

MIND, TECHNOLOGY, AND SOCIETY

Seminar Series

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Monday, March 13, 2017 — KL 232 — 3:00PM-4:30PM

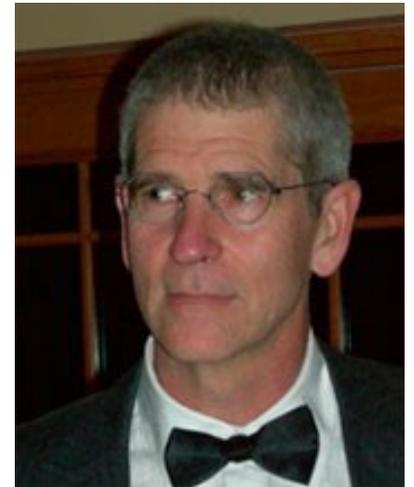
Kirk Ludwig, Ph.D.

Indiana University

Professor of Philosophy

“Collective Responsibility and Climate Change”

Human induced global warming is the most significant environment challenge the human species has faced in the long history of civilization. Who is to blame? Who is responsible, morally, for responding to it insofar as we can? Arguably, we human beings as a group (and some of us more than others) are collectively morally responsible for having caused and continuing to contribute to global warming (for none of us can do it alone), and arguably we are collectively responsible for doing something about it (for, again, none of us can do it alone). In this talk, I take a look at the grounds for the claim that we bear both backwards looking collective responsibility for global warming and forward looking collective responsibility for doing something about it, and at what the relation is between the claim that we bear *collective* responsibility and our *individual* responsibilities. I am particularly interested in what light recent work on the structure of collective action and shared intention, and especially the content and structure of we-intentions, can shed on these questions. I will develop an account of the difference that shared intention makes with respect to bringing about harms jointly to the burden that each participant bears for the harm caused in simple cases of backwards looking responsibility to do or refrain from doing. Shared intention, I will argue, makes each participant equally responsible in full for the harms done, and not just in proportion to their causal contribution. Then I will consider how this can be projected to the case of forward looking responsibility to do or refrain from doing in order to prevent or ameliorate harm, prior to the formation of a shared intention, again, first, in connection with simple cases. Then I will consider somewhat briefly the complications presented by a real-world case like climate change and the role of institutions, governments, states, and assignments of social and institutional roles in assignments of responsibility.



Professor Ludwig, a Full Professor at Indiana University, Bloomington, works on foundational issues in the philosophy of language (especially logical form and semantics), the philosophy of mind and action, epistemology, and metaphysics, though his interests extend to every area of philosophical inquiry. He taught at the University of Florida from 1990 to 2010 and was the Colonel Alan R. and Margaret G. Crow CLAS Term Professor from 2008-2010, when he joined the philosophy department at Indiana University, Bloomington.

Please contact David Noelle (dnoelle@ucmerced.edu) or Russ McBride (russ.mcbride@ucmerced.edu) for more information.