

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY OPENS CENTER FOR ETHICS

To support discussions that reflect the important moral issues facing society in the 21st century, Oakland University established the Center for Ethics (CFE). CFE supports curriculum development, scholarship and community outreach with the goal of engaging people in discussions on a range of moral issues. Technology continues to outpace the moral dilemmas that arise in areas as diverse as engineering, medicine and environmental ethics. CFE is at the forefront of bringing these moral issues to light.

In this issue of *Connect*, we highlight some of the many endeavors CFE has undertaken to support fruitful discussions about ethics in the classroom, in scholarship and in our community.

PHILOSOPHY BRINGS PHILANTHROPY TO THE CLASSROOM

In a program started by OU philosophy department's very own Professor Joyce Havstad, OU ethics courses are now engaging students in philanthropy.

Professors have been pledging their own money to donate to a charity chosen by the students in the class. Students present a charity of their choice and draw on morally relevant facts and moral theory to convince the class that their charity should be chosen for the donation. The winning charity is based on students' votes for who made the most convincing argument. This past year, donations were made to the Haven of Oakland County, the Michigan Veterans Foundation, Pediatric Center Foundation and the Red Lion Project. CFE hopes to support this endeavor in the future.

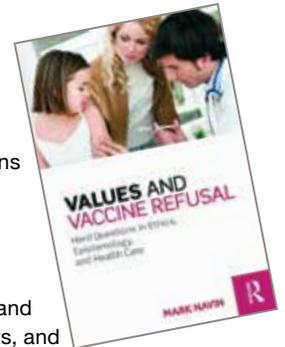
NEW BOOK PONDERS ETHICS OF VACCINE REFUSAL

Associate Professor Mark Navin's new book, *Values and Vaccine Refusal: Hard Questions in Ethics, Epistemology, and Health Care* (Routledge 2016) challenges readers on the moral questions surrounding vaccines.

Against the background of debates surrounding the safety and efficacy of



vaccines, freedom and autonomy of parents, and the responsibilities of health care providers and systems; the book provides philosophical insights into the complex problem of vaccine refusal — and what motivates parents to refuse vaccines for their children.



The author seeks to challenge readers to pay attention to the reasons behind vaccine refusal and to highlight how this reasoning is shaped by shifting relationships between individual health care consumers and professionals.

NATIONAL COLLEGIATE ETHICS BOWL REGIONAL COMPETITION TO BE HELD AT OU

The 2017 Collegiate Ethics Bowl regional competition will be held at Oakland University on Saturday, November 11. Alumni are welcome to volunteer as judges for this exciting event. If interested, contact Lisa Campbell at llcampbe@oakland.edu.



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OAKLAND BIOMEDICAL STUDENT AWARDED ETHICS BOWL SCHOLARSHIP

OU student Gabriel Bruno, a biomedical science major, was awarded a Center for Ethics scholarship to cover tuition for participation in her second Collegiate Ethics Bowl. The competition combines the excitement and fun of a tournament with an innovative approach to education in practical and professional ethics for undergraduate students.



Cases from previous competitions included debates between privacy and national security, whether guns should be allowed on college campuses and whether the United Nations should encourage loosening restrictions of abortion laws for babies with uncontrollable diseases in cultures that draw on religion to underlie laws with severe restrictions.

“I am a student with interests in both biomedical sciences and philosophy,” says Gabriel. “The ethics bowl has bridged the gap, helping me understand real life bioethical issues on a practical level. It has deepened my understanding and opened my eyes to many current ethical issues. Simultaneously, my confidence in public speaking and the ability to work effectively in a team were improved. I was once an ‘only come to class’ commuter, spending little time on campus. The ethics bowl has transformed my college experience.”

This year, professors Mark Rigstad and Lisa Campbell will lead two collegiate Ethics Bowl teams for Oakland’s CFE.



CFE SUPPORTS ITS FIRST NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL ETHICS BOWL TEAM

To further an ongoing effort to promote moral discussion in the community, the Center for Ethics currently supports Berkley High School students in their competitions in the National High School Ethics Bowl. Headed by Professor Elysa White, the High School Ethics Bowl mirrors the collegiate bowl. High school students on the team learn about constructing arguments, critical thinking, moral theory and presentation – all in a fun and competitive atmosphere. The CFE seeks additional opportunities to add high school teams in the future.

Critical Review

- A recent example of these problems:

Clarity in the face of confusion: new studies tip the scales on bisphenol A (BPA) ¹L. N. Vandenberg and ²G. S. Prins

ANDROLOGY

- “while the scientific consensus clearly indicates that ... BPA is likely affecting humans at current levels of exposure, very few regulatory actions have been taken to protect public health and reduce human exposures.” (because the studies don't agree with independent



CENTER FOR ETHICS ENCOURAGES INTERDISCIPLINARY DISCUSSION

The more we talk about ethics from a variety of perspectives, the more opportunities we have to expand scholarship, curriculum and community outreach.

The CFE continues to support a range of initiatives to encourage interdisciplinary discussion:

Professors Mark Rigstad and Elysa White chaired an on-campus interdisciplinary **ethics learning committee (ELC)** in early 2016. It was the largest ELC to date with more than 30 professors joining. The goal of the ELC was to expand professors' perspectives on addressing moral issues in order to enhance their curriculum for courses in professional ethics. Based on the idea that how one frames a problem influences what solutions are available, the ELC engaged in a series of workshops where committee members showed how various disciplines, for instance communication and rhetoric, would frame and respond to moral problems in their perspective professions. The interdisciplinary committee was so popular that the ELC will be continuing into the future.

CFE hosted an **OU College of Arts and Sciences interdisciplinary salon** on “Death, Dying and Dementia,” featuring the philosophy department's Mark Navin and Ami Harbin, The psychology department's Deb McGinnis, Jason Wasserman from the Oakland University William Beaumont School of Medicine, Mohan Tanniru from School of Business Administration's management information systems program, and Jacqueline Mohs from Beaumont Hospital.

CFE supports the new, student initiated, interdisciplinary organization called **For the Love of Humanity (FLOH)**. FLOH is a nonprofit organization founded at Oakland University by third-year student Krystal Fortune. For the Love of Humanity aims to provide information, aid, representation and community outlets to those who are most vulnerable. Through fundraising, community service, lectures and events FLOH aims to teach empathy and support within metro Detroit communities. This past April, FLOH teamed up with Fancy Pants, a local Detroit art and entertainment company that hosts an annual all women's art exhibition called Venus Rising to host a tampon/sanitary pad drive during the art show. The tampon drive was a success, with more than 300 packages of pads and tampons donated as well as \$255 dollars in cash and hundreds of toothbrushes, deodorants, nail polishes and gently used clothing items. All of the items were donated to homeless shelters and warming houses throughout Detroit and Pontiac.

FALL 2017
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Join us in this adventure.

Rekindle your love for philosophy, visit the department website to see what the faculty is currently working on and become a part of the Center for Ethics as it continues to grow.

CONNECT

- Visit the alumni page and tell us what you're up to at oakland.edu/phil/alumni.
- Are you in a career that has you facing moral issues? Please consider being a guest speaker in any of our ethics courses. To volunteer, contact Elysa White at koppelma@oakland.edu.
- The Ethics Bowl needs judges. Come spend the day engaging in moral issues with student teams from all over the region and help determine which team will go to nationals. For more information, contact Lisa Campbell at llcampbe@oakland.edu.

ENGAGE

- Visit our Facebook page to read and respond to the same scenarios our ethics bowl teams are grappling with. Search for Oakland University Department of Philosophy.
- You are invited to the philosophy department's annual Burke Lecture. In the past we have hosted Arthur Caplan, Judith Butler and Amartya Sen. This year's speaker is one you don't want to miss. For details, visit oakland.edu/phil/burkelecture.
- Alumni are welcome to attend the presentations from the many speakers who visit OU for the philosophy colloquium series. To see this year's schedule, visit oakland.edu/phil.

SUPPORT

- Help us continue the Center for Ethics' mission to encourage fruitful discussion of timely and important moral issues. From the class philanthropy initiative, to the ethics bowl teams, to research and beyond; your tax deductible donation will help spread that discussion to have a positive effect on our ever-changing and complicated society. To give, please visit oakland.edu/phil/center-for-ethics.