

## ZICKLIN CENTER FOR BUSINESS ETHICS RESEARCH SEMINAR SERIES

**SPEAKER:** Americus Reed II, Assistant Professor of Marketing  
The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania

**TITLE:** "A Grotesque and Dark Beauty: How the Self-Importance of Moral Identity and Mechanisms of Moral Disengagement Influence Cognitive, Emotional and Behavioral Reactions to War"

**DATE:** March 1, 2005 – Noon – 1:30 PM – Room 641 JMHH

*If you plan to attend and would like a lunch, please email Gale Davis,  
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### ABSTRACT

"A Grotesque and Dark Beauty: How the Self-Importance of Moral Identity and Mechanisms of Moral Disengagement Influence Cognitive, Emotional and Behavioral Reactions to War"  
By Americus Reed II

Three studies examine self-regulatory mechanisms (moral disengagement and moral identity) that drive emotional and behavioral reactions towards the consequences of war. The negative relationship between moral disengagement and feelings of guilt and shame toward invading Iraq significantly decreased for those people who had a highly self-important moral identity (Study 1). Two additional studies replicated this effect and showed that it was mediated by moral judgments that reflect the stringency of psychological group boundaries. Moral identity decreased the positive relationship between moral disengagement and the perceived morality of vengeful responses toward out-group members responsible for the September 11th attacks, which lead to stronger feelings of pride, strength, determination and inspiration (Study 2). Moral identity decreased the positive relationship between moral disengagement and the perceived morality of supportive responses toward in-group members responsible for the Abu Ghraib prison abuse, which led to donating money to a charity that benefits the US military (Study 3). We discuss these findings in terms of contemporary socio-cognitive theories of moral thought and behavior and the mitigation of inter-group conflict.

### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

**Americus Reed II** received a B.B.A in strategic management, an M.S. in organizational behavior, and M.S. in market research methods from Georgia State University. Subsequently, he worked for several years in the telecommunications and logistics industries, respectively. He completed a Ph.D. with a major in marketing from the University of Florida in 2000. His research examines the effects of social identity on consumer decisions; the impact of social influence mechanisms on brand preference; impression management and self-presentational behavior; social identification and group dynamics. His teaching background includes organizational behavior, marketing research methods (undergraduate) and consumer psychology (undergraduate, MBA-and Ph.D. level). Professor Reed was appointed Assistant Professor of Marketing in 2000 and received the Arthur Anderson term Assistant Professor of Marketing in 2004 at the Wharton Business School of the University of Pennsylvania.