeners
- Teach our students to have empathy toward others
- Demonstrate civil discourse techniques



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Building a community of practice:

- three faculty/staff fellows
- four cadet fellows
- training
- new initiatives



- “This type of debate opens them up to the possibility that people who disagree with them are not adversaries, they’re just interesting human beings who have a different point of view.”
- “VMI has become a vibrant, self-sustaining community of practice in our program, and its initiative in introducing Braver Angels debates and civil discourse to other colleges in the surrounding area is exemplary for the nation.”
  - Doug Sprei, ACTA’s VP of Campus Partnerships and Director of the College Debates and Discourse Alliance