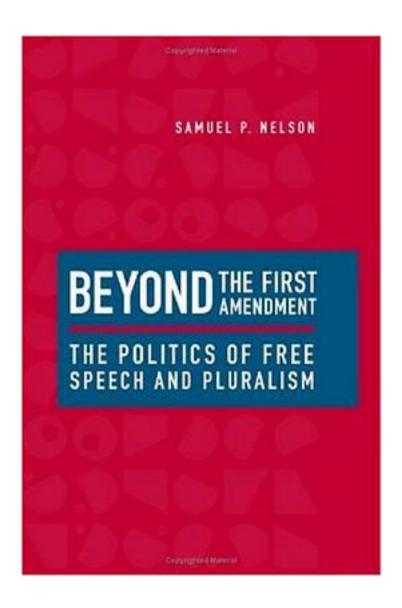
Beyond the First Amendment



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Americans often believe that the First Amendment and free speech are synonymous and that all restrictions on speech can be addressed by the legal framework of the First Amendment. Political theorist Samuel P. Nelson argues that the current legal framework for free speech actually undermines attempts to resolve many of these issues and that the law of the First Amendment has supplanted the vital politics of free speech. To cut through the confusion, Nelson takes a step back from the First Amendment framework to understand the social nature of speech, moving toward a more pluralistsic and value-based understanding. He examines three philosophies commonly used to justify speech protection-libertarianism, expressivism, and egalitarianism-and finds none of them sufficiently responsive in today's contemporary political landscape. Advocating an approach grounded in value pluralism-which describes a wider variety of free speech claims than the First Amendment

allows-Nelson pushes the debate beyond constitutional and legal questions.
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