

Philosophy of the Civil Person
Alfie Scholars Junior Conference
Seattle University



August 28 & 29, 2020

Philosophy of the Civil Person

Presenters

Chelsea Arnold
Viktoria Buina
Anastasiya Davis
Abem Fekade-Tessema
Natalie Hutson

Afrikaan Osman
Brenda Mata-Diaz
Kevin Respicio
Yao Yao

Alfie Team

Professor Natalie Cisneros
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Professor Nathan Colaner
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Professor Paula Lustbader
Director Scott Petit
Professor Jeff Philpott
Professor Jason Wirth

Conference Schedule

Friday, August 28th

- 10:00-10:20 **Welcome**
Professor Paula Lustbader
- 10:20-10:45 **The Migration of Medical Professionals from Dictatorships to the United States of America: Why America Resists to Benefit from the Brain Drain**
Presenter: Viktoria Buina
Moderator: Mariah Moreno
- 10:45-11:10 **Protecting the Vulnerable: Immigrants Access to Adequate Healthcare**
Presenter: Anastasiya Davis
Moderator: Sophie Zandel
- 11:10-11:20 **Break**
- 11:20-11:45 **In Search of Homes: Climate Refugees Meet Walls**
Presenter: Afrikaan Osman
Moderator: Richard Pallangyo
- 11:45– 12:25 **Lunch**
- 12:25-12:50 **How Social Media Promote Eating Disorders**
Presenter: Yao Yao
Moderator: Christiana Tembo
- 12:50-1:15 **Bridging Divides Through Intentional Conversation**
Presenter: Kevin Respicio
Moderator: Lorra Hernon

Saturday, August 29th

- 10:00-10:10 **Welcome**
Professor Paula Lustbader
- 10:10-10:35 **Health Care for the Incarcerated: A Plea to Save a Vulnerable Population**
Presenter: Brenda Mata-Diaz
Moderator: Adrian Nava
- 10:35-11:00 **The Mass Incarceration of African Americans in the Land of the Free**
Presenter: Abem Fekade-Tessema
Moderator: Ernesto Chacon
- 11:00-11:10 **Break**
- 11:10-11:35 **Rational for the Arguments to Defund or Abolish the Police in America**
Presenter: Natalie Hutson
Moderator: Haley Cummins
- 11:35-12:00 **Overlooked and Untreated Police Officer Mental Health: A Crucial Consideration in the Era of Reform**
Presenter: Chelsea Arnold
Moderator: Hailey McNally
- 12:00- 1:00 **Closing**
Professor Paula Lustbader

Presentation Descriptions

The Migration of Medical Professionals from Dictatorships to the United States of America: Why America Resists to Benefit from the Brain Drain

Presenter: Viktoria Buina

In the United States, the Migration Policy Institute reported 263,000 immigrants have degrees in health-related fields yet do not hold the positions in the healthcare system due to existing rigid licensing regulations. Despite the growing shortage of doctors which estimates to reach the levels between 54,100 and 139,000 physicians by 2033, these regulations still create an unnecessary timely and costly barrier for already experienced physicians. In the light of the Global COVID-19 pandemic, a number of possible solutions to ease the licensing process came out of the shadow. The main goal of this presentation is to explore the reasoning for marginalization of the immigrant medical cohort and the ways it is supported by the US authorities. In addition, some foreign practices of legitimation of immigrant healthcare workers will be explored and suggested for implementation to the US system.

Protecting the Vulnerable: Immigrants Access to Adequate Healthcare

Presenter: Anastasiya Davis

There are over 44.7 million immigrants living in America today. They all have a story to tell. They come to America in hopes of acquiring a better life. A lot of them seek refuge as they escape dire situations. They must assimilate into a new culture, with limited funds and resources, and on top of navigating this new life, a lot of them do so without the access to proper healthcare. Several factors are presumed to exacerbate immigrants limited access to health care. Some of these include policy changes, discrimination, and employment. The purpose of this presentation is to raise awareness of this issue, understand the barriers that stand in the way of immigrants and their access to healthcare, and find solutions that can someday overcome these barriers. Additionally, this article will be exploring how the pandemic has shed light on this issue and has put our most vulnerable individuals at a higher risk.

In Search of Homes: Climate Refugees Meet Walls

Presenter: Afrikaan Osman

The United Nations (UN) projects 200 million climate refugees (people displaced by climate change) by the year 2050, which is about 200 times more than the Syrian refugee crisis back in 2011 (UNHCR). All those people will lose their homes and wander around in search of new homes; some of them will become internally displaced people, and others will try to cross borders only to meet walls. The average person lives 17 years in a refugee camp before they relocate to a third country and get resettled. Refugee camps are some of the most populated and overcrowded places in the world. This makes refugees vulnerable to communicable and other diseases that are easily transmitted from person to person or through vector. The rapid rise of global warming and the global pandemic crises we are amid right now (COVID19) make it harder for people to ignore the refugee crisis and act slowly. Most of the climate refugees aren't even afforded recognition as refugees and allowed to live in the harsh life of the refugee camps. As a refugee myself who lived in a refugee camp for 19 years, I will discuss what are the causes, the impacts, and solutions of the climate refugee crisis through a refugee's lens.

How Social Media Promote Eating Disorders

Presenter: Yao Yao

US adults' social media usage has increased from 5% in 2005 to 79% in 2019. According to a survey by the National Eating Disorders Association, 95% of girls agree that they perceive a large quantity of unkind criticism on appearances on social media "posts, comments, photos and videos"; 72% of girls see them weekly, and 62% of girls wish social media were a place that supported "body positivity." With the increased use of social media today, people's eating habits are drastically influenced by them. Eating disorders, which can cause serious mental and physical damage, might be negatively associated with social media. This presentation will explore four different ways in which social media promote eating disorders, and what can be done to minimize the negative influence on body image that social media can bring us.

Bridging Divides Through Intentional Conversation

Presenter: Kevin Respicio

There is a growing divide in America today that is stalling meaningful progress on critical issues. The impact of this stalled progress is directly damaging human lives now and may damage them even more in the future. Progress is needed to address systemic racism, global warming, access to education and healthcare, policing, and our current global coronavirus pandemic. There are many proven ways to address these issues for different circumstances, and direct and intentional interpersonal communication is a foundational start. Knowing some of the basic factors at play when we enter into a conversation with someone we may disagree with is crucial for knowing how to communicate effectively to move the conversation towards progress and potentially save lives. This presentation will explore the social identification approach and other significant factors as they apply to communication models and how understanding those factors can aid us in becoming better communicators to bridge the growing divide in America.

Health Care for the Incarcerated: A Plea to Save a Vulnerable Population

Presenter: Brenda Mata-Diaz

In the Constitution of the United States of America, the 8th amendment states, “Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.” Contrary to belief, each day, men, women, and children behind bars suffer from the lack of access to adequate medical and mental health care. Out of the incarcerated population, 40 percent of inmates suffer from a chronic health condition, and without proper access to healthcare while incarcerated, inmates and post-release inmates continue to suffer. Their medical needs are not met, prisons are often overcrowded, and those conditions allow contagious illnesses to spread faster. Without action being taken, this vulnerable population continues to see uncivil practices being ignored by legislatures. We should stop ignoring the discussion on the rights of the incarcerated and improve our health care system in correctional facilities. In this presentation, I will talk about the inadequate health care in jails and prisons, what contributes to this issue, why we should care about this ongoing issue, and what we can do to address the issue.

The Mass Incarceration of African Americans in the Land of the Free

Presenter: Abem Fekade-Tessema

In the “Land of the Free,” we are home to the largest prison system in the modern history of the world. The free people of the United States account for 5% of the world’s population and yet constitute 25% of the world’s prison population. In addition, the demographics of those incarcerated suggest that we disproportionately target African American and Hispanic communities in the attempt to combat crime. Currently, over half of all those incarcerated are Black or Hispanic. As stated by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), “If African Americans and Hispanics were incarcerated at the same rates as whites, prison and jail populations would decline by almost 40%.” What possible motives or ideals could drive the United States to incarcerate the way that it does? In an assessment of the development of this system of incarceration, I hone in on the economic and social factors which play a role in its stimulation. This is an issue which demands alertness because it is a thriving industry. Over recent years, our prison industry is growing with more prisons and more inmates: between 1980 and 2015, the number of people incarcerated increased from roughly 500,000 to 2.2 million. In order to understand the ill-intent behind this institution and reconstruct a tool of oppression into a fair and just asset, we must examine its history and present contexts to develop the ideal future product. In this assessment of the economic and social factors which contribute to the ongoing attack on minority communities in the US, we will consider how the legislative oppression of the Jim Crow era continues in the form of hyper criminalization and prosecution of America’s Black and Brown populations.

Rational for the Arguments to Defund or Abolish the Police in America

Presenter: Natalie Hutson

Police Brutality is an issue that dates back to the first police forces in America but the call for solutions has been to reform the institution. Now we are seeing a shift in the conversation around solutions to defunding police or abolishing policing in many places all together. Reform has not done enough to stop people from being wrongfully killed by police and we must have the important conversation to change the way we view policing in our society so American communities can be better protected and served. This presentation will outline the history of police and police brutality in America, why we are seeing a shift from ideas centering around reform to those that call to defund or abolish the police, and what those newly mainstream solutions would look like in the context of American society.

Overlooked and Untreated Police Officer Mental Health: A Crucial Consideration in the Era of Reform

Presenter: Chelsea Arnold

Police officers suffer from undiagnosed and untreated mental health issues at alarming rates. Despite mental health services being offered by most departments, officers systematically avoid using them. For example, in a 2017 survey, 59.4% of officers reportedly felt that receiving treatment is a sign of personal failure. Furthermore, seeking mental health treatment is notoriously undervalued, not always confidential, and stigmatized across US police departments. Disturbingly, using mental health services can even result in an officer losing their job. All these factors cultivate a dangerous culture of treatment avoidance. Moreover, officers suffering from untreated mental health conditions pose a direct threat to themselves and to the communities they serve. This presentation will explore the mental illnesses plaguing American police departments today, in addition to exploring the factors that contribute to widespread treatment avoidance. Lastly, recommendations from the 2017 Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act will be explored as possible solutions to getting police officers the mental healthcare that they desperately need.

Presenter Biographies

Chelsea Arnold

Major: Forensic and clinical psychology

Chelsea Arnold is studying forensic and clinical psychology at Seattle University with the goal of becoming a practicing forensic psychologist. As we enter the era of law enforcement reform, Chelsea has quickly narrowed her interest into working particularly with police officers. Her vision is to create and implement new training techniques that promote a more humanitarian approach to policing in departments across the nation. To gain experience in her chosen field of psychology, Chelsea volunteers as a phone operator for King County's Crisis & Suicide hotline. Additionally, Chelsea is a member of Seattle University's Alfie Scholars research cohort, where she hones the leadership and research skills necessary for becoming a visionary for changing American policing.

Viktoria Buina

Major: Diagnostic Ultrasound

Viktoria Buina is studying diagnostic ultrasound at Seattle University. Her goal is to become a medical sonographer with a focus on cardiovascular sonography of fetuses, newborns and older kids with congenital heart defects. As a recent escaper from the dictatorial regime and a skilled practical medical ICU nurse with a background of volunteering with non-profit medical organizations in the middle- and low-income countries, Viktoria encountered a complicated, multi-level licensing system for immigrant medical workers and thus cannot practice in the US without acquiring local credentials or degree. She is devoted to promotion of changes in the professional xenophobia existing in the US and to creation of safe environment for this cohort to make a good use of their professional expertise. Additionally, Viktoria is a Member of Seattle University's Alfie Scholars research cohort, where she sharpens the leadership and research skills necessary for becoming an advocate for changing American licensing requirements for immigrant medical workers.

Anastasiya Davis

Major: Nursing

Anastasiya Davis is studying nursing at Seattle University with the goals of becoming a nurse practitioner in her career. Entering the healthcare field with over three years of medical experience, Anastasiya quickly realized her passion for advocating for her patients. Her vision is to create a culturally inclusive environment for patients, where everybody feels like they will get the best care. Anastasiya worked as a medical assistant at Swedish, and saw firsthand the barriers that presented themselves to patients when it came to accessing the care they need. Insurance was the biggest obstacle of them all, which sparked her interest in delving into this issue even further. Anastasiya hopes to use her experience and medical license to travel to countries in need and offer her services in a line of humanitarian work.

Abem Fekade-Tessema

Major: Business Economics, Pre-Law

Abem Fekade-Tessema is a student in the Albers School of Business and Economics at Seattle University and currently seeks to obtain a degree in Economics. With this educational background and the potential addition of a political science or public policy minor, he strives to attend law school and further equip himself to become an analytical and self-confident leader to advocate for positive social advancements. In an attempt to always gain new insights, skills and perspectives, Abem -- who is a returner to Seattle University -- participates in various extracurriculars. He is the current Junior Class Representative in Student Government at Seattle U, a Manager in Training at the UREC facilities and is an active member of the Men's and Coed Club Soccer teams.

Natalie Hutson

Major: Sociology

Natalie originally started at Seattle University as nursing major but realized that her skills and passions would be better utilized in the sociology program and decided to completely change paths. She chose sociology because she has always had an interest in examining and questioning societal norms and practices and how they impact people's lives, including her own. Natalie is committed to promoting social justice and equity and is interested in not only helping those that are facing oppression but in educating those that perpetuate systems of oppression, even unconsciously.

Brenda Mata-Diaz

Major: Nursing

Brenda is a first-generation Latina college student whose goal is to pave the way for her younger family members. Knowing the hardships her parents went through to immigrate to America, she wishes to make a positive impact in her family, community, and most importantly, make her parents proud. After obtaining a Bachelor of Science in Nursing, her next goal will be to obtain a Doctorate of Nursing Practice which will allow her to possess the highest level of nursing expertise to work in a correctional facility. Having known a family member who was imprisoned for ten years has inspired her to work in an environment that can feel oppressive and deliver healthcare equivalent to the services outside of the walls. Brenda is committed to work in a correctional facility which involves caring for the medical needs of detainees and inmates. Although she hasn't had the opportunity to work in such a setting, it is the responsibility of every nursing student to be educated and inspire leaders within the profession that will transform health care for a just and humane world.

Afrikaan Osman

Major: Computer Science with Business Specialization

Afrikaan's mother was forced from a civil war-torn Somalia to seek safety and refuge in Kenya. There Afrikaan grew up in Kakuma refugee camp, where he lived there for a long 19 years of his life. His family finally was resettled in Seattle in 2016. As soon as he was able, Afrikaan started attending Seattle Central College in 2017 to pursue an Associate of Science degree. While at Seattle Central, he served as the Student Body President for two terms (2 years), and he founded the Immigrant and Refugee Club. In recognition of his contribution to Seattle Central, in 2020 Afrikaan was awarded the Vice President's Medal. Afrikaan is passionate about advocating for refugee communities. In 2018, he founded tech4REFUGEES, a youth program that advocates for refugee youths to have access to technology and information. Also, he is using social media platforms to uplift the voices of refugee youths by sharing their real human stories. Because Afrikaan has personal experience living as a refugee and working with refugees, he understands the importance of including refugees in technology and at all other decision-making tables to give them an opportunity to become independent.

Kevin Respicio

Major: Nursing

Prior to pursuing a career in nursing, Kevin Respicio spent over a decade doing environmental protection and emergency response work in the oil industry. He has also spent 6 years as a member of the Washington Army National Guard first as a combat engineer then in the infantry. His shift into a career of nursing is a result of his ever-present desire to help others that was the reasoning behind his initial enlistment. While working in various diverse and dangerous environments, he realized the importance of seeing past politics to develop trusting relationships and effective communications with others. As a student, Kevin is a member of Seattle University's 2020 Alfie cohort as well as an honors graduate from Tacoma Community College. As soldier, he was a noncommissioned officer tasked with leading a diverse group of individuals through difficult operations and a distinguished graduate of multiple military programs. As a foreman, he was responsible for the safety and well-being of diverse individuals while accomplishing dangerous and challenging jobs. Kevin hopes to apply the lessons learned from his diverse background to become a better health care professional and communicator.

Yao Yao

Major: Computer Science

An international student from China, Yao is majoring in computer science at Seattle University. She hopes to obtain a PhD degree and work in cybersecurity or computer science in the medical field to protect others from being harmed online or help others fight disease. In addition, she hopes to address diversity, particularly the lack of women, in the tech industry. Yao has suffered from binge-eating disorder and bulimia nervosa for years and has tried different approaches to recover, including seeking help from online communities, visiting a therapist, and so on. Yao has read and experienced many eating-disorder stories from her community, so she understands many patients' demands and has the passion to eliminate the same damage to more people.

