



ETHICAL FOUNDATION

CIVIL DELIBERATION

PRINCIPLED PERSUASION

MORAL FORUM

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA



Zac Simon and Chase Espy,
Moral Forum Spring 2006 champions

“The best solution to today’s conflicts over culture is to teach the conflicts themselves, making them a part of our object of study and using them as a new kind of organizing principle to give curriculum clarity and focus.”

– Gerald Graff
Professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago
Author of *Beyond the Culture War*

UNIVERSITY HONORS 101: MORAL FORUM

*Join the one-of-a-kind class that former students have called
“an exhilarating and amazing experience”
and the “most fulfilling university course to date.”*

ABOUT THE COURSE

Effective citizenship requires a well-developed capacity for thoughtful moral discourse. In today’s society, dominated by constant exposure to polarized media, the potential for developing such discourse is seriously undermined. Two-minute, split-screen “conflict” segments on national news networks reinforce the polarization of the public and contribute to the decline of public trust in the possibility of meaningful dialogue.

This course equips students with the skills to understand multiple perspectives on complex issues, evaluate and respond to moral claims, and make reasoned judgments. Moral Forum fosters open-mindedness and conviction while distinguishing between making reasoned judgments about the moral legitimacy of views and being intolerant or disrespectful toward others. This class challenges students to question the absolutes they previously understood as the “right answers” to complex questions.

COURSE STRUCTURE

Moral Forum is organized around the analysis of one controversial moral resolution. In teams of two, students conduct research, attend regular lectures, and construct position statements in preparation for the Moral Forum debate tournament in October. Each Moral Forum tournament culminates with the presentation of \$10,000 in scholarships.

INTERESTED STUDENTS

We encourage you to add Moral Forum to your fall schedule by registering for UH 101: Moral Forum (select any one of the eight sections). For more information on Moral Forum or the Center for Ethics & Social Responsibility, visit cesr.ua.edu.

MORAL FORUM RESOLUTIONS

A hallmark of Moral Forum is the intense focus on one resolution each semester. Students delve into the arguments on both sides of the resolution, confront their own assumptions, refine their points, study the facts, and use their knowledge and the claims of moral philosophy to construct informed positions.

PAST RESOLUTIONS

Physician-assisted Suicide – In order to be a moral and just society, the United States should permit doctors to supply the means of death to competent, informed patients who are terminally ill, who have voluntarily requested a doctor’s assistance in dying, and whose requests have survived treatment for depression.

Legalization of Organ Selling – In order to be a moral and just society, the United States should permit the sale of human organs so as to allow monetary compensation for cadaveric organs as well as organs (such as kidneys) from the living when removal does not unduly jeopardize the donor’s health.

Illegal Immigration – In order to be a moral and just society, the United States Congress should pass the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act. The DREAM Act would provide a path to citizenship for illegal immigrants who entered the country before age 16, have lived here at least five years, have no criminal record and have graduated from high school or have been admitted to college. Immigrants would be granted provisional legal status during which they must attend college or serve in the military before being eligible for citizenship.

Wal-Mart – The continuing success and expansion of the Wal-Mart Corporation has led to a more just society for American citizens.

Minimum Legal Drinking Age – In order to foster a more moral society, the federal government should lower the legal drinking age from 21 to 18.



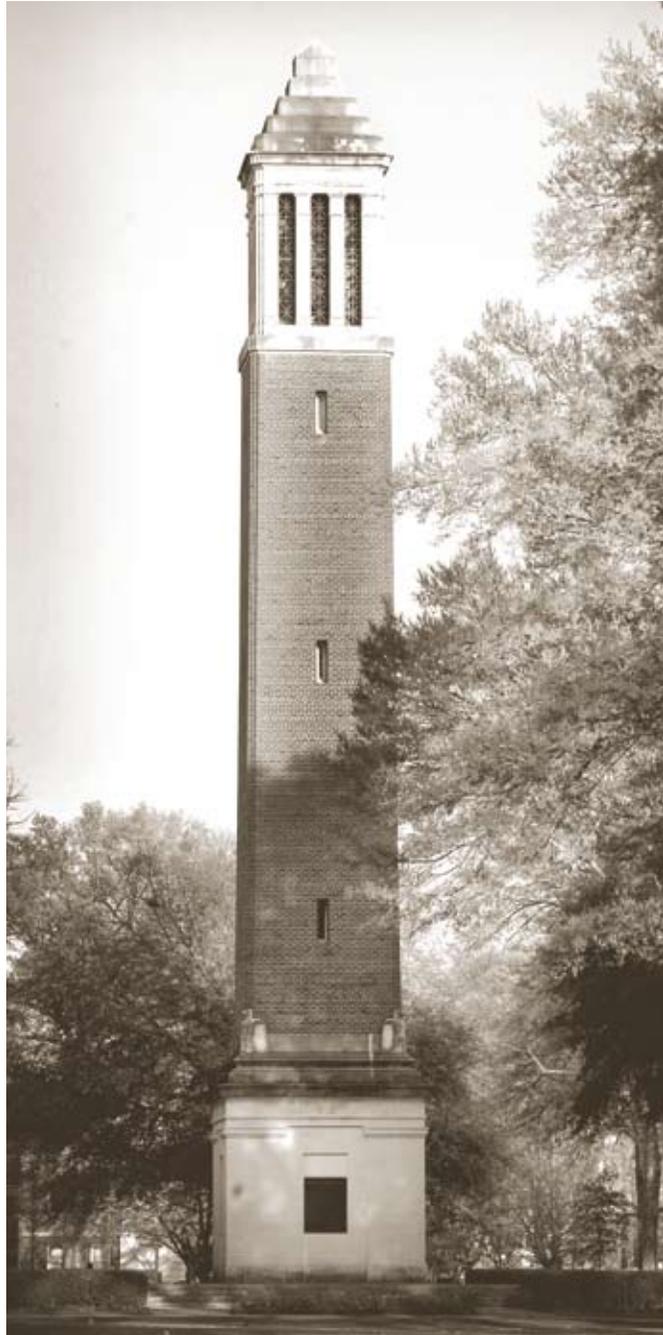
Connor Johnson and Joshua Davenport,
Moral Forum 2007 Champions

“Moral Forum not only increased my public speaking and critical thinking abilities, but also opened my eyes to our responsibility as citizens to actively examine the dilemmas facing our country.”

– Connor Johnson
Moral Forum 2007 Champion

CONTEXT OF MORAL FORUM

Moral Forum is a founding initiative of the Center for Ethics & Social Responsibility. In fall 2005, the Center began establishing a university-based program that would support the study of ethics and develop projects to nurture social responsibility and reflective, thoughtful citizenship. Believing The University of Alabama has a critical role to play in preparing students to serve as effective, engaged, and ethical citizens, CESR seeks to assist students in developing a distinctive definition of moral and civic maturity, making the values and skills of citizenship a hallmark of a University of Alabama education.





“A culture of oversimplified explanations and unquestioned certainty about moral issues undermines the ability of young people to think independently about their positions and commitments. Moral Forum helps students understand how to evaluate and respond to moral claims, remain open-minded and interested in ideas, and overcome a reluctance to have their views and beliefs subjected to serious scrutiny by others.”

– Stephen F. Black
Director, CESR



Center for **ETHICS**
SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY
at THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA

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