

Muhlenberg College

DANA FORUM 2013



Wednesday, April 3, 2013

Great Room, Seegers Union

Thursday, April 4, 2013

Great Room, Seegers Union



About the Dana Scholars Program

Mission Statement

The Dana Program offers outstanding, intellectually versatile students an opportunity to belong to a community of scholars that fosters conversations across disciplines, rigorous academic inquiry, and promotes engaged citizenship and leadership. Each Dana scholar can major in any academic department or program. All Dana seniors engage in collaborative research projects on issues of public concern and interest.

Director: Dr. Mohsin Hashim

Forum Director, 2012-2013: Dr. Richard Niesenbaum

Faculty Advisory Committee:

Dr. Karen Hiles, Dr. Daniel Doviak,
Dr. Jefferson Pooley, Dr. Joseph Keane

Student Advisory Committee:

Class of 2013

Garrett Gallinot
Casey Moser

Class of 2014

Sarah Chabolla
Elizabeth Morash

Class of 2015

Kelly Cann
Nicole Carusone

Class of 2016

Jonathan Hauptfeld
Jake Levine



Dana Forum

The **Dana Forum** is designed as a senior year capstone experience to deepen a greater sense of community among DANA scholars and to enrich the intellectual climate on campus. Each year the Forum helps Dana seniors develop and execute collaborative research projects that are tied to the Center for Ethics's annual theme. In the Fall semester, under the supervision of the Director of the Dana Forum, students engage academic questions related to the annual theme chosen by the Center for Ethics. They also form working groups to research a topic of their choice and identify a faculty mentor for the project. The collaborative research component of the Dana Forum is completed during the spring semester of the Dana Scholar's senior year under the mentorship of a faculty member chosen by each group. The specific nature of each team's project depends on the students' background, interests, and goals. Because of the goals of the DANA program, projects that also serve the community are strongly encouraged.

Dr. Richard Niesenbaum, Forum Director, 2012-2013



Center for Ethics

The Muhlenberg College Center for Ethics seeks to develop our capacities for ethical reflection, moral leadership, and responsible action by engaging community members in scholarly dialogue, intellectual analysis, and self-examination about contested ethical issues.

Through thematic lectures and events, the Center for Ethics serves the teaching and study of the liberal arts at Muhlenberg College by providing opportunities for intensive conversation and thinking about the ethical dimensions of contemporary philosophical, political, economic, social, cultural, and scientific issues. In service to its mission, the Center for Ethics hosts special events and programs, provides faculty development opportunities, provides support for student programming, and sponsors a Living & Learning Community coordinated by a Faculty Scholar-in-Residence. The Center and thematic programs are directed by full time faculty members. Muhlenberg College gratefully acknowledges the Christian A. Johnson Endeavor Foundation's support of the Center for Ethics.

The 2012-2013 program is entitled *Markets/Values*.

Dr. Bruce Wightman, Director, Center for Ethics



Markets / Values

Markets have been celebrated by many as a positive force for democratizing a standard of living previously accessible primarily to those of noble birth. However, with progress comes a dependence on markets that risks limiting our ability to constrain them through the social and political institutions that govern economic exchange. Indeed, Adam Smith, the "father" of modern capitalism, advanced the cause of free and open markets while simultaneously warning that unfettered economic activity might hinder human moral development. The observation that markets are embedded in economic, political, social, and cultural contexts begs the question of whether markets are "free" or "natural." The interplay of markets and morality is at the heart of the program. We will examine historical and contemporary questions about markets and accompanying moral issues they raise in regard to intellectual property, environmental sustainability, health and education, identity issues such as race and gender, and interactive media as labor. What sorts of markets create incentives for morally problematic behavior? And what markets promote virtues that bring about a harmony of interests? Does market organization of economic activity have an ethical basis, and, if so, how can that basis be used to evaluate the moral legitimacy of particular markets and market outcomes? Does the distribution of wealth that results from market activity derive its justification from the moral legitimacy of the exchange process, or is market wealth distribution a valid object of ethical inquiry in its own right? In what ways do market structures mediate political discourse, cultural evolution, and national and post-national identity?

Markets/Values is directed by Dr. Sue Curry Jansen in association with Dr. S. Mohsin Hashim and Dr. Marcia Morgan



Schedule of Events

Wednesday, April 3 5:30 p.m.	Welcome to the Forum Hors d' oeuvres Served
5:50 p.m.	Welcome and Opening Remarks Dr. Richard Niesenbaum, 2012-2013 Forum Director Dr. Sue Curry Jansen, Co-Director, Center for Ethics 2012-2013 Program
6:00 p.m.	<i>Religion in the Marketplace</i> Gillian Irwin, Amy Asendorf, Davis Alianiello
6:30 p.m.	<i>Chicken Farming Practices in the United States</i> Emily Ancona, Amanda Brennan, Chelsea Majid, Jennifer Seeba
7:00 p.m.	<i>The New Media Continuum: Re-Imagining the Media Paradigm of the 21st Century</i> Casey Moser, Sari Weirnerman, Ben Schweid, James Patefield
7:30 p.m.	<i>Perceptions of Consumer Health in the Fast Food Industry</i> Anne Bertolet, Jaclyn Durkin, Sabrina Kamran
8:00 p.m.	Closing remarks Dr. Richard Niesenbaum



Schedule of Events

- Thursday, April 4
5:30 p.m. Welcome to the Forum
Hors d' oeuvres Served
- 5:50 p.m. Welcome and Opening Remarks
Dr. Richard Niesenbaum, 2012-2013 Forum
Director
Dr. Bruce Wightman, Director, Center for Ethics
- 6:00 p.m. *Is Superstardom Ethical?*
Matthew Fitzsimons, Steven Alpert, Adam Downer
- 6:30 p.m. *Nuclear Energy and Global Climate Change: Public Perceptions and Federal Policies in the United States and Europe*
Jenna Kotak, Catherine Ezzio, James Gumkowski,
Nate Crossette
- 7:00 p.m. *A Content Analysis of International Policy Surrounding the Coca Leaf in Bolivia*
Jessica Epstein, Krista Gabarro, Megan Postsemski,
Emily Gup
- 7:30 p.m. *Marijuana Legislation in the United States: An Argument Analysis*
Daniel Langenbucher, Genna Soslow, Garrett
Gallinot, Evan Fletcher
- 8:00 p.m. Closing remarks
Dr. S. Mohsin Hashim, Director, Dana Scholars
Program
-



Event Schedule

**April 3
6:00 P.M.**

Presenters
Davis Alianiello
Amy Asendorf
Gillian Irwin

Mentor
Dr. Sharon Albert

DESCRIPTION

RELIGION IN THE MARKETPLACE

This year's Center for Ethics theme, Market/Values, centers around the question of the morality of economics and markets. As a result, we are interested in examining a market that is arguably more concerned with ethics than any other—the markets of religion. We are interested in investigating two prominent and distinctly American versions of religion that both are closely involved with American economic trends: mega-churches and the Church of Scientology. Our main research questions include: How do these different denominations converse with each other and American economic policy and how is this conversation influenced by interpretation of doctrine/dogma/holy text? To what extent do any of these denominations brand themselves to fit the American capitalist ideal, and to what extent do these denominations operate at odds with the capitalist economic system? What other systems do they promote that are not powerful or present in America? What kind of emphases do different denominations put on economic versus social issues, as a matter of their placement in contemporary America? What are the interior tensions in these religious organizations with regard to economic issues, and what is the conversation between religious leaders and layperson members, including those members who may be leaders in the economic or political spheres? How are the different denominations politicized through their alliances with certain social stances?



Event Schedule

**April 3
6:30 P.M.**

Presenters
Emily Ancona
Amanda Brennan
Chelsea Majid
Jennifer Seeba

Mentor
Dr. Jordanna
Sprayberry

DESCRIPTION

CHICKEN FARMING PRACTICES IN THE UNITED STATES

Here, we explore the motivation behind consumer choices. We researched the effects of factory and organic chicken farming in the United States, focusing on animal welfare, environmental impact, and human health. We examined previous literature to determine the role of ethical concerns behind consumer decisions, as well as how advertising techniques for both product types affected consumer knowledge. We conducted a survey of college students to compare this population to the general public population studied in previous literature. Our goals in conducting this research were to determine what most motivates consumer choices and how knowledge of specific food products can influence those choices.



Event Schedule

**April 3
7:00 P.M.**

DESCRIPTION

Presenters

Casey Moser
James Patefield
Ben Schweid
Sari Weinerman

Mentor

Dr. Francesca
Coppa

THE NEW MEDIA CONTINUUM: RE-IMAGINING THE MEDIA PARADIGM OF THE 21ST CENTURY

Since the turn of the twentieth century, cultural and artistic products have been constructed and distributed through mass media channels. For the purposes of our investigation, we define mass media as voluntary experiences, produced by a relatively small number of specialists, for millions across the nation to share, in similar or identical form, either simultaneously or nearly so; with dependable frequency; mass culture shapes habitual audiences, around common needs or interests, and it is made for profit. However, with a new breadth and depth of media options available for producers and consumers for dissemination and distribution of these artistic products, the media paradigm is changing. This change is shaped and guided by not only technological advances, but heavily invested economic interests - even though capital still determines control over what works are produced, we also encounter a large amount of low-cost technological alternatives, free fan labor, and local media incarnations of larger artistic properties. Along with this wide variety of production opportunity for artistic/cultural products, we also find a great amount of ethical/legal ambiguity. Our group intends to investigate how media interacts with the artistic marketplace and the ethical implications of the resulting convergence of economic and artistic interests. We will present our original concept of the media continuum and a new vocabulary with which to historicize, chart, and explain the current cultural moment, in terms of the media that filters our experience of it. Our research will reference the work of current and notable media scholars contextualized by our own observations.



Event Schedule

**April 3
7:30 P.M.**

DESCRIPTION

Presenters
Anne Bertolet
Jaclyn Durkin
Sabrine Kamran

PERCEPTIONS OF CONSUMER HEALTH IN THE FAST FOOD INDUSTRY

Mentor
Dr. Daniel Doviak

In this research, we address a number of questions about the perceptions of human health in relation to the fast food industry. These include: To what extent is the fast food industry responsible for consumer health? To what extent is the individual responsible for their own health? This study addresses these questions and the perceptions of consumer health within the fast food industry. We examine the current claims of the “unhealthiness” of fast food and explore literature on corporate responsibility within the fast food industry. Additionally, we examine previous studies related to perceptions of the health of fast food. Novel research combines these ideas to explore the perceptions of college students, one of the largest demographics of fast food consumers, in relation to responsibility of public health issues, such as obesity and diabetes.



Event Schedule

**April 4
6:00 P.M.**

Presenters

Steven Alpert
Adam Downer
Matthew Fitzsimons

Mentor

Dr. Roland Kushner

DESCRIPTION

IS SUPERSTARDOM ETHICAL?

Inequity can be found in any capitalistic market, but perhaps the most extreme example of this inequity comes from the entertainment industry. Why do people like Alex Rodriguez get paid substantially more than other major league players, for only marginally better performance? Sherwin Rosen posited a theory that he labeled the superstar phenomenon to explain such occurrences. This project uses this theory to examine the markets surrounding the music industry, particularly the concert and recording industries. This industry was examined considering utility maximization on the part of all parties involved. The success of a superstar was contingent on four key variables: luck, intentionality, skill, and appeal. Each of these variables was examined in depth to see how they particularly influenced the superstar's career. Findings suggest that talent is not the only, or even primary factor in determining one's earning in these markets. Other factors that at point can seem random may have a far greater effect on an artist's career. Technology has played a major role in these markets and has even created the opportunity for sale of the lesser known artist through the long-tail phenomenon, which we also examined.



Event Schedule

**April 4
6:30 P.M.**

DESCRIPTION

Presenters

Nate Crossette
Catherine Ezzio
James Gumkowski
Jenna Kotak

Mentor

Dr. Bruce Wightman

NUCLEAR ENERGY AND GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE: PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS AND FEDERAL POLICIES IN THE UNITED STATES AND EUROPE

Nuclear energy is a popular alternative energy source in light of rising concerns about global climate change. However, nuclear power plants are extremely expensive and potentially dangerous, so governments are often involved in funding and regulation. Because governments are invested in the nuclear power market, the four democracies of the United States, France, Germany and the United Kingdom balance public opinions on energy and climate change with long term energy and environmental policies. We found public concern about global climate change and energy resources across all four nations. However, the policies put forth by each of these countries were varied. France has shown the highest public opinion and policy support for nuclear energy, while Germany has demonstrated the lowest backing and most aggressive nuclear phase-out policies. The U.S. and U.K. governments both support a modest expansion of nuclear power, which reflects public sentiments.



Event Schedule

April 4
7:00 P.M.

DESCRIPTION

Presenters

Jessica Epstein
Krista Gabarro
Emily Gup
Megan Postsemski

Mentor

Dr. Cathy Ouellette

A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF INTERNATIONAL POLICY SURROUNDING THE COCA LEAF IN BOLIVIA

As the poorest nation in South America with a democracy established only thirty years ago, Bolivia is especially susceptible to foreign intervention. Since 1961, Bolivia has been the focus of United States and United Nations policies regarding narcotrafficking due to its position as a major producer of coca. Coca leaf, primarily cultivated in the Chapare region of Bolivia, serves as a primary source of income for economically vulnerable populations. While it is a mild stimulant, the coca leaf is not in itself a drug; chemical processing is necessary to transform the leaf into cocaine. The US and UN policies, which traditionally advocate for total eradication of coca leaf growth, are insensitive to the cultural and economic importance that the coca leaf occupies in indigenous populations. Additionally, these policies endorse a supply-side approach to regulating and combating narcotrafficking and fail to address the issue of drug demand in the United States. US policies disproportionately impact a small population of Bolivian coca leaf growers, who do not have another viable income, as these policies do not adequately implement successful alternative development strategies. In this project, we explore four legislative policies and examine the indigenous responses to this conflict. We are interested in the extent to which the aims of these policies and indigenous movements agree and conflict with each other. A primary contrast between US, UN and Bolivian policies is the pursuit of either total eradication of the coca leaf or the implementation of alternative development policies. Our research indicates that these policies, in the aggregate, fail to benefit, and in certain cases even harm, the very populations that they target. We believe that a collaborative approach involving all parties affected would yield policy that is more effective, sustainable and culturally sensitive to regulating growth of the coca leaf in Bolivia.



Dana Scholars Program

**April 4
7:30 P.M.**

DESCRIPTION

Presenters
Evan Fletcher
Garrett Gallinot
Daniel Langenbacher
Genna Soslow

Mentor
Dr. Rudski

MARIJUANA LEGISLATION IN THE UNITED STATES: AN ARGUMENT ANALYSIS

The legal status of marijuana in the United States, especially in recent years, has become the topic of a public policy debate between a contingent of the American population who wish for the drug to remain illegal and for current drug laws to continue to be enforced and another contingent who wish for the drug to be made legal for recreational use by those above a certain age. Many of the arguments that have been historically used to keep marijuana illegal can be found in records of floor debates on major drug legislation such as the Comprehensive Crime Control Act of 1983 and the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986. Undergirding many of these arguments are premises that point to marijuana as a cause of various social detriments and allusions to the various costs of marijuana use. On the other side of the marijuana policy debate, news articles and interest group publications from the recent successful campaigns to legalize marijuana for recreational use by referendum in the states of Washington and Colorado shed light on the arguments proposed for reforming marijuana laws in the United States. These largely rely on premises that imply the social and economic costs of recreational marijuana use are not as large as they are commonly supposed and that the benefits of recreational marijuana use are frequently underestimated. The goals of this paper are two-fold: The first goal is to analyze the more common arguments for and against the legalization of marijuana and to determine whether each of those arguments is valid according to its internal logical structure. The second is to determine if the arguments are sound by checking the validity of premises related to social and economic costs and benefits against the findings of the relevant academic literature.



DANA Scholars

Class of 2013

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Steven Alpert
Emily Ancona
Amy Asendorf
Anne Bertolet
Amanda Brennan
Tina Chou
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Jaclyn Durkin
Jessica Epstein
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Chelsea Majid
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Genna Soslow
Sari Weinerman