The book talk will feature Professors Frances McCall Rosenbluth and Ian Shapiro, who will discuss their new book "Responsible Parties: Saving Democracy from Itself."

This is part 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 event is also co-sponsored by the Yale University Press and the Whitney and Betty MacMillan Center for International and Area Studies.

The authors argue that in recent decades, democracies across the world have adopted measures to increase popular involvement in political decisions. This has included the use of primaries and local caucuses to select candidates, ballot initiatives and referenda to allow citizens to enact laws directly, and proportional representation to encourage smaller parties that represent different interests rather than two dominant parties. However, this has led to voters becoming increasingly disillusioned and disengaged with their political systems.

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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