

A glance at any newspaper today points up the crucial need for promoting ethics in today's world. People hunger for guidance to help them make the right choices and to live decent lives in a complex world. The Hebrew Union College-University of Cincinnati Center for the Study of Ethics and Contemporary Moral Problems is dedicated to providing the guidance that can help rescue lives and heal the world.

The Ethics Center promotes teaching, learning, and research in applied ethics and ethical literature in an open environment for scholarly discourse of various religious and secular ethical traditions. It helps faculty, students, professionals, and members of the community identify ethical issues and make personal and professional ethical decisions.

The Ethics Center's Advisory Board members recently approved a strategic plan for the Center to achieve national recognition as a venue for interfaith study and discussion of current



Dr. Jonathan Cohen, Director of the HUC-UC Ethics Center

- issues and applied ethics. The plan calls for expanding the Center's abilities to:
- Sustain competitive graduate programs in comparative law and applied ethics;
 - Become a major research center in ethics, law, and religion;
 - Provide choice continuing professional education programs in applied ethics;
 - Offer quality outreach events that engage religious and secular leaders.

Continuing and Community Education

"I believe that despite the war and terrorism afflicting our world, the people of Cincinnati are committed to improving the quality of life for every citizen, right here and right now," states Dr. Jonathan Cohen, Director of the HUC-UC Ethics Center. The Center's high-caliber programs (see sidebar) appeal to diverse interfaith and multiethnic audiences. Furthermore, Dr. Cohen adds, "We are pledged to providing continuing education for professionals in law, medicine, social work, real estate, and other vocations." Programs such as the ongoing Quarterly Forum are designed to promote cooperative research among local academic institutions and social justice and not-for-profit organizations. Programs have attracted over 1200 participants, and we have enabled nearly 150 professionals to receive continuing education credit.

In June, the Ethics Center will present *New York Times* columnist Randy Cohen ("The

Ethicist") and Cincinnati Opera artistic director Nicholas Muni who will talk about capitalism and sin in the context of Kurt Weill's opera *The Seven Deadly Sins*. Sponsored by the William A. Friedlander Ethics Lecture Fellowship, this program will continue OperaRap, the Ethics Center's successful ongoing partnership with the Cincinnati Opera. The Ethics Center is also planning a day-long October conference on "Mental Health and the Law: Ethical Dilemmas" which will offer continuing professional education to physicians, attorneys, nurses, and social workers. Dr. Terry Perlin of Miami University in Oxford, Ohio is leading a group of representatives from local academic, medical, government, and social justice institutions to organize the event.

TO A

LIGHTING THE WAY

RECENT PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE HUC-UC CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF ETHICS AND CONTEMPORARY MORAL PROBLEMS:

A debate on capital punishment in advance of the presentation of the new American opera *Dead Man Walking* marked the Ethics Center's very first collaboration with the Cincinnati Opera. The *OperaRap* debate, which filled the Manuel D. and Rhoda A.

"Zero Tolerance: Education and Justice for All?" featured a lecture by Daniel J. Losen, an attorney with the Harvard Civil Rights Project. Dr. Laurence Thomas, Professor of Philosophy at Syracuse University, spoke on the "The Role of Parents in the Social and Moral Development of Children." Discipline policies in secondary public schools were debated by a panel that included the deputy superintendent of Cincinnati Public Schools, the president of the Ohio Federation of Teachers

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

Mayerson Auditorium to capacity, presented the diverse views of a Catholic nun, a civil rights attorney, the editor of *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, and a professor of theology at Cincinnati Bible College.

ZERO TOLERANCE

Graduate Study and Research

"We are tremendously excited about creating new courses and research opportunities in comparative law and applied ethics for our HUC-JIR and University of Cincinnati students," says Dr. Cohen. "Our students are enthusiastic when scholars from other academic institutions, such as the Athenaeum of Ohio/Mount St. Mary's Seminary, contribute guest lectures on canon law and other topics."

With the launch of the new M.A. and Ph.D. programs in Jewish and comparative law and applied ethics, the Ethics Center

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Moderator Dr. Irvine H. Anderson at the "Ethics and the Media: Reporting the War on Terror," sponsored by the Donald J. and Dr. Norma K. Stone Lecture Fellowship.

ETHICAL WORLD

MORE

The HUC-UC Center for the Study of Ethics and Contemporary Moral Problems

PUBLIC EDUCATION

(AFL-CIO), an ombudsperson for the State of Ohio Department of Education, and attorneys representing the Legal Aid Society and Cincinnati Parents for Public Schools. Verna Williams, professor at University of Cincinnati College of Law, thanked the Ethics Center "for presenting such fascinating programming." This outreach event was sponsored in part by the Donald J. and Dr. Norma K. Stone Ethics Lecture Fellowship, the Harris K. Weston Institute for Law and Public Policy, and the Legal Aid Society of Greater Cincinnati.

The Role of Rescuers in Jewish Tradition," a thought-provoking lecture by Rabbi David Novak, Ph.D., was offered to the public by the Ethics Center and HUC-JIR's Center for Holocaust and Humanity Education (CHHE).

ALTRUISM

the last surviving Nuremburg interrogator, which brought together over 200 listeners.

The Ethics Center and the CHHE also co-sponsored a lecture by former U.S. Ambassador John Dolibois,

WAR CRIMES TRIALS

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offers graduate students four main areas of academic concentration: Philosophy and Ethics, Law, Jewish Legal Texts, and Comparative Law and Ethics. Students can concentrate their research in areas such as human and civil rights, business law and ethics, and medical and bioethics.

The graduate programs are administered by HUC-JIR's School of Graduate Studies, in coordination with the Ethics Center and University of Cincinnati College of Law. Students are exposed to the basic disciplines of civil law and Jewish law, and encouraged to identify and examine problems ethically. "We want them to develop an informed individual approach to ethical-legal problems, and give them the tools to address socio-legal problems in the community," Dr. Cohen emphasizes. "Our goal is to prepare students for future work and research in applied ethics, and to promote teaching and research in the areas

Andrew Higley/University of Cincinnati



Los Angeles Times foreign correspondent Robin Wright speaking at the "Ethics and the Media: Reporting the War on Terror" Stone Lecture.

of Jewish and comparative law and applied ethics."

Students are introduced to diverse religious and secular models of ethics and to jurisprudential analysis, and given the opportunity to participate in practical, such as internships at the

Legal Aid Society or the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center. Flexibility is crucial to accommodate the

interests of each individual student. "We invite students to take courses offered at HUC-JIR, UC College of Law, other schools and departments of UC, Xavier University, and at the Athenaeum of Ohio," Dr. Cohen explains.

The programs foster the interaction of students of various backgrounds, faiths, and disciplines. Some of the core courses are offered jointly, accredited both at HUC-JIR and the UC College of Law, and attract lay and professional participants; and some are accredited at HUC-JIR and the Athenaeum of Ohio and/or Xavier University. The cooperation of the participating institutions creates an opportunity for open scholarly discussion and enriches the students involved.

ETHICAL WORLD

TO A MORE

The HUC-UC Center for

LIGHTING THE WAY

the Study of Ethics and Contemporary Moral Problems

URBAN HOUSING POLICY

In a public discussion of housing and homelessness, "Calling Cincinnati Home: Ethical Decisions in Housing," that attracted hundreds of local residents, a panel comprised of two Cincinnati City Council members and two Hamilton County commissioners responded to a written statement by former Ethics Center scholar-in-residence Dr. Julian Wuerth entitled "Ethical Issues in Housing." Steve Knight, a social worker at Mt. Airy Shelter, said the focus on public policy and the homeless "helped me rethink my views and also recharge my commitment to work with this population." Attorney Jeanette N. Dannenfels concurred, "This panel was very helpful in highlighting the dire issues that face the City of Cincinnati regarding appropriate and livable housing."

As part of the two-day focus on urban housing issues, the Ethics Center offered a seminar on predatory lending, reverse mortgages, and childhood lead hazards in housing, which was described by attorney Nancy C. Helwig as "very informative on issues that are not commonly discussed in legal updates and other seminars, but which are vitally important." Presenters from the Better Housing League, ClearCorps, and the Legal Aid Society of Greater Cincinnati took part.

END-OF-LIFE CARE

The symposium "End-of-Life Treatment and Care: Religious and Secular Perspectives" brought together the ideas of a clinical nurse specialist, a priest who teaches theology at Thomas More College, a professor of Psychiatry and Law at University of

“Beyond the academic focus of the programs, the practica requirements are most attractive to our students. We give them a chance to take part in a variety of social service and educational projects,” Dr. Cohen says. “The ethics education practicum challenges our students to explore ethics education at all levels, for instance, by teaching an ethics course or preparing an ethics curriculum. The social justice practicum entails working with a community-based organization, and gives them practical experience in an area of their choice.” Students choose an area of interest (such as homelessness, domestic violence, medical ethics, etc.) and are then placed as interns in a related organization. Both practicum experiences are closely supervised. Students gain practical experience, and apply the knowledge acquired in the classroom.

Dr. Cohen is particularly proud of the Ethics Center’s Scholar-in-Residence program. The Center’s 2002-03 Scholar-in-Residence was Professor Mark Stavsky, an attorney and noted



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German journalist Malte Lehming speaking at the “Ethics and the Media: Reporting the War on Terror” Stone Lecture

legal scholar on the faculty at the Salmon P. Chase College of Law at Northern Kentucky University, who specializes in criminal procedure, evidence, trial advocacy, white-collar crime, comparative law, and prisoner’s rights. During his year of residency, Professor Stavsky taught a joint course in “Criminality and Civil Disability” at the UC College

of Law and HUC-JIR in addition to lecturing and conducting research.

The joint course addressed the implications of criminality. “Members of our society endure civil disabilities following the discharge of their sentences,” explained Stavsky, who is the Director of the Kentucky Innocence Project. “Such

disabilities range from the prohibition to bear arms to the inability to exercise the right to vote.” Dr. Cohen co-taught the joint course, which, he explained, “offered contemporary American and Jewish perspectives on the subject of criminality, guilt, and innocence, as well as various issues relating to the re-integration of offenders into society.”

The Ethics Center welcomed its first scholar-in-residence, Dr. Julian Wuerth in 2001. During his residency, he focused on his areas of specialization, which include the ethics and theoretical philosophy of Immanuel Kant, early modern philosophy, the history of ethics, and religion.

The Ethics Center is hard at work fulfilling its mission: stimulating graduate study, academic research, community outreach programs, and continuing professional education to people of all faiths in Cincinnati. In doing so, it serves as a beacon of light and humanity for today’s troubled world.

Cincinnati Medical School, an ethics consultant and professor of interdisciplinary studies at Miami University, and Dr. Robert V. Brody, a primary care physician who chairs the Ethics Committee at San Francisco General Hospital. The event was part of the Ninth National Conference on Nursing Administration Research.

ETHICS OF RESTITUTION

The Ethics Center hosted a thought-provoking lecture on the ethics of restitution by English barrister David Turns, LL.M., entitled “Picking Up the Pieces After Armed Conflict: How International Law Can Help.”

“Violence Against Women: Family, Faith Communities and the Law” offered a panel discussion on domestic violence, and featured the views of a social worker, attorney, Catholic priest, and a

Reform rabbi/academic.

“Wonderful

variety of perspectives,” remarked attorney Alison Bazely after the program, “great value as well.” Attendee Karen Rowe of Catholic Social Services “found the diversity of the presentations very rich.”

“Beyond Welfare: Raising Children Out of Poverty,” the inaugural conference of UC’s Harris K. Weston Institute for Law and Public Policy, hosted by the Ethics Center and presented by the Legal Aid Society of Greater Cincinnati, was a gathering of policy leaders from the public, non-profit, and civic sectors. The event addressed the topic of working mothers and the challenge of achieving self-sufficiency, and featured a lecture on fathers and child support.

WELFARE AND POVERTY

FAMILY VIOLENCE