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NEWS RELEASE

Sept. 3, 2009

Contact: Lisa Thomas, UM Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, 406-243-4689, lisa.thomas@mso.umt.edu.

LECTURE TACKLES TOPICS OF FREE SPEECH, OBSCENITY

MISSOULA —

University of Montana history Professor Michael Mayer will give UM's annual Constitution Day Lecture on Wednesday, Sept. 16.

Mayer will present "I Know It When I See It': Obscenity and the Constitution" at 7:30 p.m. in the University Center North Ballroom. The event is free and open to the public.

The lecture will focus on major legal battles over obscenity from the 19th century to the present and the tension between the First Amendment's guarantee of free speech and the desire on the part of some to rid society of what they regard as the blight, or even the danger, of obscenity.

The public and the courts have long considered obscenity to be outside the protection of the First Amendment, Mayer said, but the courts have never established a viable definition of obscenity.

An expert on the history of American law, post-World War II culture and the U.S. civil rights movement, Mayer earned a doctorate from Princeton University in 1984.

Constitution Day, Sept. 17, is an annual celebration of the signing of the Constitution in 1787. Events are held around the nation to continue the legacy of the 39 brave men who changed the course of history.

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