

Ethics Institute Newsletter

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Upcoming Films in the Ethics Series

All films are scheduled to begin at 6pm.

- Monday, Nov. 16, "Whose Life Is It Anyway?"
- Monday, January 25, "Trade"
- Monday, Feb. 15, "Crash"
- Monday, Mar, 15, "Glenarry Glen Ross"
- Monday, Apr. 19, "Dr. Doolittle 2"

Brown Bags are Back: Bill Bachman

Institute for Ethics Brown Bags are back for another semester. The first two presentations will focus on ethics in the professions.

On Thursday, January 28, Prof. Bill Bachman will introduce us to "A Structured Approach to Ethical Management Decisions." On Thursday, February 25, Dr. Sheri Bleam will talk about "Professional Ethics in Communications."

These two sessions are a preview of next year's series which will focus on Ethics in the Professions and in Academia." They are open to the public.

Prof. Bachman is one of the earliest pioneers in including discussions and courses in applied ethics at Adrian College. He describes his talk:

"The recognized focal point of management decisions is the achievement of specific

and measurable objectives. These objectives not only define a definite direction for the organization and its managers, but also develop a sense of accountability of achievement.

"One complicating facet of management decision making is that a variety of interest groups wish to influence these objectives based on each group's personal interests. These personal interests could be and are value based. This complicates the managers' decision making as not all of the values and interests of the groups are necessarily compatible. Some interest/values may be based on economic gain, or legal compliance, or personal moral standards.

"If managers are to make good, rational decisions in the face of possible conflicting objectives, including moral ones, it is important to develop a structured approach



Bill Bachman,
Professor of Accountancy /
Business Administration

for making management decisions that meet an ethical responsibility. While there are many different structured approaches, my presentation will focus on one approach."

The remaining Brown Bag sessions for this semester are Rev. Dr. Chris Momany on "Social Ethics" (Thursday, March 18) and Dr. Melissa Stewart on "Environmental Ethics" (Thursday, April 22).

Ethics Film Series Details

The **Not For Sale** student group at Adrian College will present an addition to the Institute of Ethics film series. The movie, "**Trade**," (starring Kevin Kline) will be shown in Knight Auditorium on Monday, January 25 at 6:30 p.m.

Trade deals with international sex traffickers who earn mil-

lions exploiting their human victims. The plot revolves around the brother of the victim who overcomes ordeals to rescue her.

The movie will be followed by a discussion lead by guest speaker Chris Matthais. Matthais is affiliated with the Dominican Sisters at Siena

Heights University and finds product lines. He is a strong advocate for speaking against human trafficking and will lead an exciting discussion.

The remaining films in the series are:

* **February 15,**
"Crash" (Scott Elliott and Idali

Brown Bag Schedule:

- Sept. 24, Dr. James Spence
- Oct. 22, Dr. Tony Coundouros
- Nov. 5, Prof. Nathan Goetting*
- Dec. 1, Dr. Fritz Detwiler
- Jan. 28, Prof. Bill Bachman
- Feb. 25, Dr. Sheri Bleam
- Mar. 18, Rev. Dr. Chris Momany
- Apr. 22, Dr. Melissa Stewart

Times and Location:

- Knight Auditorium, Valade Hall
- 12:10—12:45. Twenty-minute presentations. Fifteen minute Q&A.

"It is requisite for the relaxation of the mind that we make use, from time to time, of playful deeds and jokes."

— Thomas Aquinas

Ethics Film Series cont.

Feliciano)

* **March 15**, "Glengarry Glen Ross" (James Spence and Bill Bachman)

* **April 19**, "Dr. Doolittle 2" (Melissa Stewart and Janet Salzwedel)

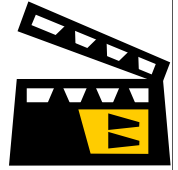
Due to copyright issues, the film series is open only to the Adrian College community.

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

Special thanks to Skyler Lambert for putting this addition to the Film Series together.

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 next year's Film series are particularly welcomed. All films will be followed by an open discussion.

Adrian College Ethics Bowl Team Competes in Illinois

On Saturday November 21, a team of five students represented Adrian College at the fourth annual APPE Upper Midwest Ethics Bowl at Northeastern Illinois University. Comprised of T.J. Behling (Freshman: undeclared), Creedence Hoffman (Junior: Political Science/ Mathematics double major), Cleary Murphy (Senior: Philosophy/ Criminal Justice double major), Nolan Gillespie (Junior: Criminal Justice with a Philosophy minor), and Ken Warren (Junior: Philosophy/ Mathematics double major), the team, though not qualifying for Nationals, still did remarkably well.

Each of the participating colleges had three matches, consisting of one college team pitted against another. During each match, both teams argued for and defended a position on one of twelve ethical cases that all teams had received in advance. Though the cases themselves were familiar, the questions that the teams had to respond to were not. After getting their question, teams had two minutes to confer and seven to present their position. Afterwards, the opposing teams critiqued the

first, who then had a chance to rebut. The matches then turned to the judges. After asking final questions of their own, the three deciding judges of each match scored both teams on their performance. Each team was then ranked according to their overall match victories as well as their winning point differentials. The team on top after



the first three matches, for example, Oakland University, was both 3-0 and +53.

Adrian won its first match, against Bowling Green State University, by a substantial margin: 114 to 137. Though that would be Adrian's only victory at the competition, both other matches were close. Adrian's second match, against Oakland University (the same team with

the most wins/highest point differential), came down to the scoring of the last judge. Adrian's third and final match, moreover, against University of Detroit Mercy, was lost by a mere point. The other colleges at the competition were University of Iowa, Western Michigan, University of Wisconsin, Ripon College, Northeastern Illinois University,

Loyola University, Harper College, and Carleton College. Though the team didn't make Nationals in the end, point wise, Adrian was well represented. More importantly, however, the team had a great time participating while demonstrating that Adrian College students are just as fit for intellectual competition as athletic.

The team has been invited to have a "rematch" with Bowling Green later this semester. Plans are also in the works to have a second "rematch at Adrian College.

Congratulations to the team and their coach Dr. James Spence. Thanks to Cleary Murphy for the description of the trip and for his efforts in bringing the team together.

A Profile in Ethics: Thomas Hobbes

Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) is one of the first modern moral and political theorists. He was born when the Spanish Armada was about to invade England. Hobbes lived in turbulent times, and later in life is reported to have said "fear and I were born twins." He was educated at Oxford though he rejected the still prevalent Aristotelian views of science and metaphysics.

Pre-modern thinkers believed that nature was filled with purpose as a result of a design or plan, that all things had properties and powers which helped explain their behavior in the world, and that there was no sharp distinction between fact and value. Something was good insofar as it was natural and successful in attaining its natural state.

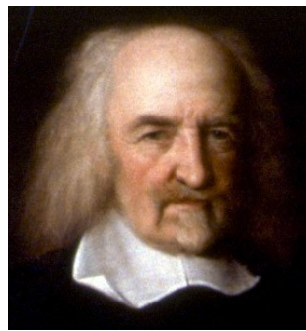
Medieval natural theorists believed that reason could help us understand the natural order of things, that human beings aided by conscience and knowledge of the world were naturally inclined toward good, and that individual happiness and societal well being could be achieved by living in accordance with our true nature.

Hobbes rejected all of this. He states that "there is no such finis ultimus [ultimate goal] nor summum bonum [greatest good] as is spoken of in the books of the old moral philosophers". Where medieval explanations tended to be in terms of properties (human being live in community because they are naturally social, material objects fall because they are heavy) Hobbes, influenced by Galileo, believed that scientific explanations should appeal to matter in motion, not qualities of the objects. He was notorious for asserting this of humans as well. Just as with all other animals we are material creatures driven by inner forces, which he conceived as motions within us. Our appetites draw us towards those things we desire, our fears repel us from perceived danger. These fears and desires cause conflict because we fear that others may impede the satisfaction of our desires. To make things even worse, Hobbes believed that we cannot know God's will, closing off another avenue to moral knowledge that could be used to guide our actions.

The natural state of human

beings, then, is not a peaceful community or human beings realizing their natural purpose. It is a state of war: "During the time men live without a common power to keep them all in awe, they are in that conditions called war; and such a war, as if of every man, against every man."

He believes in such a condition, "there is no place for Industry; because the fruit thereof is uncertain; and consequently no Culture of the Earth; no Navigation, nor use of the commodities



that may be imported by Sea; no commodious Building; no Instruments of moving, and removing such things as require much force; no Knowledge of the face of the Earth; no account of Time; no Arts; no Letters; no Society; and which is worst of all, continual fear, and danger of violent death; And the life of man, solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short." Hobbes argues that in such a situation it is senseless to talk of justice: "To this war of every man against every man, this also in consequent; that nothing can be unjust. The notions of right and wrong, justice and injustice have there no place. Where there is no common power, there is no law, where no law, no injustice. Force, and fraud, are in war the cardinal virtues."

Unlike the natural law theorists, Hobbes does not believe that good and evil are parts of the universe or real attributes of natural things. Instead, we see things in the world as good or evil (just as we see them as red or green) because of how we are constructed. So although we talk about good and evil as if these were aspects of the world, they are really projections of our fears and passions. "Moral philosophy is nothing else but the science of what is good, and evil, in the conversation, and society of

mankind. Good, and evil, are names that signify our appetites, and aversions; which in different tempers, customs, and doctrines of men, are different." Hobbes extends this view to judgments of right and wrong, stating "there are no authentical doctrines of right and wrong, good and evil, besides the constituted laws in each realm and government."

Hobbes' reasoning is something like this: nothing exists but matter in motion. Good and evil are nothing more than appearances based upon our desires. We cannot know God's will, conscience is just one more belief, and there are no moral guidelines in nature. We are driven by our desires, and our strongest desire will determine what we do. Since other people can impede the successful satisfaction of our desires, life in the absence of some powerful governing body will be a "war of all against all." What we need, then, is a government to create and enforce some rules, whatever they might be, because this is a necessary precondition of peace and our survival.

Many critics have accused Hobbes of driving morality out of the world. Hobbes, though, thought of ethics as the science of deriving "consequences from the passions of men" and saw himself as merely providing a scientific account of how human beings ought to understand their situation and how to best handle it. For Hobbes, and he believes these consequences of our passions are often disastrous. Ethics allows us to avoid those consequences.

Hobbes' views were not popular. He painted an unflattering portrait of human beings, sided with secular authority over divine, and was skeptical of any form of limited government because he thought it would descend into chaos. But his rejection of Aristotelian science and metaphysics, and his emphasis on the individual rather than the community, mark him as one of the first modern moral and political theorists. Because of this account of human nature, Hobbes has been traditionally interpreted as a psychological and ethical egoist - someone who believes that we are motivated only by self interest and ought to do what is best for ourselves as individuals.

"Such is the nature of men, that howsoever they may acknowledge many others to be more witty, or more eloquent, or more learned; yet they will hardly believe there be many so wise as themselves."

—Thomas Hobbes