

Humanist Chaplaincy at Rutgers University

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New Humanist Chaplaincy at Rutgers Sets First Event For September 9

The new Humanist Chaplaincy at Rutgers, approved last spring by the Religious Life Council, announces its first event, a Humanist Salon at the Raritan Lounge in the Student Activities Center, 613 George Street, College Avenue Campus, on Wednesday, September 9, 2009 from 7:30-9:30pm. The Salon is for those students, faculty and staff who are interested in forming a Humanist community at Rutgers. There are currently four Humanist Chaplaincies at universities nationally, the oldest of which is the 32-year-old Humanist Chaplaincy at Harvard University.

Barry Klassel, the newly appointed Humanist Chaplain at Rutgers explained, "There is no required dogma. Humanists find wonder in the natural universe and think that human beings are best understood as part of nature. We base our values on human need, which includes taking care of our planet. Humanists rely on science and rationality for understanding how the world works and for creating technologies that enhance our lives. The arts are also a source of wisdom about human experience and provide an artistic way to express ourselves."

Humanism is for those who don't believe in gods, spirits or an afterlife, but who share a strong set of beliefs and values for the here and now. Humanists are often agnostics, atheists, freethinkers or secular people who espouse an ethical, secular worldview. The Chaplaincy will offer opportunities for students to explore the Humanist philosophy and to express themselves freely in the company of like-minded people.

(more)

Dr. Gary Brill, Campus Coordinator for the new Chaplaincy, and Instructor in the Psychology Department, believes there is a need for such a group at Rutgers. Dr. Brill said, “There is no other comprehensive group [at Rutgers] for those outside traditional religious faiths. According to a recent survey from **(must cite source)**, nearly 10% of Americans have little or no belief in a supernatural deity. In a university environment, it’s likely that the percentage is higher.”

Meetings of the Chaplaincy will provide opportunities for friendships, open discussions, fun and inspiration. Participants will help to plan the activities, which might include community service projects, talks by prominent scientists, celebrations of Humanist holidays, family events, book clubs, performances by campus groups, social outings, etc. A partial list of fall events includes: The Humanist Salon on September 9; a late October talk by Harvard Humanist Chaplain Greg Epstein about his new book, Good Without God; and, a December party celebrating HumanLight, the winter holiday created by Humanists. The complete fall schedule will be presented at the September 9th Salon and on the website, www.rutgershumanist.org. Mr. Klassel can be reached at rutgershumanist@gmail.com.



(High resolution photo available for download at:

http://www.steelmanonline.com/hires/Barry_Klassel.jpg)

Caption:

The Rutgers Humanist Chaplain, Barry Klassel, is a Humanist Celebrant, certified by the Humanist Society of the American Humanist Association.

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