

Newsletter

Sr. Helen Prejean visits with David Smith at the reception.

The Death Penalty: Two Views

The Poynter Center, Union Board, Horizons of Knowledge, many other campus departments, and numerous community organizations co-hosted a program about the death penalty on October 15. Thomas Perkins, Indiana Deputy Attorney General and Section Chief for Capital Litigation and Habeas Corpus, opened the evening with a description of the death penalty process in the state of Indiana. Perkins described the process as one of the best in the country, because it has so many safeguards and appeals built in to the process. Sr. Helen Prejean, author of *Dead Man Walking*, spoke of her opposition to the death penalty, no matter how the procedures work. She spoke about her initial involvement with death row inmates, and how she learned she needed to offer her help to the families of the victims as well. Prejean concluded that life imprisonment without the possibility of parole is a better moral choice for the United States.

The Ethics of Life Writing

Life writing is a growing discipline, with ethical questions that cross cultures and subjects. A group of scholars who will be submitting essays for a book met October 24-27 on the Indiana University campus to discuss their planned essays with each other and with other interested scholars. The colloquium, which was sponsored by the Poynter Center and the IU Department of English, was led by John Eakin from English and David Smith from the Poynter Center. The colloquium provided an opportunity for the contributors to present their précis, hear how the chapters fit together, and consider comments and discussion as they finish their work. The book, titled *The Ethics of Life Writing: Acts and Contexts*, will be edited by John Eakin and published by Cornell University Press.

Contributors include: John Barber, Religion, St. Olaf College; G. Thomas Couser, English, Hofstra University; Arthur W. Frank, Sociology, University of Calgrary; Richard Freadman, English, La Trobe University, Australia; Marianne Gullestad, Institute for Social Research, University of Oslo; W. Craig Howes, English, University of Hawaii at Manoa; Paul Lauritzen, Religious Studies, John Carroll University; Nancy K. Miller, English, City University of New York; Diane Middlebrook, English, Stanford University; Claudia J. Mills, Philosophy, University of Colorado; Deborah Nelson, English, University of Chicago; David Parker, English, Chinese University of Hong Kong; and Alice Wexler, Center for the Study of Women, University of California Los Angeles.

Poynter Lecturers Address Timely Topics

Dennis Thompson, Professor of Political Philosophy and Director of the Center for Ethics and the Professions at Harvard University, spoke at Indiana University on October 31 on justice in the electoral process. In a talk entitled, "Election Time: Its Implications for Redistricting, Voting, and Fundraising," Thompson tackled thorny issues currently facing the nation, including voting procedures, the electoral college, the politics of redistricting, and efforts at reform in fundraising.

Michael Walzer, Professor of Social Science at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey, spoke on December 4 on the subject of "The Triumph of Just-War Theory (and the Dangers of Success)." Professor Walzer spoke about the development of the theory of a just war and the conditions in which fighting can be considered just. He also spoke about the potential war with Iraq, outlining conditions that would Walzer visited twenty-five years after the publication of his book, *Just and Unjust Wars*, which used examples from many wars but especially concentrated on World War II and Vietnam.

Dennis Thompson talks to students over lunch.

Ethics Courses Available Scientists and Subjects

One assumes that researchers want to do the right thing, but how are they to know what that is? The course, "Scientists and Subjects: An Online Seminar on the Ethics of Research with Human Subjects" offers a strong foundation. This unique and innovative online seminar was designed for researchers and research administrators and is funded by the National Institutes of Health.

Developed at the Poynter Center by Kenneth D. Pimple and Julia Pedroni, the seminar will meet online for nine weeks of intensive readings and interactions, using a Web-based bulletin board system. The seminar covers four major topics: justifying human experimentation, The Belmont Report, informed consent, and the therapeutic obligation in medical research. The next session, the fourth to be offered, runs January 13-March 14, 2003. Registration and the \$50 fee are due by January 3, 2003.

Teaching Research Ethics

The popular workshop, "Teaching Research Ethics," will be May 14-17, 2003 on the Indiana University campus in Bloomington. The program, which has been offered by the Poynter Center for nine years, started with FIPSE funding. When the FIPSE grant ended, a number of universities agreed to help support the program, which is capped at 45 participants per year. The program helps science faculty integrate research ethics into their teaching.

Online Course

The Least of My Brothers, an online module on the ethics of research with human subjects, is now available for review. The course was developed by Kenneth Pimple and Julia Pedroni of the Poynter Center in collaboration with WisdomTools, Inc. The project was funded by the National Institutes of Health and the Poynter Center.

The Least of My Brothers is based on a dramatization of the PHS Syphilis Study at Tuskegee. The facilitator works with learners who read and respond to fictionalized scenes and supporting resources that are available on the Web. The course is designed to be used alone or as a part of a larger course or workshop.

For further information on any of these three courses, see the Web site, <http://poynter.indiana.edu>, or contact Kenneth Pimple at the Poynter Center.

Medical Ethics Seminars

The Poynter Center is continuing its Medical Ethics Seminar series this year. Dr. Richard Need led off the series on September 26, with a discussion-starting title of "Do Physicians Have to Lie to be Paid?" Dr. John Bancroft, Director of the Kinsey Institute at Indiana University, spoke on Nov. 7 on "The Ethics of Gender Re-assignment of Intersex Infants." Dr. Bancroft explained the medical conditions that can lead to intersex infants as well as the various schools of thought about whether or not it is better to begin surgeries early to resolve the child's genital ambiguities. Those who attended left with a better understanding of the extremely difficult decisions facing parents. The December 5th seminar featured Dr. Richard J. Calli, Jr., speaking on "Teaching Ethics to Freshman Medical Students: Content and Controversies."

The spring seminars will be posted on the Web site and announced on [poynter_news](#).

Sims Lecture February 13

Thomas Murray, president of the Hastings Center, will present the second Matthew Vandivier Sims Memorial Lecture Thursday, February 13. The Sims Lecture was established in 2001 to honor the memory of Matthew Sims, who died in infancy. The lecture is intended to open thoughtful discussion among patients, family members, and professional care

givers concerning the care of seriously ill or impaired newborns, children, and others. The series is a collaboration between Matthew's family and friends and the Poynter Center.

Before taking the helm at the Hastings Center, Murray served as Director of the Center for Biomedical Ethics, School of Medicine, Case Western University, and as Professor of Ethics and Public Policy at the Institute for the Medical Humanities at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston.

Murray earned his B.A. from Temple University and his Ph.D. from Princeton University. He has focused on ethics in medicine and science, including aspects of health policy, the care of newborns and children, and genetics. He is the editor of *Which Babies Shall Live?* (Humana Press, 1985) and the author of *The Worth of a Child* (University of California Press, 1996). He has published widely in scholarly journals.

David Smith to retire

June 30, 2003

David Smith, who has led the Poynter Center for 20 years, will retire June 30, 2003. He will present his retirement lecture for the Department of Religious Studies on Thursday, March 6, with a reception to follow.

Smith holds the BA from Carleton College, the BD from Yale Divinity School, and the PhD from Princeton. He joined the Religious Studies faculty at Indiana University in 1967 and served as department chair from 1976-1984. In 1982 he became the director of the Poynter Center. The next newsletter will include more information about Smith's career and the transition at the Poynter Center.

APPE Annual Meeting

The Association for Practical and Professional Ethics will host its annual meeting February 27-March 2 in Charlotte, N. C. The keynote speaker will be Dennis

Thompson, Alfred North Whitehead
Professor of Political Philosophy at Harvard
University. A colloquium for ethics
directors and the Ninth Intercollegiate Ethics
Bowl will be held on February 27. The mini
conference topic will be "Research Ethics,"
with a keynote address by Eric M. Meslin,
director of the Indiana University Center for
Bioethics. Meslin, who is also the former
Executive Director of the National Advisory
Commission, will speak on "Research Ethics
as Public Policy."

The site will be the Hilton Charlotte
University Place, located near the campus of
the University of North Carolina at
Charlotte. Details are available at
<http://php.ucs.indiana.edu/~appe.home.html>.

Poynter Center Newsletter

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Glenda Murray, Editor

The Poynter Center for the Study of
Ethics and American Institutions
Indiana University
618 E. Third Street
Bloomington, IN 47405-3602

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New Monograph

Charles Shelton, S.J., from Regis
College in Denver, is the most recent author
of a Poynter Center monograph. In the
monograph, Shelton examines the
significance of gratitude and offers seven
rationales for studying gratitude. He links
gratitude to its moral roots and explores
gratitude as a moral emotion. He then offers
a critical view of gratitude. Shelton offers
many examples and argues that gratitude
provides completeness in life. The
monograph was published in October of
2002.

A complete list of monographs is at the
Web site, <http://poynter.indiana.edu>. Some
are available online in PDF files. All can be
ordered by contacting the Poynter Center at
812-855-0261 or poynter@indiana.edu.

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