

Civility and Ethics in Action
Alfie Scholars Senior Conference
Seattle University



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Civility and Ethics in Action

Presenters

Nico Seni
Shayna Guevara
Czarina Runatay
Heremela Gebrehiwot
Anna Au

Vy Vuong
Hanan Aman
Aster Gebregergis
Sahar Sadat

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

- 10:00–10:20 **Welcome**
Professor Paula Lustbader
- 10:20–10:40 **Confronting Gun Violence: Steps Toward Resolution**

Presenter: Nico Seni
Moderator: Ahmed Abdullah
- 10:40–11:00 **Thoughts and Prayers? No – Policy and Change**
Presenter: Shayna Guevara
Moderator: Mogan McKibbin
- 11:00–11:20 **The Discrimination in Healthcare Towards Black Women**
Presenter: Heremela Gebrehiwot
Moderator: Ayleah Bowser
- 11:20–11:50 **Break**
- 11:50–12:10 **Male Contraceptives and Unintended Pregnancies: A Critical Review of the Current Landscape and Future Directions**
Presenter: Czarina Runatay
Moderator: Sandra Hernandez
- 12:10–12:30 **The Cost of Health: Struggles and Triumphs of Affordable Healthcare**
Presenter: Anna Au
Moderator: Amy Nguyen
- 12:30– 1:15 **Lunch**

- 1:15–1:35 **Examining the Validity of Standardized Testing
in Gauging Student Performance**
Presenter: Vy Vuong
Moderator: Joyce Diakubama
- 1:35–1:55 **Women’s Right to Education in Ethiopia**
Presenter: Hanan Aman
Moderator: Marvin Espino
- 1:55–2:15 **Understanding and Solving Homelessness in
Seattle**
Presenter: Aster Gebregergis
Moderator: Stephanie Nehema
- 2:15–2:45 **Closing**
Professor Paula Lustbader

Presentation Descriptions

Confronting Gun Violence: Steps Toward Resolution

Presenter: Nico Seni

Gun violence, especially in cities like Seattle, significantly disrupts communities and daily life. This thesis argues that addressing gun violence effectively involves exploring various strategies, incorporating the role of civility, and developing practical solutions supported by clear reasoning.

My presentation will focus on strategies to effectively address the challenges posed by gun violence in Seattle. I will examine current patterns of violence and discuss practical solutions aimed at creating a safer community. By exploring various approaches and their potential impact, I hope to provide actionable recommendations for reducing gun violence and enhancing overall safety. The objective is to offer clear, practical solutions that can be implemented to improve the well-being of our community

Thoughts and Prayers? No – Policy and Change

Presenter: Shayna Guevara

The presence of gun violence in America has been a long-standing issue that is only getting worse. Mass shootings, which are defined as 4 or more individuals injured from a firearm, are happening more frequently and even worse, unpredictably. Through solutions like in-depth background checks, mental health assessments, and stricter access to firearms, it is our civil duty as a community to do our best to prevent more deaths and protect our future generations.

The Discrimination in Healthcare Towards Black Women

Presenter: Heremela Gebrehiwot

A Black woman should be able to have the confidence to enter a healthcare setting feeling safe. Black women are being discriminated against and fearing for their lives rather than feeling safe in the healthcare setting. They aren't receiving equal treatment, and it's unjustifiable. They have to worry that stereotypes could determine the amount of effort put into their health. This presentation will touch on the history of Black women's health disparity, consider perspectives on why it remains, and highlight solutions that connect with civility.

Male Contraceptives and Unintended Pregnancies: A Critical Review of the Current Landscape and Future Directions

Presenter: Czarina Runatay

Current male contraceptive methods often lack efficacy and acceptability, placing the burden of family planning and pregnancy prevention primarily on women. This disparity contributes to a high global incidence of unintended pregnancies, a public health issue with profound implications for people and societies. This presentation investigates the factors contributing to the stagnation in male contraceptive innovation, including market dynamics, cultural norms, social constraints, and health disparities. Thus, this study investigates the relationship between male contraceptive use, abortion rates, and legal frameworks in the United States, aiming to identify future directions for research and policy.

The Cost of Health: Struggles and Triumphs of Affordable Healthcare

Presenter: Anna Au

Consistency could help an individual achieve better health; persistency is vital for our country's pursuit of quality affordable healthcare for all. Healthcare should be a basic human right; however, not everyone in the U.S. can afford it, and millions are struggling to gain access due to inadequate or lack of insurance coverage, high out-of-pocket expenses, and the rising cost of treatment and medication. Many low-income and middle-class families have no choice but to delay treating their health issues or resort to inadequate treatment. It is our country's civil responsibility to prioritize every person's health and well-being equally, regardless of race, class, and financial status. We have a duty to each other to not only advocate for affordable healthcare for all, but to also build healthier, more equitable communities for future generations. In this presentation we will discuss the impact, causes, and viable solutions that could ease this crucial national issue and lead us to a healthier tomorrow with less worries and a little more vitality for all.

Examining the Validity of Standardized Testing in Gauging Student Performance

Presenter: Vy Vuong

In my presentation, I examine whether standardized testing accurately assesses student performance in today's educational landscape. While proponents argue for the benefits of these tests, I discuss their significant limitations, including perpetuating inequalities, failing to measure authentic progress, and harboring inherent biases. I propose more comprehensive alternatives that empower students to showcase their skills, reflect on their learning journeys, and foster continuous dialogue with educators. Ultimately, I advocate for moving away from an overreliance on standardized testing, suggesting more holistic and individualized methods of evaluation.

Women's Right to Education in Ethiopia

Presenter: Hanan Aman

Education is a human right essential for personal and societal empowerment, yet in Ethiopia, many women are denied this right. Only 57% of Ethiopian girls attend primary school, and this number drops to 31% in secondary school. Several factors contribute to this disparity: cultural norms that prioritize boys' education, early marriages affecting 40% of girls before age 18, and gender biases that discourage girls from pursuing education. Additionally, many girls lack basic school supplies and access to feminine hygiene products, leading to absenteeism and dropouts. To address these issues, the government should increase financial support for girls' education, and community programs should challenge harmful norms and raise awareness about the importance of educating girls. Providing sanitary products in schools and having female teachers as role models can significantly improve girls' educational outcomes by creating a supportive learning environment. These solutions can promote and protect the fundamental right to education that Ethiopian women deserve, benefiting both individuals and society as a whole.

Understanding and Solving Homelessness in Seattle

Presenter: Aster Gebregergis

The homelessness crisis in Seattle continues to escalate, affecting a wide area. This presentation discusses current Situation, Causes, and Solutions of homelessness in Seattle. It aims to provide a comprehensive overview of this critical issue. The homelessness crisis in cities like Seattle is severe and needs immediate action. Despite numerous efforts, including the establishment of various outreach programs and shelters, the problem persists. The root causes are multifaceted, encompassing economic factors such as unemployment,

underemployment, and the severe lack of affordable housing, compounded by rising rental costs. Social factors like mental health issues, substance abuse, and domestic violence further exacerbate the situation, while systemic issues such as inadequate social safety nets and discrimination contribute to the growing number of homeless individuals.

This presentation will delve into these explanations, supported by statistical data to provide a more comprehensive perspective of the situation. Furthermore, we will look into various solutions, with a focus on the Housing First method, which advocates providing permanent housing as a first step in addressing other issues. This strategy has proven successful in a variety of places and will be highlighted with convincing examples. We will also discuss the importance of improving access to mental health care and substance abuse treatment, alongside economic initiatives like job training programs and the development of affordable housing. Policy changes, including the enhancement of social safety nets and the implementation of anti-discrimination laws, are crucial for long-term impact.

The presentation concludes with a call to action, encouraging audience members to engage in volunteering and advocacy, supported by actionable steps and resources. Despite the challenges, homelessness is a solvable crisis through coordinated efforts and effective policy implementation.

Silenced Voices: The Ongoing Struggle of Afghan Women Against the Taliban's Oppression

Presenter: Sahar Sadat

Women in Afghanistan have faced a variety of challenges, and the Taliban's return has aggravated their preexisting problems. Some of the challenges they have faced and are still facing today include forced marriages, discrimination, inequality, oppression, and a lack of freedom. This presentation discusses the challenges faced by Afghan women, both historically and in recent times, particularly due to the resurgence of the Taliban. It emphasizes that while progress had been made in the past, the Taliban's strict interpretation of Islamic law and cultural values have severely limited women's rights and opportunities. It goes over possible solutions including supporting organizations that empower Afghan women, raising global awareness, and applying diplomatic pressure to protect women's rights. It emphasizes the importance of unity and collective action in restoring hope and dignity for Afghan women and promoting gender equality.

Presenter Biographies

Nico Seni

Major: Nursing

I am someone who has been directly affected by the rise of gun violence in my community. I am a native member of the community who has been living in South Seattle since I was born. My family has deep ties to the South Seattle community as my parents, uncles, aunts, and cousins mostly went to the same schools growing up. I have lost friends and family members to gun violence on these streets. Growing up in a challenging environment marked by gang involvement, drug dealing, and the struggle to make ends meet exposed me to a higher risk of gun violence, and I understood the risks that came with it. I've experienced the deep pain of losing loved ones to gun violence, and at times, that grief led to a desire for retribution, hoping to make others feel the same pain we endured. The cycle of violence perpetuates the ongoing issue in not only my community but all other marginalized communities, where resources are already scarce.

Shayna Guevara

Major: Nursing

Shayna is a senior nursing student who is passionate about living a purposeful life. As a mother of a 4-year-old, the biggest issue she thinks about is her daughter's safety. With the amount of mass shootings that happen in school settings, she feels more inclined to stress the importance of this topic and advocates for policy change concerning access to guns. Shayna will analyze gun violence in regards to mass shootings, and how it can affect anyone at any given time. By the end of this presentation, she hopes that we are more cognizant of the causes and byproducts of gun violence, and how it can be better prevented.

Heremela Gebrehiwot

Major: Nursing

Heremela Gebrehiwot is a senior nursing student at Seattle University whose ultimate goal is to become a family nurse practitioner. She's studied the discrimination against Black women in healthcare for the past two summers and has a motive to educate and advocate for these women. Heremela's goal is to provide comfort and assistance to diverse and underserved communities. She wants them to come into the healthcare setting feeling safe.

Czarina Runatay

Major: Nursing

Czarina Runatay, a Nursing major at Seattle University, exemplifies resilience and determination as a first-generation college student. Born and raised in the Philippines, her educational journey has sparked an innate curiosity about diverse cultures and a commitment to bridging healthcare gaps. She is dedicated to pursuing a career that addresses healthcare disparities and embraces humanity's diverse tapestry.

Her journey in healthcare includes extensive research and advocacy work. She has been actively involved with Youth Advocates and the Young Women's Association, where she worked to empower young women and promote reproductive health education. She has also collaborated with organizations to increase awareness and acceptance of male contraceptives, developing educational programs and community outreach initiatives.

Czarina's personal experiences with various birth control methods, from pills to injections and intrauterine devices (IUDs), while contending with health concerns such as hormonal imbalances, weight gain, blood clotting, and Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS), have fueled her advocacy for male contraceptives. She aims to address this crucial yet often overlooked facet of family planning, believing that expanding contraceptive options for men can significantly enhance the health and well-being of families and societies. Her story is a testament to the power of diversity and the importance of inclusive healthcare solutions.

Anna Au

Major: Diagnostic Ultrasound Specializing in Cardiology

Anna Au is a first-generation Asian-American college student, a former Covid-19 tester, and an Alfie Scholar studying Diagnostic Ultrasound specializing in Cardiology at Seattle University. Her long-term goal is to become either a cardio-thoracic surgeon or a medical doctor specializing in cardiovascular diseases. She was employed as a day-shift supervisor in the phlebotomy lab at Harborview Medical Center. As a patient AND healthcare worker with a decade of combined clinical and management experience, she knows all too well that timely diagnosis and preventive medicine are two of the most important factors when it comes to patient care. She aspires to provide pro-bono work to members of our community who are lacking access after completing her education. Anna is motivated by her own lived experiences to advocate for affordable care and accessibility. She hopes you will gain further insight into this critical issue from her presentation and walk away with a renewed sense of motivation as an

affordable-care advocate, hopeful that you feel empowered to stand up, reach out, and speak up on this basic human right, for yourself and each other

Vy Vuong

Major: Computer Science

Vy Vuong is a senior at Seattle University, majoring in Computer Science. She is currently conducting research in astrophysics data science and interning in web development. In her presentation, she critically examines the validity of standardized testing in evaluating student performance and offers potential solutions. With a deep appreciation for the importance of education, Vy views it as a crucial force in shaping future generations. Her commitment to questioning standardized testing reflects her dedication to enriching learning experiences for all students. She aims to excel in Computer Science and make meaningful contributions, particularly in the area of accessible education.

Hanan Aman

Major: Biochemistry

Hanan Aman was born and raised in Ethiopia until she was 19 years old, completing her high school education there. During this time, she witnessed first-hand the issues affecting her friends and family, which opened her eyes to the struggles and challenges that student, especially girls, face daily in pursuing education in Ethiopia. She aims to raise awareness and reduce the mistreatment of Ethiopian girls and women in education. Now she is a senior in the Biochemistry program at Seattle University. Hanan is interning at the Department of Health in Shoreline, where she focuses on mosquito identification, extraction, and PCD to separate DNA and RNA and detect arboviruses such as West Nile Virus. Her passion for women's right to education, especially in Ethiopia, is driven by the challenges faced by her close friends and family.

Aster Gebregergis

Major: Nursing

Aster is a senior transfer nursing student at Seattle University. She is deeply concerned about Seattle's rising rate of homelessness. She chose to discuss this topic because she was homeless for seven months when she first arrived in America and knows many homeless individuals. She has witnessed how those who are homeless are stigmatized and ignored by society. Aster's observations, personal experiences, and studies on the subject all influenced her perspective. Her passion is advocating for homeless people, who face numerous challenges. Her presentation's goal is to raise awareness about the issue and propose potential solutions.

Sahar Sadat

Major: Nursing

Sahar is a senior nursing student. She was born and raised in Afghanistan. She is determined to speak up on behalf of Afghan women and the daily struggles they endure in their quest for basic human rights. Given her personal experience and upbringing in Afghanistan, she has a deep understanding of the cultural, social, and political factors that contribute to the discrimination and unequal treatment of women in the country. By combining her personal experiences and passion, she hopes to make a meaningful impact in raising awareness of the challenges faced by Afghan women and contribute to the larger movement for gender equality in Afghanistan and beyond.

