



Institute for Ethics Newsletter

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Adrian College Institute for Ethics

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Ethics Film Series Upcoming Films

All Films are Scheduled to
begin at 6 pm

- Friday, March 11,
"Capitalism: A Love Story"
- Monday, April 11,
"Shattered Glass"

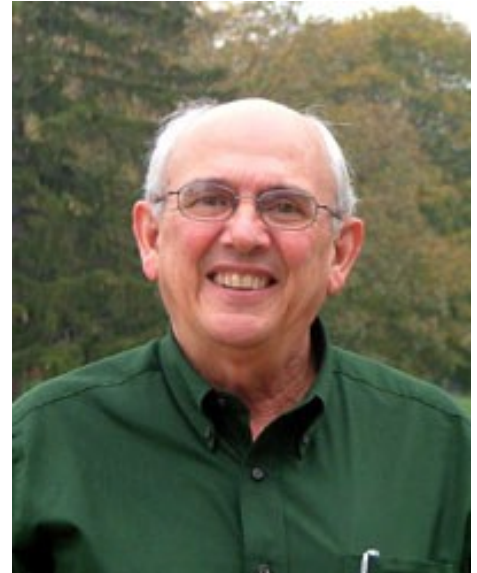
*Due to copyright issues, the film
series is open only to the Adrian
College community.*

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.

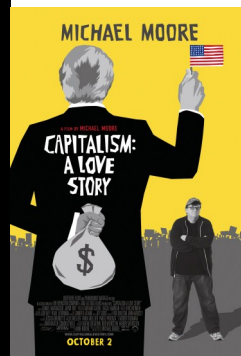
February's Institute for Ethics Brown Bag features **Dr. Hank Cetola** (Psychology). Cetola's presentation highlights the ethical dimension of humor in terms of the way in which it contributes to the resolution of potential conflicts and provides a model for the moral evaluation of humor. The presentation begins by examining two possible ways of evaluating the morality of a joke.

The first examines its "content"; the second focuses on "consequences".



Dr. Hank Cetola

The "content" approach looks at three alternative stances – the "moralist"; the "immoralist"; and the "amoralist". All of these explore the relationship be-



Ethics Film Series: *Capitalism: A Love Story*

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

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.

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.

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.

Ethics in Film Series *continued*

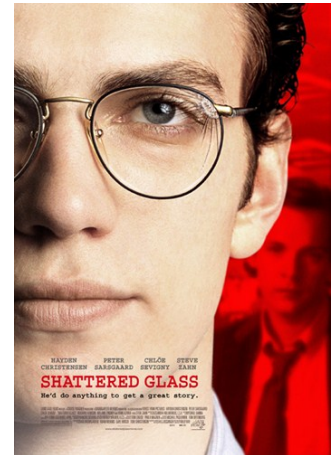
Suggestions for upcoming Film series are particularly welcomed. All films will be followed by an open discussion led by a discussant.

For faculty and staff who would like to lead a discussion on a suggested film, the Institute 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 film for this semester is:

***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 revealed. Ethics and Journalism.



New on the Web

In collaboration with Adrian College Faculty, the Institute for Ethics has compiled a set of links to Codes of Ethics from professional organizations, local govern-

ment and groups of interest to our students and community. The list will be available soon on the Institute for Ethics web page. If you missed the first opportunity to submit links, it

is not too late to make additions to this list, please contact Johanna Hanley at jhanley1@adrian.edu and we will be happy to add the link.

Spring Brown Bag Schedule

- 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

REMINDER: Ethics Prize



\$100 prize for the best Ribbons of Excellence paper having an ethics component. Students wishing to compete for this prize will need to notify the Institute for Ethics at least one week prior to their presentation.

Ethics in Journalism *continued*

tween the content of humor and ethics.

Dr. Cetola then moves to a "consequentialist" approach and uses a standard utilitarian measure of the "most good" and "least harm" to the moral evaluation of humor. He contextualizes this by using examples from the emergency room in hospitals where health professionals use humor to keep going in spite of the human misery they encounter. He describes this as "gallows humor" or "dark humor" since it deals with realities and issues that we would rather remain hidden to ourselves in our ordinary day-to-day lives. Jokes will abound!

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 can 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.

Profiles in Ethics: Martin Luther King and Ronald Reagan

This February two events coincide and give us pause to consider the contributions of two American icons. The first event is a Black History Month which highlights the contributions that African-Americans have made to the history of our nation. Although we annually remember the life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in January, February is also a time to reflect on the way in which King brought our attention to the situation of African-Americans in what was then a segregated society. The second event marks the 100th anniversary of the birth of Ronald Reagan. Many Americans consider Ronald Reagan to have been one of the greatest individuals of the 20th century. Reagan also is considered to be the "father of the modern Conservative Revolution."



Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Both Reagan and King defined freedom in terms of individual rights and economic opportunities. Both grounded their approaches for the betterment of humanity on the United States Constitution and on individual character. Both feared the use of government power for ends which limited or restricted those freedoms.

Both recognized that the society as a whole, and government in particular, have a responsibility for helping the less fortunate. Both believed in the words of the preamble to the United States Constitution that "all men [sic] are created equal." Both looked forward to the day in which a new America would fulfill the promise of the Great Experiment.

Yet, Reagan and King saw the path to the new

America in very different terms. In his domestic policy, Reagan, the eternal optimist, emphasized humanity's capacity for good. He envisioned an economic path in which the private sector and virtually unrestrained capitalism would take us to the Promised Land. Reagan also believed that individual liberties, talents, and character were sufficient to achieve the American dream.

King, a realist born out the experiences of a people who had suffered injustices at the hands of the existing system, pointed out humanity's capacity for evil and looked to government for the redress of those injustices. In contrast to Reagan, King believed that individual liberties, talents, and character should be sufficient to achieve the American dream but understood that, for some Americans, the structural injustices of the society had not permitted that to happen.



President Ronald Reagan

In terms of their moral perspectives, the fundamental difference between Ronald Reagan and Martin Luther King Jr. lies in their contrasting views the locus of moral problems. For Reagan, moral problems were purely a consequence of individual moral failure and government interference. For King, moral problems arose from a combination of individual moral failure and a recognition of what social ethicists refer to as structural injustices. That means that, beyond individuals, there are social institutions which can act to suppress or advance the individual well-being of people in the society. Finally, Reagan saw success in terms of individual freedoms and economic wealth. King saw success in terms of eradicating social injustices and overcoming the social, political, and economic inequalities in which the privileged class wanted to maintain.