

Think again, interculturality

Master Class on Intercultural Ethics at Tilburg University, November 2008

Invitation and Call for Papers

The *Centre for Intercultural Ethics*, CIE, based at Tilburg University, the Netherlands (<http://www.tilburguniversity.nl/cie>) invites PhD students and postdocs to submit a draft proposal for inclusion in its first master class on intercultural ethics. The deadline for proposals is June 1, 2008. The master class will take place on November 5-7, 2008.

The CIE is honoured to announce that two eminent scholars in the field of intercultural ethics have agreed to lead the master class: professor Gavin D'Costa from Bristol University, UK, who has written on ethical issues from within what might be termed a well defined religious community and professor Walter Lesch, from Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium, who has written on several intercultural topics.

Over a two day period on campus, the master class will provide participants with the opportunity to meet with other scholars in the field, as well as contribute to the ongoing debates and discussions that arise out of a desire to speak and think 'inter-culturally'. Participants will also be given an opportunity to present an academic paper on a topic of their choice and gain feedback from experts in the field. In order to ensure vivid exchange and debate, the number of participants is limited to 20. A selection of the papers will be published in the recently founded CIE Series 'Intercultural Ethics' (Peeters Publishers, Louvain) in 2009.

All submitted proposals will be assessed by a committee and the chosen participants will be informed of the decision before July 1st. The deadline for submission of the full paper is October 8, 2008. During the actual master class, participants will receive feedback on their work from professors D'Costa and Lesch.

The aim of the master class is to rethink some of the current ethical issues from a specific intercultural perspective, thus taking seriously both the task of ethics to frame ethical issues adequate to the practical problems at stake and implementing the intention to reflect ethical problems whilst recognizing the plurality and mixing of cultures in Western societies.

The CIE does not aim at confronting values in different cultures as such but seeks to examine moral issues as they arise in diverse Western societies. Within this context, we understand *interculturality* as an evaluative term, intending the genuine living together of people from different cultural settings and practices. It is distinguished from *multiculturality* as a descriptive term, which expresses the actual cultural diversity in a society. This specific approach explains the programmatic title of our master class --*Think again, interculturality*-- which we will develop into a yearly event in collaboration with CIE's international partners: *Zentrum für Interreligiöse Studien* (ZIS), Otto-Friedrich-University, Bamberg, Germany; *Centro per le Scienze Religiose* (FBK.sr), Trento, Italy; *Irish School of Ecumenics*, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland.

Practical information:

- CIE master class November, 5-7, 2008; first meeting on Wednesday, Nov. 5, 17.00 hours; closure on Friday, Nov. 7, at 16.30 hours.
- We are looking for contributions on practical/specific issues as well as those that focus on more theoretical intercultural concerns:
 - *Practical* issues such as the need to rethink moral issues as they might arise in the context of a Western hospital, for instance, is a key intercultural issue. How should we understand the term 'autonomy' when confronted with cultural settings and the hierarchy of moral values of Turkish patients; or the area of 'little ethics' - etiquette in the public domain - where on an every day basis cultural and moral frictions take place between citizens and residents of different (cultural or sub cultural) backgrounds. Papers that address these practical issues are most welcome, especially if they link up intercultural theories with intercultural experiences. In this context, Frans Vosman, who holds the chair of christian ethics and spirituality, will present a paper on the theme of *honour* as it is perceived and interpreted in different cultures, thereby highlighting its capacity to contribute to an intercultural political ethics.
 - Papers that address the more *theoretical* aspects of intercultural ethics are also welcome. In particular, the committee is looking for papers that attempt to show the limits of various theories as a means to understanding and making sense of intercultural issues, such as the clash of high theories, e.g. a neo-kantian theory of justice with a 'religious based' theory, developed in the context of Muslims legal scholars; or the comparison of ethical theories on the concept of community. Papers should demonstrate the relevance (i.e., strengths and limitations) of intercultural theories by giving practical, contemporary examples. In this context, Jan Jans, director of the CIE, will present a paper outlining the current *status quaestionis* and the stakes of a normative intercultural ethics.
- Enrolment: If you are interested in participating in this master class, please send an email to the assistant of the CIE, mrs. Marcia Smits (cie@uvt.nl) before August 1st, 2008.
- Call for papers: any ethicist at PhD or postdoc level is welcome to participate. We will invite a limited number of scholars who have sent us a draft of their paper (800 words max., stating problem(s), question(s), theories that are used, plus some (extra) info on your present research: deadline June 1, 2008) to submit a complete paper before October 8, 2008. The paper in its final form should not exceed 8500 words, including footnotes. All papers that are to be presented in the master class should not exceed 20 mins. Together with the contributions of D'Costa, Lesch, Jans and Vosman, the CIE will publish the paper in its final form if it satisfies the scholarly standards of its committee.
- Costs: the conference fee is €250,00 and comprises accommodation for 2 or 3 nights, full board, as well as transport to and from the campus. There are 3 grants available of €400,00 each for scholars from Eastern Europe and others who can demonstrate the need for it. It is expected that this bursary will cover the conference fee and contribute to travel expenses. All conference fees should be paid before October 1st, 2008. In case of illness, or any other extenuating circumstances, payments will be reimbursed with a € 50,00 deduction. However, all cancellations must be confirmed before November 1st; otherwise the paid amount will not be reimbursed.
- Language: English, both for the master class and the publication. A paper in its final form shall be handed in to the editor only when your own native speaking translator/corrector approves it of.
- Further information: for practical issues, please contact mrs. Marcia Smits, tel. 0031-13-4662782 / email cie@uvt.nl; for background issues please contact dr. Jan Jans, Director CIE, tel. 0031-13-4662595/ email: jan.jans@uvt.nl