

# THE CENTER FOR ETHICS

NEWSLETTER

FALL 2006

at The University of Montana

## Upcoming Events

### Evening Panels

- **Proposed Ethics Code**  
A discussion featuring  
President Dennison,  
faculty and students.  
February 8
- ***Real American Ethics***  
Professor Albert Borgmann  
and other philosophers  
discuss his new book.  
February 22

### Ethics at Noon

- **Paul Lauren**  
History Professor  
February 7
- **John Engen**  
Mayor of Missoula  
February 21
- **Ann Mary Dussault**  
Missoula County CAO  
March 7
- **Jeffrey Greene**  
Political Science Professor  
March 21
- **Eloise Cobell**  
Executive Director,  
Native American Community  
Development Corporation  
April 11

## NSF Grant for Ethics Education

Dane Scott

The Center for Ethics was recently awarded a major grant from the National Science Foundation. It is a 3-year grant that provides \$270,000 to develop and test an ethics education program. The title of our project is *Debating Science: A New Model for Ethics Education for Science and Engineering Students*. The purpose of the program is to help graduate research scientists participate more actively and effectively in public debates about science and emerging technologies.



*Debating Science* focuses on three areas of intense social, political, and ethical debates: biotechnology, nanotechnology and global climate change. In all three of these debates it is crucial that there be productive dialogue between people from the humanities and social sciences, public policy and sciences.

The grant is the result of the collaborative efforts of the Center's director, Dane Scott, Christopher Preston, a philosophy professor and fellow at the Center for Ethics, and Rebecca Bendick, a professor in geophysics, to write the proposal. These three were greatly assisted in writing the grant by Otto Koester, UM interim grant coordinator and visiting scholar for the Central Asia and Caspian Basin Program and the Center's former administrative officer, Colleen Hunter. Also joining the project are Jim Costa, director of the University of North Carolina's Highlands Biological Station; Clark Wolf, director of the Bioethics Center at Iowa State University; and Catherine Murphy, a University of South Carolina chemistry professor.

One of the important ideas behind the project is scientists need to become fruitful participants in these debates. However, scientists rarely have formal training for that in their backgrounds. Traditionally, researchers have learned scientific ethics in standards-of-practice courses. Science students are most often taught about ethical issues internal to their practices as researchers, such as professional honesty and the treatment of research subjects. De-

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## Center for Ethics Staff

**Kari Samuel** is the new administrative officer at the Center. She has a B.S. in Microbiology from the University of Montana and is working on a second B.A. in Philosophy and Political Science. She joined the Center last summer.



**Justin Whitaker** returns as the project coordinator at the Center. He has a B.A. in Philosophy, with honors, from the University of Montana and an M.A. in Buddhist Studies, with distinction, from the University of Bristol, England. Currently, he is redeveloping the website and facilitating the development and implementation of the Center's summer courses and Environmental Ethics Institute.



**Ali Tabibnejad** joined the Center this fall as a project assistant. He holds a B.A. in Philosophy, with honors, with a minor in German and a B.S. in Business Administration from the University of Montana. He assists in promoting the events of the Center and has been instrumental in developing this newsletter.



**Christopher Preston** is a fellow of the Center for Ethics. He will become an associate professor of philosophy at the UM next fall. His specialty is environmental philosophy and he assists the Center with the Environmental Ethics Institute and will be offering an online course on the history of environmental ethics next fall.



**Dane Scott** continues as the Center's Director.

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Debating Science has a different focus. It will be on ethical deliberation in an effort to better prepare young scientists to effectively and productively enter into debates over the direction of emerging technologies. These technologies have enormous social and ethical implications. Science students need to be comfortable discussing the social and ethical aspects of these issues.

The grant will bring 36 science and engineering graduate students selected from universities and colleges nationwide to UM next summer for a four-day introductory workshop, where they will hear from experts in each area. Students will then return to their home institutions and take online courses examining global climate change, biotechnology and nanotechnology. Each course will result in a collaborative policy document. Their feedback then will be used to further develop and perfect these online courses for a second group of students the following year. An online electronic activity center on emerging technology debates also will be created.

The overall goal of the project is to design new curriculum using a new model for ethics education based on ethical deliberation. It is absolutely essential for scientists to better understand and be able to discuss ethical and social dimensions of how science and society interact.

***For more information about  
Debating Science  
and to apply to the program  
go to***

***www.umt.edu/ethics/  
debating\_science***

***Application deadline: April 2***

## The Director's Column

Dane Scott

Recently I was invited by Earl Hall, the Bio-Terrorism Project Coordinator at UM's School of Pharmacy, to participate on two panels at the annual meetings of the Montana Hospital Association and the Montana Public Health Association. Earl had assembled a distinguished panel to discuss the ethical issues of dealing with critical medical shortages in the event of a world-wide flu epidemic. Worries about a pandemic caused by "bird flu" have been making the headlines lately. Part of Earl's job is to get medical and public officials thinking about how to prepare for such crises. It was enlightening and a bit scary to think about the possibility of pandemic flu. The following is a summary of what I learned from being on this panel.

Seasonal or common flu is a serious health threat for some people, but most get over it in a week to ten days. However, every 30 years, or so, a particularly virulent strain of flu causes a deadly global outbreak, a pandemic. It's been nearly 40 years since the last pandemic. This is why health experts are carefully watching the bird flu as the next potential pandemic agent. Presently, the bird flu virus is not transmitted between humans. But experts are concerned that the virus might mutate and become capable of human to human transmission. One World Health Organization official was quoted in the press recently as saying, "We at WHO believe that the world is now in the gravest possible danger of a pandemic."

While avoiding irrational responses based on unfounded fears, it's important for officials and the public to be prepared. If the United States is hit hard by pandemic flu, it would likely take months to identify the strain and produce a vaccine, and it's predicted that there would



CFE Director Dane Scott

only be enough shots for about 1/2 of the population. Further, the surge in patients would overwhelm hospitals, creating additional shortages of things like ventilators. Shortages in medical supplies can cause serious problems. For example, during the 2004-2005 flu season, shots were hard to come by. This was due to the contamination of the vaccines produced by a major supplier. One headline at the time read, "Flu Shot Shortage Poses Public Health Disaster." That article listed some unethical behaviors during the shortage: flu shots were stolen from physicians' offices, some wholesalers tried to charge hospitals \$800 for shots that normally cost \$10; a few doctors vaccinated family, friends, and long-time patients, while people at risk of suffering severe consequences from the flu were forced to stand in long lines and some went without.

All this happened during a normal flu season. Imagine what could happen if we were in the midst of a major crisis like the flu pandemic of 1918. It has been estimated that 50 million people lost their lives in that pandemic. Montanans did not escape the virulent disease. On November 1st, 1918, Montana officials reported that more than 11,000 people had contracted the flu, and hundreds died that fall.

Given the unethical behaviors of some during the flu short shortage a couple years ago, it's critical to have a rationing plan in place. In case of shortages, the plan must answer: Who should move to the front of the line? Who goes rear? And, who might have to go without?

Public officials and medical professionals

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## Environmental Ethics Institute 2006

Ali Tabibnejad

Last summer The Center for Ethics took a major step in making environmental ethics a focus at The University of Montana. The first incarnation of the Environmental Ethics Institute (EEI) featured three short, intensive courses alongside lectures, panel discussions and field trips. The courses mixed the traditional classroom format with an online approach which not only made possible the instruction of leading scholars in the field such as Dr. Andrew Light and Dr. Yuriko Saito, but also allowed students from around the country to spend a week in Missoula dedicated to the class. In addition to the courses taught by the guest instructors, Dr. Robin Saha of UM's Environmental Studies Department taught course about environmental justice and led a highly-praised field trip to the National Bison Range. The courses drew a diverse crowd of students to their intimate, discussion-focused setting—from university professors to Ph.D. candidates and school teachers.

The student evaluations of the courses were invariably positive. Kathrine Robinson, a Ph.D. candidate at the University of South Carolina, took both Dr. Yuriko's "How We Experience Nature: Environmental Aesthetics with Case Studies in the U.S. and Japan" and Dr. Light's "Foundations of Environmental Thought." Her first memory of her time in Missoula is the beautiful UM campus. "The best part was the campus," she said, calling



Students in Dr. Yuriko Saito's class at the Center for Ethics. From left: Ruth Heffron, Jennifer Surdyk, Katherine Robinson, Patricia Crusch

the courses "valuable and definitely worth [her] time." Allison Hagerman, who is pursuing a Ph.D. at University of New Mexico, called the beautiful Missoula environment "the perfect setting for these courses." Robinson also appreciated the lectures and panel discussions saying they were "very good" and that they "amplified the learning experience." Kristina Swanson, a graduate student in Public Administration at UM, agreed that not only did the evening lectures and panel discussions enrich her learning experience but that they gave everyone, especially those from out of state, a chance to socialize outside of the classroom.

Swanson was particularly impressed by the intellectual prowess of the students and the instructors. "The class was so intellectually vibrant," she said, "everyone was brilliant." Asked if the class had had *continued on page 5*



An enthusiastic audience awaits a panel discussion by Albert Borgmann, Holmes Rolson III, Ned Hettinger and John Hart about science, religion and the environment during the Environmental Ethics Institute in July.

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an impact on how she conducted herself on a daily basis, she called the impact “huge.” “It was like a paradigm shift,” she said, adding as an example that although she had grown up loving the outdoors she had never seen the side of her who “collected outdoors experiences as commodities” until this attitude had become explicit for her in the course.



Patricia Crusch looks on as Yuriko Saito talks to Homes Rolston III and John Hart.

Hagerman, on the other hand, found herself impressed by the fellow student with whom she shared a room, “I recycle religiously now because of her, and I always take my own bags to the grocery store.”

Robinson, Swanson and Hagerman all found it especially exciting to meet the people they had only known online through their written comments on the reading and the brief autobiographies everyone had posted of themselves. Asked about their final thoughts, everyone wished that the program would continue or that they could do it again.



Students in Dr. Andrew Light's course at the Center. From left: Seth Nivens and Zeno Swijtink.

## Environmental Ethics Institute 2007

- *EEI 2007 takes place late July/early August*
- *Courses may be taken for both graduate and undergraduate credit, or no credit.*
- *On-campus housing is available for the duration of the courses at \$18/night.*
- *Courses offered by the Environmental Ethics Institute combine an intensive week of traditional face-to-face classroom with an on-line approach. Those who participated in the Environmental Ethics Institute of 2006 invariably praised the approach. They enjoyed meeting those with whom they had corresponded during the interactive, on-line portion of the course, and appreciated the intensive week of instruction and study in beautiful Missoula, Montana.*
- *For more information about the events and courses in Summer 2007, please see page 6.*

## Summer 2007 Course

### Foundations of Ethical Business Practices

Dr. Dane Scott

MBA 645, 1 credit

offered weekend of June 15-17

This course examines foundations for ethical decision making in business. The course begins with a critical survey of basic approaches to business ethics. Next, students discuss, identify, and examine threats to ethical business practices. In the last part of the course, students will investigate the recent Enron scandal to identify factors that contributed to unethical decisions and criminal behaviors.

Dr. Scott's teaching of the course has been praised as “very effective” by his students. His potent use of examples and thought-provoking lectures make for an engaged yet relaxed setting in which students may form the foundations of their approach to business.

## Environmental Ethics Institute Summer 2007 Courses

*Dr. Andrew Light's*

### **Environmental Ethics and Policy**

This class will serve as a foundation for discussion of the overwhelming challenge of environmental degradation and the human responses to that degradation. The course will focus on contemporary environmental, moral and political theories, as well as the general use of philosophical methods in broader environmental questions and policies.

Online: July 1- 24

Face-to-face: August 6-10

**Professor Andrew Light**  
Department of Philosophy &  
Evans School of Public Affairs  
University of Washington



Andrew Light holds a joint appointment with the Evans School of Public Affairs and an adjunct appointment with the Department of Geography. A prolific author and editor of 16 books in environmental ethics and policy, philosophy of technology, moral and political philosophy, and aesthetics, he is currently finishing a book on ethical issues in restoration ecology.

*Dr. Anna Peterson's*

### **Value and Practice**

In many areas, including the environment, personal behavior, and electoral choices, people act in ways far removed from their expressed moral values. This gap has been well documented in surveys but has received little attention from ethicists or sociologists of religion. In this course, we will draw on these fields, among others, to examine the gap between values and practices.

Online: June 20-24

Face-face: July 30-August 2

**Professor Anna Peterson**  
Department of Religion  
University of Florida



Anna Peterson teaches about and conducts research on social and environmental ethics. She has published a number of articles in these fields, as well as *Being Human: Ethics, Environment, and Our Place in the World* (University of California Press, 2001) and *Seeds of the Kingdom: Utopian Communities in the Americas* (Oxford, 2005).

### **2007 Environmental Ethics Institute Evening Events**

A number of evening events are planned for the 2007 Environmental Ethics Institute, including two panel discussions and several evening lectures. Events will feature both local and national scholars as speakers and, like the 2006 EEI, all events will be free and all are welcome to attend.

*Please check the Center for Ethics website and the upcoming spring newsletter for more details.*

# THE CENTER FOR ETHICS

FALL 2006

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## www.umt.edu/ethics

The Center for Ethics website has been revised and updated. Visit [www.umt.edu/ethics](http://www.umt.edu/ethics) to find more information about events and programs of the Center for Ethics.

Miss an evening lecture or panel discussion this summer? The CFE website has streaming video of EEI 2006!

Videos of all evening events from last summer's Environmental Ethics Institute can be viewed online. DVD copies are also available for purchase.

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will face many ethical challenges during a pandemic. The most fundamental is to be faithful to the public's trust. There are both ethical and practical reasons for this. On the practical side, the cooperation of the public is necessary for these people to do their jobs. If trust is lost, so is cooperation. On the ethical side, people trust that officials and medical professionals will fulfill their duties in times of crisis.

In a pandemic, people are extremely vulnerable and have little choice but to trust medical experts and public officials. However, to maintain that trust certain expectations must be met. Officials and health care providers must be competent, ethical and prove to have the best interest of the trusting person in mind. But there will be real difficulties in maintaining trust when some patients are told that they can't have the

best treatment, and that they must go to the back of the line. How can trust be maintained in such a situation?

Being fair is critical in times of crisis. So part of the answer of how to maintain the public's trust is to have a fair rationing plan in place prior to a pandemic. We all hope that future pandemics can be averted. But if one happens and public officials don't have a plan to deal with shortages, they will be seen as incompetent and trust will be lost. If the plan is judged to be unfair, officials will be seen as unethical, and again, trust will be lost. To be prepared for the ethical challenges of a pandemic, officials need to involve the public in a fair and open process of devising a consistent and just plan, one that is ethical, easily understood and widely communicated. Officials must be just to maintain the public's trust.

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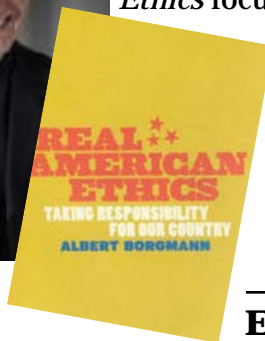
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...and more!

## Upcoming Evening Panel Discussions



***Real American Ethics* with Professor Borgmann**  
Please join Professor Albert Borgmann and guests to discuss his philosophy and new book. *Real American Ethics* focuses on the role each of us has in creating and taking responsibility for American values.



Thursday, February 22, 7:00 pm  
Dell Brown Room, Turner Hall  
The University of Montana

*Reception to follow*

Co-sponsored by the Department of Philosophy

## Ethics Code Panel

Join UM President George Dennison, ASUM Student Body President Andrea Helling, and members of the UM faculty to discuss the proposed campus-wide ethics code.



Thursday, February 8, 7:00 pm  
North Ballroom, University Center  
The University of Montana

Co-sponsored by ASUM

The Center for Ethics  
**Ethics at Noon**  
speaker series also continues in 2007. All Ethics at Noon talks are held in Gallagher Business Building at 12:10 pm. *Please see page 1.*