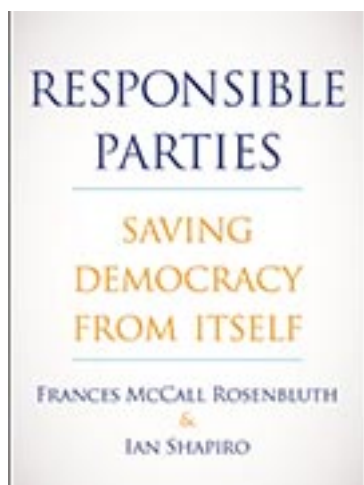# Book Talk - Responsible Parties: Saving Democracy from Itself

September 13, 2018
Please join us on Tuesday, Oct. 2, at 4:30 p.m. for a thought-provoking talk by Professors Frances McCall Rosenbluth and Ian Shapiro about their new book "Responsible Parties: Saving Democracy from Itself."

This is the opening event of the 2018-19 Arts and Humanities Book Talk Series, presented by Yale University Library's Department of Area Studies and Humanities Research Support. The Oct. 2 talk is also co-sponsored by the Yale University Press and by the Whitney and Betty MacMillan Center for International and Area Studies.

Co-authors Frances McCall Rosenbluth and Ian Shapiro argue that in recent decades, democracies across the world have adopted measures to increase popular involvement in political decisions. Parties have turned to primaries and local caucuses to select candidates while ballot initiatives and referenda allow citizens to enact laws directly. Many places now use proportional representation, encouraging smaller parties that represent different interests rather than two dominant parties. Yet voters keep getting angrier. There is a steady erosion of trust in politicians, parties, and democratic institutions, culminating most recently in major populist victories in the United States, the United Kingdom, Italy, Hungary, Poland, and elsewhere.

Rosenbluth and Shapiro maintain that devolving power to the grassroots is part of the problem—not the solution. Efforts to decentralize political decision-making have made governments and especially political parties less effective and less able to address constituents' abiding concerns. They argue that to revive confidence in governance, we must restore power to political parties, which are the core institutions of representative democracy.

Rosenbluth is the Damon Wells Professor of Political Science. Shapiro is the Sterling Professor of Political Science. William Frucht, Executive Editor of the Yale University Press, will moderate the conversation with the authors.

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