Ellen Kennedy, Political Science

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Ellen Kennedy, professor emerita of political science in the School of Arts & Sciences, died on September 22, 2026. She was 78.

Dr. Kennedy earned a BA in political science at Trinity College in 1968, an MA in political science from Indiana University in 1970, and a PhD in government from the London School of Economics & Political Science in 1977. Before joining Penn's faculty in 1989, Dr. Kennedy taught at the Universities of London, York, Manchester and at the University of Freiburg. She was promoted to full professor in July 2003. She was active in the Faculty Senate and served on various committees, including the 1992 School of Arts & Sciences Planning and Priori-ties Committee that analyzed the status of and shape a five-year plan for the school (*Almanac* October 26, 1993 (https://almanac.upenn.edu/archive/v40pdf/n09/102693.pdf)). She retired from Penn in 2015.

Dr. Kennedy was an eminent political theorist whose work on Carl Schmitt shaped scholarship on law, constitutionalism, liberalism, and sovereignty. Her translations made Dr. Schmitt accessible to a broad intellectual audience and her writings on Dr. Schmitt's work opened his thinking to political theorists, legal theorists, and other academics. She also wrote on the political economy, publishing a monograph on the Bundesbank that resulted in her serving as a consultant to European banking institutions and policy makers, according to an online tribute from Penn's political science department.

Outside of Penn, Dr. Kennedy was a research fellow of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation and the Friedreich Ebert Foundation as well as the British Academy and the Nuffield Fondation. She authored the books *Constitutional Failure: Carl Schmitt in Weimar* (Duke University Press, 2004), *The Bundesbank* (Johns Hopkins, 1997), *The Bundesbank: Germany's Central Bank in the International System* (Council on Foreign Affairs, 1991), and *Freedom & the Open Society: Henri Bergson's Contribution to Political Philosophy* (Garland, 1987). She also co-edited the volume *Women in Western Political Philosophy* (Harvester, 1986).