

WHARTON/PENN FACULTY PRESENT A PANEL DISCUSSION ON

“RESPONSIBILITY AND THE FINANCIAL CRISIS OF 2008”

**MONDAY, DECEMBER 7, 4:30-6:30 PM,
COLLOQUIUM HALL, 8TH FLOOR HUNTSMAN HALL**

**[SPECIAL SESSION FOR MBA STUDENTS IN “ETHICS AND RESPONSIBILITY,”
BUT OPEN TO THE ENTIRE WHARTON AND PENN COMMUNITY]**

PARTICIPANTS:

First-year MBA students in LGST 652, “Ethics and Responsibility,” and the following faculty:

INTRODUCTION:

Thomas Robertson

(Dean, The Wharton School)

MODERATOR:

Eric Orts

(Wharton Legal Studies and Business Ethics Department)

PANELISTS:

Franklin Allen

(Wharton Finance Department)

William Bratton

(Penn Law School, visiting professor from Georgetown University Law Center)

Mauro Guillén

(Wharton Management Department)

Diana Robertson

(Wharton Legal Studies and Business Ethics Department)

Amy Sepinwall

(Wharton Legal Studies and Business Ethics Department)

David Zaring

(Wharton Legal Studies and Business Ethics Department)

Larry Zicklin

(Clinical professor of business ethics at NYU’s Stern School; former chairman of the board, Neuberger Berman; and senior fellow at Wharton)

DESCRIPTION:

Much has been written in the press and elsewhere about the causes of the global financial crisis of 2008, and responsibility has been ascribed to individuals and entities as varied as the United States of America, China, regulators in different countries, investment bankers, individual subprime mortgage purchasers, hedge funds, credit rating agencies, international banking institutions, citizens who elect Republicans or Democrats, and business schools. The purpose of this panel is to explore the normative dimensions and policy implications of these ascriptions of responsibility. To that end, the panelists will explore questions such as:

- Where does moral blame for the financial crisis reside, if anywhere and with anyone? How ought it to be apportioned? What, if anything, would count as an appropriate sanction for the wrongdoers?
- Did the crisis, or part of it, result from a confluence of unfortunate circumstances for which no one is to blame? If so, what should be done to counter attempts to ascribe blame on individuals or collectivities who are innocent?
- Is there some type of moral responsibility that some or perhaps all of the relevant players bear? What are the grounds of this kind of responsibility, and what does it entail?
- What obligations or constraints is it fair to impose upon the individual or collective players who may have materially contributed to the crisis, but whose contributions were not wrongful?
- Should a diagnosis of the causes of the crisis prompt a change in the economic incentive structure and/or ethos of those working in the financial industry?
- What sort of regulatory reform is warranted?
- How can or should business schools adapt their curricula to forestall the forces underpinning this crisis – and perhaps aid future leaders in preventing or addressing future crises?
- Does the financial crisis reveal more profound injustices or imbalances with respect to the prominence and power of Wall Street versus Main Street?
- Does reflection on the causes of and responsibility for the financial crisis enable new social initiatives or present new opportunities that may not have arisen without it?