

The Ethics of Civility
Alfie Scholars Senior Conference
Seattle University



August 21, 2021

Philosophy of the Civil Person

Presenters

Chelsea Arnold
Viktoria Buina
Brenda Mata-Diaz

Afrikaan Osman
Kevin Respicio
Yao Yao

Alfie Team

Professor Natalie Cisneros
Director Carol Cochran
Professor Nathan Colaner
Professor Paula Lustbader

Director Scott Petit
Professor Jeff Philpott
Professor Jason Wirth

Conference Schedule

Saturday, August 21st

- 10:00–10:20 **Welcome**
Professor Paula Lustbader
- 10:20–10:45 **Did They Consent? A Call to Practice Empathy on Animal Testing**
Presenter: Yao Yao
Moderator: Plamedi Diakubama
- 10:45–11:10 **An Ethical Analysis of the Medical Industrial Complex and Its Failures**
Presenter: Kevin Respicio
Moderator: Asmerom Ghirmai
- 11:10–11:25 **Break**
- 11:30–11:55 **Digital Gap: How COVID-19 Increased Technology and Internet Access Inequities and Our Ethical Responsibility to Closing this Gap.**
Presenter: Afrikaan Osman
Moderator: Sirish Gurang
- 11:55–12:20 **Life under dictatorship: What it feels like to be excluded from the moral community and how to survive if you choose to resist?**
Presenter: Viktoria Buina
Moderator: Serah Ombongi
- 12:20– 12:45 **Lunch**

- 12:45– 1:10 **An Ethical Decision to Promote Equal Health Care for the Incarcerated: A Vaccine to Ensure Safety and Health Among the Vulnerable.**
Presenter: Brenda Mata-Diaz
Moderator: Lia Matias
- 1:10– 1:25 **Unjust and Unethical: The Endless Punishment of U.S. Sex Offenders**
Presenter: Chelsea Arnold
Moderator: Mashaal Shameem
- 1:30-2:00 **Closing**
Professor Paula Lustbader

Presentation Descriptions

Did They Consent? A Call to Practice Empathy on Animal Testing

Presenter: Yao Yao

About 26 million animals are used for scientific or cosmetic testing in the United States every year, and about 95% of these animals are not protected by the federal Animal Welfare Act (AWA), according to nonprofit organization ProCon. A study conducted by Pew Research center shows that 89% of scientists favor animal testing. Animal testing benefits humans in many ways and has been a popular approach in for many scientists, but it is not necessarily ethical to continue. In this presentation, I would like to explore the current situation on animal testing, reasons why animal testing is unethical, what the alternatives are, and what we can do.

An Ethical Analysis of the Medical Industrial Complex and Its Failures

Presenter: Kevin Respicio

The American medical-industrial complex thrives in an economic ecosystem that prioritizes corporate self-interest and profits over the health and well-being of people. The American capitalist environment rewards dogmatic pursuits of maximized profits that result in failures of care for the people served by this healthcare system. Three major sectors of the medical-industrial complex identified are insurance, hospital, and pharmaceutical corporations. Each sector continues to gain incredible power and influence to the detriment of the people of The United States. The problems generated by the medical-industrial complex becomes even clearer when examined through the lens of multiple ethical frameworks for instance deontology, contractarianism, Aristotelian virtue ethics, and utilitarianism. Fortunately, a path towards a more ethical and equitable healthcare system has been identified. Observing the same ethical frameworks, it is possible to provide adequate healthcare for all while maintaining quality and affordability.

Digital Gap: How COVID-19 Increased Technology and Internet Access Inequities and Our Ethical Responsibility to Closing this Gap.

Presenter: Afrikaan Osman

The COVID-19 pandemic has shed light on America's existing inequities, such as lack of access to technology and internet among minority groups, by limiting these communities' choices in accessing health, education, and jobs. This presentation will speak to the impact of these inequities and our ethical responsibilities in closing the ever-widening digital gap.

Life under dictatorship: What it feels like to be excluded from the moral community and how to survive if you choose to resist?

Presenter: Viktoria Buina

Living under systemic political oppression by the non-legitimate power means living under the everyday risk of being beaten, detained, tortured, fired from a job, expelled from the educational facility, having your kids expropriated from family, or even murdered to death. Knowing these all, Belarusian people have been resisting the regime since the most recent presidential elections on August 9, 2020. This paper provides a brief description of the main hurdles experienced by Belarusian people from the authorities, the ways of helping them to survive through the most repressive times ever seen in this country, and why all the above turns out a positive feedback loop.

An Ethical Decision to Promote Equal Health Care for the Incarcerated: A Vaccine to Ensure Safety and Health Among the Vulnerable.

Presenter: Brenda Mata-Diaz

Presentation description: On December 31st, 2019, the government in Wuhan, China documented that health workers were treating dozens of cases of pneumonia from an unknown cause. Days later, virologists identified a new

virus that had already infected thousands of people in Asia. Almost a year later, the F.D.A approved a coronavirus vaccine by Pfizer. This cleared the way for millions of highly vulnerable people to begin to receive the vaccine within days. However, with the rollout of vaccination plans come ethical dilemmas of who should be vaccinated first. Individuals at higher risk of exposure should receive priority, yet, despite the substandard healthcare in prisons, inmates being disproportionately affected, and prison walls are porous, inmates have been excluded from covid vaccine plans. Just as Saad B. Omer, the director of the Yale Institute for Global Health, said, “it’s immoral to promote any plan that isn’t laser-focused on mitigating the risk of infection and the risk of bad public health outcomes”

In this presentation, I will talk about the push to vaccinate the incarcerated population, what contributes to this issue, why we should care about this ongoing issue, and what we can do to address the issue.

Unjust and Unethical: The Endless Punishment of U.S. Sex Offenders

Presenter: Chelsea Arnold

Sex offenders are arguably one of the most stigmatized populations in the United States. Because of this, almost one million sex offenders are subject to extremely punitive laws far past the end of their prison stays. These laws make it nearly impossible for individuals with past sex offenses to reintegrate into society in any meaningful way. The laws in question are sex offender registration laws. While the public may gain a false sense of security from these laws, evidence suggests that they do not work, nor are they fairly applied. The most poor and disenfranchised members of U.S. society are disproportionately subjected to registration, while powerful members of society are free to carry on their act of sexual violence with impunity. If the true goal of sex offender registration laws is to reduce sex crimes, then more effective, ethical, and justly applied alternatives to sex offender registration should be considered. In this presentation, I will examine sex offender registration laws, including the repercussions and unjust application of these laws. Furthermore, I will suggest a few different reasons why these laws exist, despite their lack of efficacy, unjust application, and unethical approach. Lastly, I will suggest what criteria would be for an ethical set of sex offender laws, and some tangible ways this may play out in future policies.

Presenter Biographies

Chelsea Arnold

Major: Forensic and clinical psychology

Chelsea Arnold is a forensic and clinical psychology major who recently shifted her goal of becoming a clinical psychologist to the goal of becoming a defense attorney. With this newfound goal, she hopes to be a source of support to the most stigmatized members of society. Her passion to take this path has come from her realization that justice is not objective nor equitable, and her strong belief that it *should be*. This presentation is Chelsea's first endeavor to defend a population that has been one of the most stigmatized groups in U.S. history: sex offenders. While Chelsea believes that sex offenders are deserving of consequences, she does not agree with the extreme measures that sex offender registration laws take, and the violation of fair justice and societal damage that they leave in their wake. As a survivor of sexual assault herself, Chelsea believes she is well positioned to articulate a need to empathize with other survivors, while also acknowledging the need for the fair application of justice for all.

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 the cardiovascular sonography of fetuses, newborns, and older kids with congenital heart defects. As a recent escaper from the dictatorial regime, Viktoria does want to help and support those left to live under the systemic and individual oppression of the non-legitimate power in Belarus. She is devoted to the promotion of changes in her native country toward building a strong democratic society.

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 the political vector in Belarus and reestablishing rights and freedoms of the opposers.

Brenda Mata-Diaz

Major: Nursing

Brenda Mata-Diaz is a first-generation Hispanic college student who wishes to pave the way for younger students that have faced hardships. As a first-gen student, there were times where she underestimated her potential and worth. However, she turned her worries and fears into a drive to pursue a Bachelor of Science in Nursing, where she aspires to work closely with patients in surgical services. Working in peri-operative services has been a goal of Brenda because it allows her to face the root of the problem at first-hand. In addition, while working as an RN, Brenda hopes to provide back to the community and volunteer at correctional facilities. Using her nursing knowledge, she hopes to deliver healthcare equivalent to the services provided outside of jails and prisons. After obtaining her Bachelor of Science in Nursing, her next goal will be to obtain a Doctorate of Nursing Practice. She hopes to use this degree to further educate herself on how to transform health care into a just and equal service.

Afrikaan Osman

Major: Computer Science with Business Specialization

I grew up in a refugee camp in Kenya, where our world was bound to the camp borders. We did not have access to technology or the internet that was fast and affordable. My monthly salary was \$40, and the internet cost was \$30 a month! After coming to the U.S, I decided to major in Computer Science, and I am passionate about advocating for minority communities, immigrants and refugees, to have equal access to technology and the internet here in our neighborhoods in Seattle, WA. Unfortunately, the internet or any network is not available to over 20 million Americans, and most of these people are from minority communities. Currently, as everything in our lives moves to virtual so fast, minority communities are left behind. The cost of the digital gap is that some of the most fundamental rights, such as jobs, education, and health, will not be available to our communities. Once a refugee and now hoping to change lives through technology and advocacy.

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 in nursing is a result of his ever-present desire to help others which was the reasoning behind his initial enlistment. He is currently working as a Nurse Technician at Harborview Medical Center's Trauma-Surgical ICU. As a student, Kevin is a member of Seattle University's 2020 Alfie cohort as well as an honor graduate from Tacoma Community College. As a soldier, he was a noncommissioned officer 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. As a future healthcare professional, Kevin hopes to use his leadership and knowledge of ineffective healthcare systems to do his part to promote equitable, ethical, and quality healthcare.

Yao Yao

Major: Computer Science

An international student from China, Yao is majoring in computer science at Seattle University. Yao hopes to study and work in cybersecurity or software engineering field to reduce the internet negativity and help build a friendly and caring society. Yao has experience caring for domestic rats. This experience makes her see the value in rats and many other animals that are not commonly considered when people talk about animal rights. She started researching and advocating for marginalized animals.

