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CONFÉRENCE DES INVITÉS DU CDPC

THE GRENADE, THE HOURGLASS, AND THE SUNDIAL: CONSTITUTIONAL TIME IN THE UNITED STATES AND THE WORLD

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Institut de droit comparé 28 rue Saint-Guillaume 75007 PARIS

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Le Centre de droit public comparé (CDPC) organise une table ronde sur le thème ***« The Grenade, the Hourglass, and the Sundial: Constitutional Time in the United States and the World »*** *(« La grenade, le sablier et le cadran solaire : le temps constitutionnel aux Etats-Unis et dans le monde »)* **le mercredi 8 novembre.**

Conférence de Richard ALBERT, professeur à *University of Texas at Austin*

Présentation de la conférence

Time passes in a peculiar way under the ancient United States Constitution. Constitutional time in America follows the sundial model, rotating for years through crises and shocks both great and small, little consideration ever seriously given to breaking

with time, replacing the constitution, and starting afresh with a new constitutional document. In contrast, the grenade and hourglass models prevail in much of the rest of the constitutional world: crises or shocks, both real and perceived, trigger the writing of a new constitution that emerges ultimately from the chaos of the grenade model or from the orderly self-contained procedures of the hourglass model. In this lecture, Richard Albert will introduce these three models of constitutional time in the world, and show how the American sundial model of constitutional time explains why the U.S. Constitution is so hard to amend, why Americans venerate their Constitution, and why current efforts to replace the Constitution are doomed to failure.