ETHICS UPDATE
Newsletter of the Ethics Institute at Dartmouth College
Fall 2009

FALL DINNER DISCUSSION
Wednesday, October 28th at 6:00

Irene Kacandes, Professor of German and Comparative Literature
Dartmouth College
Author of Daddy’s War: Greek American Stories

Earlier this year Irene Kacandes published Daddy’s War: Greek American Stories, a text she labels a “paramemoir” to signal its similarities to the memoir genre, but also its dissimilarities. In narrative form she recounts having an indistinct sense of her father’s past in wartime and she narrates certain key events that eventually led her to researching the “truth” of what happened to her paternal family in Greece during the Second World War and the Axis Occupation. That research involved interviewing family members of several generations and of course historical research. However, it also involved theorizing about the effects of trauma on those individuals and the stories they told. The final form mixes genres and experiments with “voice” as Kacandes tries to strike the right tone for communicating both the tragedies of what happened to previous generations and the damaging way those tragedies affected her own.

In her conversation with us, Kacandes would like to share some of the ethical dilemmas she faced as she confronted the reality of some key players no longer being alive to tell their sides of the story or of some who were alive but monolingual not being able to vet what she was writing in English; of her father’s increasing dementia and the fact that he couldn’t fully understand her project; and more generally of the difficulty of telling a morally complex story within an American cultural context that craves simplification.

6:00 – 6:30 cash bar
6:30 – 7:30 dinner
7:30 – 9:00 discussion

Subsidized cost of the dinner: $24.00
RSVP by October 20th
Make check(s) payable to the Ethics Institute
Mail to: Stephanie Kvam
Ethics Institute
Dartmouth College
HB 6031 Haldeman Ctr, 2nd Floor
27 N. Main Street
Hanover, NH 03755

Contact the Ethics Institute for more info:
603-646-1263 or Ethics.Institute@Dartmouth.edu
The start of any new academic year is an exciting time, but this year is a particularly exciting time for all of us at Dartmouth as we welcome a new President and a renewed vocation toward our mission as educators. The constant pull toward finding better ways to integrate ethics into the fabric of Dartmouth life is a challenge that we enjoy. The summer term provided us with an opportunity to partner with several departments across campus in offering ethics training for staff from Muhimbili University in Tanzania. Daima Bukini spent two weeks assimilating a wide range of best practices for institutional research. It was a pleasure to work with Daima and, by extension, her staff at Muhimbili. We look forward to continued collaboration.

Another collaboration, this one much closer to home, is being formed between the Ethics Institute and the state of New Hampshire. As a newly appointed member of Justice David Souter’s Civic Education Task Force, I will be working with a small group of educators, politicians, lawyers and judges who will examine the state’s commitment to preparing NH youth for engaged participation in citizenship. I will be taking the information gathered from this task force and offering several faculty discussion groups as well as day-long events for local teachers on integrating citizenship into the curricular goals of every school. Additionally, the students in the Dartmouth Ethics Society will be volunteering their expertise in ethics debate at several local schools, helping the students to wrestle with the ethical dimensions of public life.

The on-going need for ethics education, discussion, research and debate grows every year, and our programming aims to satisfy that growing need. Over the past few years I have expanded our offerings to include every professional, graduate and undergraduate program as well as serving on the executive boards of the two premiere national ethics associations. Within the next year we will begin a new strategic plan that will position the Ethics Institute for growth within Dartmouth’s academic mission in the 21st century.

Please visit: [www.dartmouth.edu/~ethics/events.html](http://www.dartmouth.edu/~ethics/events.html) for complete information on these events.
The Dartmouth Ethics Society, a group of undergraduate students interested in ethical issues, is once again competing in the Association of Practical and Professional Ethics’s annual Ethics Bowl competition. The national event has become so popular among college students that two years ago the competition was restructured to regional competitions, with those winners qualifying for the national competition. Dartmouth has placed in the national competition every year for the past five years.

The debate-style competition uses cases that are taken from the news within the past year and the team of three to five students must develop an argument for a specific position. The team meets with Aine Donovan, the DES faculty advisor, at least once a week to strategize and research their cases and positions. The regional competition will be held at Marist College in Poughkeepsie, NY on November 14th. The national competition will be held at the APPE national conference, in Cincinnati, OH on March 4th, 2010.

A case from this year’s competition follows:

PARKLIFE

Desperate Kenyans, who, due to climate change, have seen a dramatic drop in their food and water supplies, are settling illegally in their country’s national parks. Around 15,000 squatters currently live throughout Kenya’s protected parks. In order to make heavily forested areas apt for cultivation and cattle-grazing, settlers have deforested almost 1 million acres.

Food insecurity has been the main cause behind these settlements, yet the consequence of cutting down protected forests is to put Kenyan people in an even more precarious situation. Because trees “promote the formation of clouds – cutting them down inevitably leads to lower rainfall.” In turn, lower rainfall adversely affects agriculture and food security. The indiscriminate clearing of many of Africa’s forests has already caused the desertification of the African landscape. Mourning the recent disappearance of a local river, a Kenyan farmer worriedly complained: “My life will be completely ruined if I cannot get water for us and our livestock, our land will turn into a desert. We will all die.”

Thus far, the Kenyan government has responded to the so-called assault on its parks by vowing to add more armed guards and electric fences to prevent illegal settlements. However, the situation in Kenya defies easy solutions. While many squatters are hungry Kenyans in search of sustenance, allowing the poor to extract resources out of nature parks will not solve Kenya’s problems. As the director of Kenya’s Wildlife Service has argued, “Kenya is destroying itself. The population has reached an unsustainable level. We are killing ourselves slowly by destroying the forests and settling there.” Complicating the issue still further, many of the current settlers belong to indigenous groups who claim to have lived in the forest for generations while allegedly harvesting its resources in a sustainable manner. Furthermore, the label “squatters” has even been called into question by those who claim to have land titles in the protected areas.

Electric fencing might prevent additional settlements in Kenyan parks, and the removal of current squatters may help prevent further destruction of Kenya’s flora and fauna. However, these measures do little to address the underlying cause of these illegal settlements: food scarcity and climate change. It is unclear what the Kenya government can do to address climate change, given that global warming can be partly attributed to developed nations overuse of ecological resources. Because the lifestyle in developing nations (in the form of copious carbon emissions) has unavoidably impacted the whole earth, the negative consequences of global warming experienced in the developing world constitute the “largest health inequity of our time.”


Invitation for Faculty - Sixth Annual Seminar for “Ethics Across the Curriculum”

The Ethics Institute is pleased to offer a faculty seminar that has as its goal the integration of ethics into every discipline and department at Dartmouth College. The EATC program has been generously funded by Skip Battle ('66), Gerry Phillips ('47) and Stacey Phillips ('83). The seminar is limited to 15 participants, so please register early for a spot in the class by calling the Ethics Institute at 646-1263.

October 19th (Mon.): 6-9:00PM; Ethics Institute Conference Room, Haldeman Center
Presentations of past participant’s projects, and introduction of new participants.

November 11th (Wed.): 6-9:00PM; Ethics Institute Conference Room, Haldeman Center
Introductory session; what do we mean by ethics, and how can we link it to our specific disciplines?

December 7th (Mon.): 6-9:00PM; Ethics Institute Conference Room, Haldeman Center
Ethics in higher education; what is the appropriate understanding of the call for inclusion of ethics into the curriculum? What do students need, developmentally?

January 11th (Mon.): 6-9:00PM; Ethics Institute Conference Room, Haldeman Center
Participants will receive a (small) introductory ethics book that will serve as the basis for discussion on ethical theory.

February 8th (Mon.) 6-9:00PM; Ethics Institute Conference Room, Haldeman Center
This session will expand upon the introduction to ethical theory and include contemporary challenges to the prevailing models of decision-making; linking theory with practice.

March 3rd (Wed.): 6-9:00PM; Ethics Institute Conference Room, Haldeman Center
This session will explore the pedagogical approach of case study for integrating ethics into the curriculum. [Readings will include articles on the approach as well as a case study that will serve as the basis of discussion in the seminar]

For further information please contact Aine Donovan at Aine.Donovan@dartmouth.edu.