



Institute for Ethics Newsletter

Volume 2, Issue 5 March, 2011

Adrian College Institute for Ethics

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Ethics Film Series Upcoming Films

All Films are Scheduled to
begin at 6 pm

- Monday, April 11,
"Shattered Glass"

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

Science and Ethics

The March Ethics Brown Bag series will feature **Dr. Janet Salzwedel** (Biology). The session will be held on Thursday, March 17, in Knight Auditorium of Valade Hall beginning at 12:05 p.m.

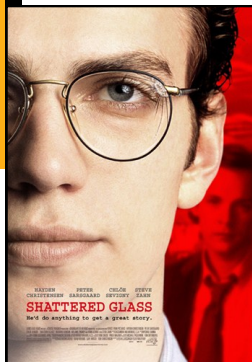
Dr. Salzwedel (Biology) will lead us in a discussion of Ethics and Scientific research. Dr. Salzwedel writes, "Often when one thinks of ethics in scientific research, it is the ethical treatment of test subjects that is of concern. But researchers face additional ethical challenges. In an era of big budgets needed to carry out technologically advanced research, the pursuit

of funding has pushed some scientists to present biased or even fraudulent results. More



Dr. Janet Salzwedel

recently, even the choice of research projects is an ethical decision when potential results could aid the work of terrorists."



Ethics Film Series: *Shattered Glass*

The final presentation in the Spring 2011 Institute for Ethics film series features the movie *Shattered Glass* which will be shown at 6:00 p.m. in Valade Knight Auditorium on Monday, April 11, 2011.

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

The R-rated movie will be followed by a discussion on the ethical issues in the film led by Renee Collins (Journalism).

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.

New on the Web

There will be a new link on the Adrian College site to the Institute for Ethics' own website. In support of current information provided online, these pages will

highlight all the activities of the institute allowing more opportunities for outside collaboration and interaction via the web. We will soon offer interactive models, terms for ethical discourse and forums that will help promote ethical reflection on campus and in our community.

Check us out!

A Model for Developing Ethical Discourse in Courses *by Fritz Detwiler 2011*

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.

The following steps are a good way to begin to expose students to ethical reflection.

The first two steps can be integrated into any course in the curriculum where appropriate. At these steps, the ethical dilemmas do not have to be "solved." These two steps have the purpose of getting students to become familiar with the terminology and questions of ethics so that they can recognize them.

Step 1: Learning the "key terms" in ethics (e.g., rights, duties, fairness, utility, virtue)

(Implemented by general faculty and students – prepared by faculty in ethics)

Step 2: Identifying the "key questions" ethics raises

(Implemented by general faculty and students – prepared by faculty in ethics)

The third step involves students taking a formal course in ethics. Here they become familiar with the theories behind the vocabulary and questions. This prepares them for the fourth step.

Step 3: Formally studying the major theories of ethics

(Implemented by faculty formally trained in ethics)

The final step applies the learning in the first three steps to real-world ethical problems. These scenarios should be developed by faculty in the various disciplines in conjunction with the faculty in ethics. Many of these could be developed for the web.

Step 4: Applying those theories through case studies and simulations

Spring Brown Bag Schedule

- Mar 17, Dr. **Janet Salzwedel**, Ethics in Scientific Research
- April 14, **President Jeff Docking**, Social Ethics

Time: 12:05—12:45 Twenty minute presentation. Fifteen minute Q&A.

Place: Knight Auditorium, Valade Hall

Science and Ethics *continued*

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 un-

derstandable 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: Aristotle's Virtues in the Classroom

Aristotle builds his ethical theory on the idea that virtue or excellence (*arête*) is ability at a function. Something is excellent or virtuous if it performs its function well. Aristotle thinks that this concept of excellence is applicable to human life as such and to specific human functions. Thus, there is excellence in terms of the student, the teacher and excellence of humans as such. To achieve excellence in this general sense in any endeavor one needs to have the necessary and sufficient abilities. These abilities are also virtues albeit in a narrower sense. For example, intellectual courage is necessary for one to be an excellent student or teacher.

A major component of Aristotle's ethics are the character virtues. Character virtues are not types of knowledge but dispositions to act or to experience emotions in certain ways. Aristotle defines character virtue as a mean between extremes. It is the capacity to choose the intermediate between the extremes of excess and deficiency in terms of action or emotion (*Nicomachean Ethics*, 1106b). Such virtues are acquired through a long process of habituation. I practice doing actions that fall within the mean and then doing such actions becomes part of my character. Once I develop such virtues of character then I act out of them spontaneously.

Aristotle thinks that these virtues—there are twelve—should both be exhibited in, and be cultivated through, education. Thus, the character virtues have a clear place in the classroom: they can be exhibited there, they are necessary for the good function of the classroom, and they can also be taught. Let us examine some of these.

Courage is the mean between rashness and cowardice, these being the excess and the deficiency respectively. Courage, cowardice, and rashness have to do with the emotions of fear and confidence. We are courageous when we are neither too confident nor too fearful. We could be very fearful of ideas foreign to us and thus tend to reject them. We could also be too confident of our ideas and tend to reject other ideas. Both of these perspectives involve an emotional reaction to foreign ideas. But an intellectually courageous person would be better able to control his emotions and thus be better prepared to consider their intellectual merits clearly. Intellectual courage implies that one is willing to follow the evidence wherever it may lead and possibly change one's own position accordingly.

Another character virtue is that of truthfulness which is the mean between boastfulness and understatement or self-deprecation. These have to do with the action of self-expression. This may have to do with sharing our ideas with others. We may tend to express our ideas in such a way that they seem more important or less important than they really are to us. I may be in the company of people who do not think racism is morally bad and express my rejection of racism in a very mild way or not express it at all. On the other hand, I may be in the company of people who are Marxists and express a great interest in Marx as well just to fit in or to stand out. What truthfulness implies however is that I should be truthful about the degree to which I endorse or condemn certain ideas.

A further character virtue is friendliness which is the mean between cantankerousness and obsequiousness. This virtue has to do with social conduct in conversation. In classroom discussion, one can be too argumentative or uncooperative or he can be too submissive. Friendliness entails expressing one's position and arguments and conceding points in a way as befits the spirit of a cooperative endeavor. The aim of discussion is ideally to discover the truth and friendliness seems conducive to this end.

Modesty is also a character virtue for Aristotle, and it is a mean between shamelessness and shyness. This has to do with the emotion of shame. Aristotle thought that there is such a thing as proper shame or modesty. Students can often be too shy to speak up in class. Some of them are shameless and engage in disruptive behaviors or comments. Some still have a proper sense of shame and speak up in class in a respectful way.

Another character virtue is wittiness, which is a mean between buffoonery and boorishness. This has to do with being pleasant in conversation. Wittiness, buffoonery, or boorishness, can also come into play in the classroom. Professors are often accused of giving boring lectures or not having a sense of humor. Students may engage in buffoonery. Aristotle thought that being witty and having a healthy sense of humor are important aspects of the good life and this seems also important in the classroom.

