



The W. Maurice Young Centre for Applied Ethics is pleased to present:

## **Dr. Waheed Hussain**



Waheed Hussain is an assistant professor at the University of Pennsylvania in the Wharton School. He holds an A.B. in Philosophy from Princeton University and a Ph.D. in Philosophy from Harvard University. A former fellow at the Safra Center for Ethics at the Kennedy School of Government, he works on issues in moral and political philosophy, particularly as they arise in economic life. He has published articles about the nature of freedom and autonomy, the ethical significance of class, and more democratic alternatives to the Anglo-American model of corporate governance, such as the “codetermination” system in Germany. His current research focuses on the morality of ethical consumerism and of consumer culture more generally.

### **Is ethical consumerism an objectionable form of vigilantism?**

Ethical consumerism has become an increasingly prominent feature of social life, as new forms of technology have allowed consumers to use their choices in the marketplace to address various environmental, labor and trade concerns. But little attention has been paid to the moral issues raised by ethical consumerism. If consumers are morally permitted to use their buying power to pressure companies to treat animals better or to reduce carbon emissions, does this mean that they can pressure pharmacies not to stock the “morning after” pill? Can they pressure Wal-Mart not to sell books or music that they find offensive? Even in cases where consumers are pressuring companies to do the right thing, don’t their actions amount to an objectionable form of vigilantism? In this talk, I will provide an overview of the normative debate about ethical consumerism and then develop a view about when ethical consumerism is morally permissible and when it is not. My main claim is that any justified form of ethical consumerism must respect democratic ideals, such as representation, deliberation and respect for formal democratic politics.

**Please [email](#) for details if you would like to attend  
February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2012, 12:00-3:00 pm.**

---

For more information on the CAE’s Public Lecture Series, visit

<http://ethics.ubc.ca>

and click on “News & Events”

