

As Trump takes office, there appears to be little hope of bringing people together, VCU political scientist says

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Credit: Virginia Commonwealth University

As Donald Trump is sworn in today at noon as the 45th president of the United States, Virginia Commonwealth University political science

professor Deirdre Condit, Ph.D., says the country remains deeply divided, and she is skeptical the divisions will be healed anytime soon.

Condit, an associate professor and chair of the Department of Political Science in the College of Humanities and Sciences, whose research interests include political theory, feminist theory, law, and [public policy](#), was asked to comment as Trump takes office.

"In a normal political world, democratic legitimacy requires some level of institutional predictability and stability, even though democracy itself is characterized by the continual changes brought about by the citizens within," she said. "This election has exposed some very deep rifts among our citizens, our political parties and our institutions. But, as Lincoln noted poignantly, 'A house divided against itself cannot stand.'"

"Inaugurations typically serve as an opportunity for Americans to begin to knit ourselves back together as a country, especially after deeply divisive elections like this most recent one. If they are to be legitimate, the new administration has to find a way to strike a balance between being the 'change agent' their voters wanted, and becoming the leader of those who did not support them. Thus far it is unclear to me that Mr. Trump and his team understand the need to do so or are even interested in doing so. That is dangerous for the country. Nor are his opponents much interested in normalizing his presidency."

"So, it seems that the divisions among Americans are going to continue. One need only look at the fact that this weekend will be marked on Friday by Trump's inauguration, only to be followed on Saturday by a massive March for Women, who will be standing primarily in protest to his swearing in. We have been deeply divided before in our history. Resolution of those differences typically came at a high cost. We could [be] at such a moment, once again."

Provided by Virginia Commonwealth University

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