



Institute of Ethics Newsletter

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Adrian College Institute of Ethics

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Ethics Film Series Upcoming Films

All Films are Scheduled to begin at 6 pm

- Thursday, February 3
"Slumdog Millionaire"
- Friday, March 11,
"Capitalism: A Love Story"
- Monday, April 11,
"Shattered Glass"

Due to copyright issues, the film series is open only to the Adrian College community.

Ethics in Journalism

The Spring Semester Ethics Brown bag series will feature presentations on journalism, humor, scientific research, and social ethics. The sessions will be held on Thursdays, in Knight Auditorium of Valade Hall beginning at 12:10 p.m.

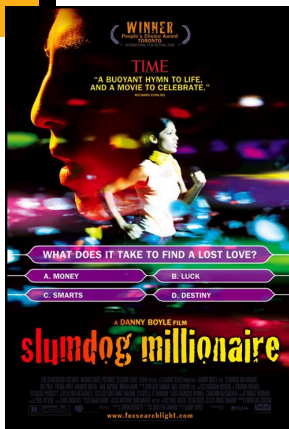
Prof. Renée Collins (Journalism) begins the series January 20 with a presentation on Ethics and Journalism. She will focus on the ethics of lying in the media and getting away with it. She will explore the consequences of misrepresentation and raise the question of whether public fora, such as the Internet, is a deterrent. Collins will also explore whether lying in the media raises the level of distrust of the media among the general public.



Ms. Renée Collins

Assistant Professor, Journalism

On February 17, **Dr. Hank Cetola** (Psychology) will address the issue of Gallows Humor from a Utilitarian viewpoint. Dr. Cetola will first discuss the use of Gallows Humor as a stress reliever.



Ethics Film Series: *Slumdog Millionaire*

The first presentation in the Spring 2011 Institute for Ethics film series features the movie *Slumdog Millionaire* which will be shown at 6:00 p.m. in Valade Knight Auditorium on Thursday February 3, 2011.

An 18 year-old orphan from the slums of Mumbai finds himself one question away from winning India's version of "Who Wants To Be a Millionaire", when he is arrested on suspicion for cheating and he tries to prove his innocence through with stories of his life and how he came upon the answers to the questions posed on the game show. The film touches upon ethics of honesty and character.

The R-rated movie will be followed by a discussion on the ethical issue in the film led by Dr. Tony Coumoundouros (Religion/Philosophy) and Dr. Stephanie Jass (History).

Please contact Dr. Scott Elliott at selliott@adrian.edu if you would like a formal part in the discussion.

Ethics in Film Series *continued*

The Institute for Ethics welcomes ideas for films from other campus groups. The films must directly deal with an ethical issue / problem / dilemma facing the contemporary world.

Suggestions for upcoming Film series are particularly welcomed. All films will be followed by an open discussion led by a discussant.

For faculty and staff who would like to lead a discussion on a suggested film, the Insti-

tute for Ethics does provide an honorarium. This would be a great opportunity to show a film relevant to a class you are teaching which includes ethical situations.

The remaining scheduled films for this semester are:

Capitalism: A Love Story, Friday, March 11

The film explores the question of what is the price Americans pay for their love of Capitalism through both humor and outrage using

examples from everyday life, the political epicenter of Washington DC, and global financial institutions in Manhattan. Business Ethics and the Ethics of Social Institutions, Ethics and Humor

Shattered Glass, Monday April 11

The film tells the story of journalist Stephen Glass, popular staff writer for "the New Republic" who in a quest for fame, concocted sources, quotes, and entire stories during his three year tenure there until his deception was

Spring Brown Bag Schedule

- Jan 20, Prof. **Renee Collins** Ethics in Journalism
 - Feb. 17, **Dr. Hank Cetola** Ethics and Humor
 - Mar 17, Dr. **Janet Salzwedel**, Ethics in Scientific Research
 - April 14, **President Jeff Docking**, Social Ethics
-
- **Time:** 12:10—12:45 Twenty minute presentation. Fifteen minute Q&A.

Place: Knight Auditorium, Valade Hall

Ethics in Journalism *continued*

er and is a method to increase group cohesiveness. He will conclude with a discussion of the utilitarian use of humor in general.

Dr. Janet Salzwedel (Biology) will follow with a discussion of Ethics and Scientific research. Often when one thinks of ethics in scientific research, it is the ethical treatment of test subjects that is of concern. But researchers face additional ethical challenges. In an era of big budgets needed to

carry out technologically advanced research, the pursuit of funding has pushed some scientists to present biased or even fraudulent results. More recently, even the choice of research projects is an ethical decision when potential results could aid the work of terrorists.

Pres. Jeffrey Docking will conclude the semester series on April 14 on the topic "Creating an Ethical Compass". President Docking raises the question, "Can we take what we learned about ethics in the

classroom and apply to behavioral changes in our own lives?" He will further ask us whether the highly theoretical writings of Aristotle, Plato, Bentham, Locke, Kant, and many other ethicists be "boiled down" into a few understandable rules for living that, if adhered to, can truly make us more ethical human beings. The session attempts to accomplish this task by providing listeners with an ethical compass to guide one's day to day decisions.

Ethics Bowl

Last November Dr. Spence and four students went to Harper College, which is located just outside of Chicago, to participate in the regional ethics bowl. Seniors Cleary Murphy (philosophy and criminal justice), Ken Warren (math and philosophy), Creedance Hoffman (math) and sophomore David Brockway (philosophy) competed against other schools from the upper mid-west region. Some of the issues debated included corporal punishment, eco-terrorism, and Facebook privacy policies. After the competition they had the opportunity to have dinner with one of the judges - Tom May, Director of Graduate Studies at the Medical College of Wisconsin's Center for Bioethics and Medical Humanities. Unfortunately, they did not qualify for the national competition, an honor that went to Macalaster College in Minneapolis.



Students pictured left to right Ken Warren, Cleary Murphy, Creedance Hoffman and David Brockway

Utilitarianism

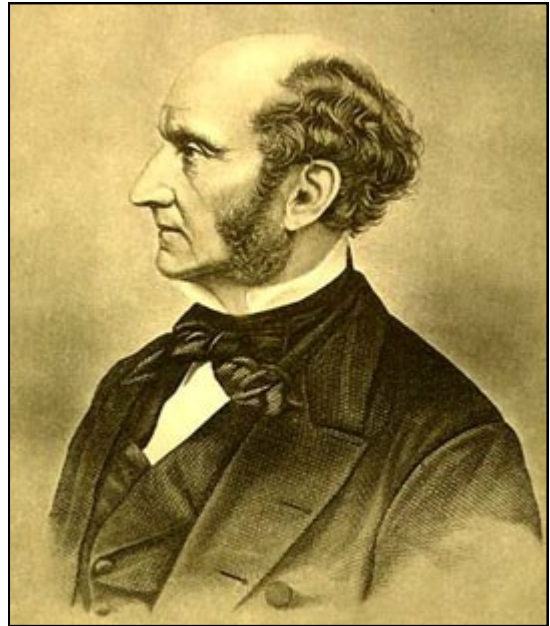
Utilitarianism, also known as consequentialism, is one of the most popular forms of ethical theory. The theory is often characterized by the slogan “the greatest good for the greatest number”, or might shortcut GGFGN. That characterization, however, only gives us half of the theory. The second part of the theory holds that we should do that which creates the least harm for the greatest number of people.

What matters most for utilitarianism are the consequences of an action rather than the motives behind an action. This means that an action is judged solely on the basis of what happens rather than what a person intends or thinks will happen. For example, if I intend to save a child from an approaching car but I inadvertently pushed her into the way of another car. I am held responsible for her injuries even though that was not my intent.

The originator of utilitarianism, Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), believed that when choosing an action we must select from all possible courses of action, not just those which immediately to our mind. This principle runs counter to the tendency of many people who just want to choose between two possible alternatives—mine and yours.

Bentham structured his theory which defined "good" and "harm" in terms of pleasure and pain. Thus, his theory was hedonistic. Other utilitarians have used different criteria to define good and harm. In the business world good and harm are often defined in terms of profit and loss.

Bentham believed that there was a way of measuring the good or harm resulting from an action that should be employed in evaluating the potential consequences of an action. The first of these is *intensity*, which measures the strength of pleasures or pain. The second mark, as Bentham called them, measures the *duration* of our pleasures and pain. The third mark, *certainty* or *uncertainty*, holds that we should choose the action that is most likely to produce the desired results. The next mark, *propin-*



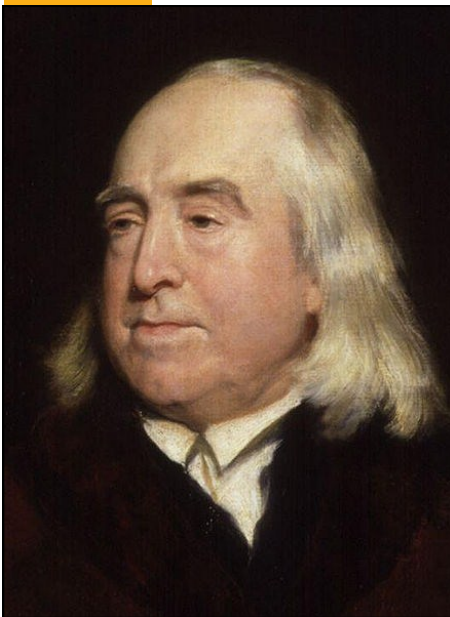
John Stuart Mill

quity or *remoteness*, argues that actions that produce immediate consequences should be preferred over those that may occur in the future.

Fecundity or *fruitfulness* suggests that we should prefer those actions which are most likely to produce the same kinds of results in the future. The next mark, *purity*, holds that we should choose those actions which are least likely to produce the opposite results. The seventh mark, *extent*, measures how likely the action is to produce desired consequences for the greatest number of people.

Bentham's utilitarian calculus raises the obvious question of how we can measure the amount of good or harm an action produces. While Bentham believed that it was possible to measure the consequences. Most utilitarians use these marks as guidelines rather than exact measures.

John Stuart Mill (1806-1873), followed Bentham's utilitarianism but criticized Bentham for only considering the amount of good or harm rather than its *quality*. Mill held that those actions which produce higher pleasures are preferable to those that produce lower pleasures. Mill tended to equate higher pleasures with a higher capacity of the human mind. Thus, mental pleasures should be preferred over physical pleasures. As Mill put it, "it is better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a pig satisfied." Thus, the good life could be a dissatisfied life, especially if the dissatisfaction was rooted in the attempt to create a better life for people.

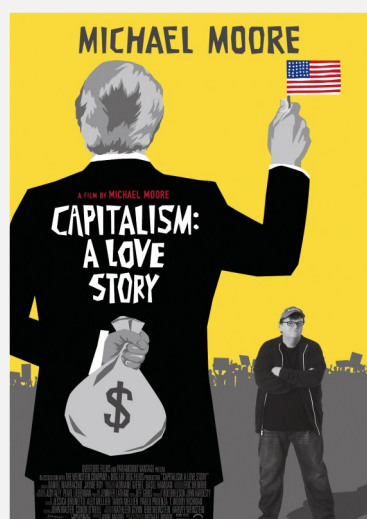


Jeremy Bentham

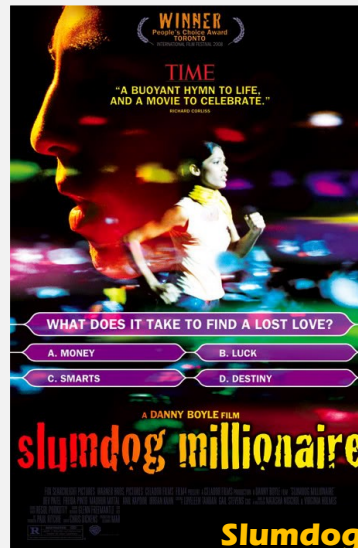
Adrian College Institute for Ethics Spring Film Series



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Capitalism: A Love Story
Friday, March 11
6 pm Knight Auditorium



Slumdog Millionaire
Thursday, Feb 3
6 pm Pelle 207



Shattered Glass
Monday, April 11
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Institute of Ethics Brownbags

SPRING 2011

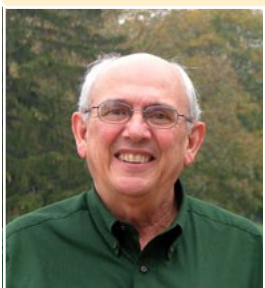


Renée Collins

AC Department of Journalism

“Ethics in Journalism”

**Jan.
20**



Hank Cetola

AC Department of Psychology

“Ethics and Humor”

**Feb.
17**



Janet Salzwedel

AC Department of Biology

“Ethics in Scientific Research”

**Mar.
17**



Jeffrey Docking

President Adrian College

“Social Ethics”

**Apr.
14**

**Thursdays, 12:10 to 12:45
Knight Auditorium Valade Hall**

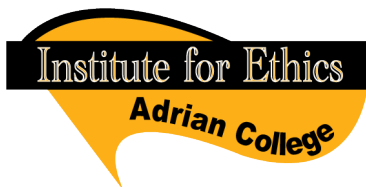


Institute for Ethics Brown Bag

ETHICS AND JOURNALISM

Dr. Renée Collins

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Thursday, Jan. 20, 2011

12:10-12:45

Knight Aud., Valade Hall

