

Anthony Comegna ([00:13](#)):

(music).

Anthony Comegna ([00:20](#)):

You all probably know Bill Glod by now, one of IHS's resident philosophers who has long worked with graduate students and faculty alike, including serving as our longtime director of the summer graduate research fellowship, the SuRF program, but to my great shock, I recently realized that in over a year of ideas and progress now, we've never talked about an entire type of programs that we offer, the academic research seminar. Bill has recently taken charge over those programs and has a ton of really interesting things coming up so I wanted to welcome him back on the show to give you all an overview of what you can apply for, what you can expect during the events, and what you can eagerly anticipate over the coming months. All right. Great. Well Bill, welcome back on the show. Always good to have you here.

Bill Glod ([01:09](#)):

Thanks for having me on.

Anthony Comegna ([01:11](#)):

I think pretty much everybody in the audience probably knows you, if not knows who you are, certainly since we had you on to talk about your book before. By the way, how is that... I believe when we had you on, it was still a manuscript and it was coming out in a month or so. So how has the book, *Why It's OK...* Remind me of the title. *Why It's OK Not To Do Good* or *Why It's OK...*

Bill Glod ([01:41](#)):

*Why It's OK Not To Do Good*. That'll be the next title. It's *Why It's OK to Make Bad Choices*. It was released in August and I think I've been happy with the level of interest there seems to be in it. For those of you in the audience who might be interested in the title, it's available on Amazon. Paperbacks go for under \$25. Let me just do my little sales pitch here, and it's I believe a few dollars cheaper if you go through the Rutledge website, but the price fluctuates a little bit, but if you all are interested, I would certainly love to talk about it and we can follow up if you want.

Anthony Comegna ([02:22](#)):

I'm curious to know real quick here. What has the feedback been like because I remember when you were on and we talked about the book, one thing I said was that people could easily, I could see them construing this as your standard libertarian excuse for why people don't have to really care about how they treat each other. So what has been the general response to your overall thesis that you don't have to be perfect all the time and the important thing is that you learn from mistakes?

Bill Glod ([02:50](#)):

Yeah. I think that the response has been very positive. Now granted, it's probably a bit of a sampling bias since a lot of them are people who already know me, either friends or through the IHS network, but yeah, I mean, those who have looked into the book seem to agree with me. I'm waiting for the people to really push back though. Those are the ones that I'm waiting for.

Anthony Comegna ([03:15](#)):

Well, so I started by saying pretty much everybody here listening probably knows you in some capacity or another. You've been around IHS for quite a while now, but most people probably don't know that you have recently taken over one of our main program types, the academic research seminar. So I wanted to have you on to talk about what exactly those are. We haven't covered them on the show. Tell us what are the IHS academic research seminars?

Bill Glod ([03:44](#)):

Sure. So the academic research seminars, or ARS's for short since we have to have acronyms at IHS. So they are sort of things that we used to do. We pair them with in-person conferences. I'll talk about the new format in a little bit, but first, I maybe just want to talk about some of the main goals of ARS's. So I would say that they have two main goals. One of them is to convene a set of panels where expert scholars on a given topic can present either part of a working paper or something from their body of previous research. So these function much like conference panels where usually, three panelists have about 15 minutes each to present, sometimes followed by a bit of moderated discussion and always followed by questions from the audience for the remaining time. A focus area of these ARS panel presentations is on questions and matters to be explored more with regards to the topic at hand.

Bill Glod ([04:51](#)):

So it's intended as an opportunity to highlight challenges for future work, future work to address rather than rest content with sort of any orthodoxy on the topic. Now, speakers of course will come with their own set of views, but the aim is not to "win an argument," and nor are these panels meant to be echo chamber. So we welcome diverse viewpoints or at least representations of diverse viewpoints among speakers and the audience members. What makes these events unique, I think, is the second goal where participants in the audience are asked well ahead of time to bring their own questions and research ideas on the topic. The audience has not met merely to consume presentations, but also to produce some preliminary thoughts themselves.

Bill Glod ([05:45](#)):

So typically, panels are followed by breakout discussion groups where we split up the speakers and mix and audience members so they can have a, for now, virtual brainstorming session. Each audience member has a chance to relate to the breakout group what they're interested in academically, what they're working on, and how it might pertain to the panel topic. So this is a chance for audience members to explore new avenues, not only for academic research, that's a large part of it, but perhaps also writings that can reach a wider audience such as op-eds or articles and outlets geared toward a more general readership. So I would say those are two main goals of ARS's or at least what maybe sets them apart from other programs that we do at IHS. Of course, chances for scholars to network and hopefully research projects, cold collaborations might come out of that. Those are more ancillary goals, but certainly part of what we would hope to see.

Anthony Comegna ([06:52](#)):

Now, you did mention that for now, these are virtual. So COVID obviously, as it's done for everything else here, it's impacted these programs quite a bit. What do they normally look like in a normal world, in a normal time, such as, I guess we ever live in one, what do these programs usually look like, and then what have you been doing to change them and adjust them to COVID times?

Bill Glod ([07:20](#)):

Yeah, so there are probably people on staff who can speak better to what the face to face events looked like because I have no experience. I've never even attended one of those. When I took ownership of the ARS's in July, obviously we were already well steeped into the pandemic and had to move everything online, but I would say what they used to look like and what they will, fingers crossed, look like again soon is basically typically, they would be attached to an in-person disciplinary conference such as the SCA, Southern Economics Association annual meeting or API or some other disciplinary conference, and we would try to invite people who were already going to be attending the conference. So usually, the ARS would be held the day before the conference itself and then conference attendees would be invited to attend several panels revolving around a particular theme.

Bill Glod ([08:21](#)):

So maybe corporate welfare, that was sort of a theme of the conference or some kind of public choice topic, and the demographics for these include grad students, junior faculty, senior faculty and professionals who are academically or policy oriented, depending upon the topic. Since we've had to move events online for the time being, we're not attaching ARS's to conferences. Instead, we're adapting the format to allow more flexibility. So from March of this year through at least July, we'll be treating seminars as periodic online series. So for instance, our event on Trust and the Open Society will take place on three dates in March, spaced roughly a few days apart.

Bill Glod ([09:15](#)):

As with all of these series we'll be running, people who register or apply may select which panel breakout sessions to attend. So as few as one or as many as all three under the umbrella of the seminar based on their interest, availability, and time commitment. So we're thinking that in the virtual space, we don't need to make the format of the event sort of isomorphic with how they were conducted in person. We can have more flexibility in terms of just people aren't having to be committed to a single day or a two day event. We can spread things out. So that's kind of how it's working virtually right now. So it does have its advantages.

Anthony Comegna ([09:57](#)):

Yeah. I've been to one academic research seminar in person shortly after I started here. I think it was summer of 2019 in Florida, and I remember, among other things, extremely good hors d'oeuvres. I think we all miss the extremely good hors d'oeuvres, but soon enough, we'll have that back. So now, you mentioned your upcoming topic here, Trust and the Open Society. Tell us a little bit about that program.

Bill Glod ([10:25](#)):

Sure. So I'm really excited. I'm excited about all of these upcoming ones, but this one is one where some of the speakers may be more familiar than typical. I would say big names, bordering on famous perhaps for academics. So it's Trust and the Open Society. So it's sort of exploring why there's been a decline in social and political trust, especially in the US in the recent decades, whereas we've seen actually increases in trust in a lot of other liberal democracies, such as many European democracies, and so I think we're recording this the day after the rioting at the Capitol so I find this to be a particularly relevant topic and a timely one, but some of the themes we're going to be exploring there, so the first panel is going to explore Christina Bicchieri's work on social norms and the open society.

Bill Glod ([11:29](#)):

Dr. Bicchieri is a philosophy professor at University of Pennsylvania. She will be on the panel and discussing it with two other scholars, and her work is really well-known among people who study the emergence of social norms, how people enforce your mechanisms for interpersonal interaction, often through informal channels and not through mechanisms, more coercive mechanisms such as state institutions. So that will be the first panel being held on March 12th. Then the second panel will be on the causes and consequences of social and political trust, and that will feature three speakers including Joseph Heinrich, who is the chair of Harvard's evolutionary biology department, pretty well known among trust scholars and somewhat among the wider public as well.

Bill Glod ([12:28](#)):

And then so that'll be March 24th, and then on March 31st, we will feature a panel on trust, democracy, and markets that will also have three speakers, including Helene Landemore of Yale University, who has done a lot of pioneering recent work on democratic theory, and so for this event, we're going to be partnering with professor Kevin Vallier, who is a philosopher at Bowling Green State University, a long time friend of IHS, and Dr. Vallier actually has... I'm sorry?

Anthony Comegna ([13:04](#)):

Long time friend of the show, at that.

Bill Glod ([13:05](#)):

Long time friend of the show too. Yeah, he's been on here. Yeah, and so Kevin's new book is actually coming out as well. It's called *Trust in a Polarized Age*, for those of you who might be interested. Check it out on his website, [kevinvallier.com](http://kevinvallier.com). Last name is V-A-L-L-I-E-R, and he would probably be happy to talk about it if you have a chance.

Anthony Comegna ([13:32](#)):

So then what else can we expect here coming up on the schedule? What else?

Bill Glod ([13:37](#)):

Sure. I'm happy to run down some of the things that we're doing. So we're going to also have an online series on entrepreneurship with a focus on women, minorities, and everyday social entrepreneurs. We're still lining up speakers for that, but the dates for those will be April 2nd for women in entrepreneurship, May 21st for minorities in entrepreneurship, and then May 28th for everyday entrepreneurs, and for this event, we're partnering with professor Steve Gohmann in his center for free enterprise at the University of Louisville. I think I pronounced, it's Louisville, I've been told by people from there.

Anthony Comegna ([14:22](#)):

I'll take your word for it. Yeah. Now wait a second because when you're saying everyday sort of social entrepreneurs, what exactly are you thinking of because I might take that to mean everybody from the guy who runs the mobile barbecue stand, where he's there until he sells out every day and he advertises on Instagram, or you might think of people who sell things on Etsy or something like that. So what are you thinking of when you put that category?

Bill Glod ([14:53](#)):

I think we're going to be pretty wide open in terms of what runs the gamut here. I can say that one of the speakers that we have lined up is his research focuses on veterans, and particularly disabled veterans and some of the entrepreneurial skills that they bring to the table and some of the challenges that they're finding so that would be an example, I think, of the kind of entrepreneur that will be discussed, and I think something we're going to try to do is bring in, if not as speakers, then as participants, some actual real-world entrepreneurs as well because scholars have a lot to learn from studying entrepreneurs, but I think another question is how much can entrepreneurs learn from the scholarship on it, and just sort of have a two way discussion there? So that's something I'd like to see, if possible, that we can mix in some scholars with some entrepreneurs themselves.

Anthony Comegna ([15:55](#)):

I like that topic mix for entrepreneurship because I'm looking at the schedule here and you also have events at least planned on the future of work and criminal justice reform, which seems like, again, it takes both of those earlier topics and expands them and probably takes them in different directions, but I love that those are kind of worked in together. Tell us about those two conferences.

Bill Glod ([16:20](#)):

Sure. So the future of work event, we're partnering with the center for growth and opportunity at Utah State University, and the topics for that series will be occupational licensing in a post-COVID world, which will be on April 9th, post-COVID gig economy, which will be April 23rd, and then robotics, automation, and the American worker on May 7th. I should actually correct that. The date for the first panel is April 16th for occupational licensing in a post-COVID world. Sorry. Yeah, just made that correction. So that's something I know future of work is a hot topic, but there's certainly a lot of interest in it and we have lined up quite a few speakers for that, that I'm excited to have there, and then criminal justice reform. So we're going to try, we're hopefully going to have a face-to-face event here probably late July, early August.

Bill Glod ([17:24](#)):

So hopefully, fingers crossed, things will have settled down enough that we will be able to convene in person, but we're probably going to look to make this a hybrid event so that those who still have travel concerns can join remotely, and we might just have a mix of in-person and remote, but anyway, the theme for this criminal justice reform ARS is over criminalization. So why and how there are too many criminal laws, and then how this leads to perverse and judicial incentives, such as a rampant plea bargaining, prosecutorial discretion, overworked public defenders, and then how all of that in turn leads to perverse policing incentives. So tough on crime laws, arrest quotas, stop and frisk, racial profiling, civil asset forfeiture, all kinds of bad stuff that are attended to this. So that will be sort of the theme of the event over criminalization, and for that event, we will be partnering with the Charles Koch Institute.

Anthony Comegna ([18:31](#)):

Yeah, that sounds really great, and the final topic I see on here is another thing that dovetails well with another online series that I'm running starting Friday, actually. It's a 2020 retrospective because who doesn't need more 2020?

Bill Glod ([18:50](#)):

Of course. Look back at the dumpster fire.

Anthony Comegna ([18:56](#)):

Yeah. It's going to be great, but we'll look at some of the best work made by classical liberal scholars in the last year, responding to all of this mess that has been, or was mercifully 2020, and a lot of it is mirrored in the list you have here, especially in this last panel that we haven't discussed yet, incentives and ethics of pandemic responses. We'll be getting to some of that on Friday so tell me your thoughts about that panel.

Bill Glod ([19:27](#)):

Sure. So actually later today, I will be having a discussion with a possible partner for this event. This one's probably the most tentative one of what we have listed here, but the tentative topics that we're looking at include the role of addiction and drugs in mental health during a pandemic, during quarantine and things like that. So what are the greater challenges people might be facing when they're asked to shelter in place? Another possible topic is the role of expertise. When can we trust experts? When can we be skeptical of them, especially if you have two experts that you ask the same question and you get three different answers. It's like, what do you do? How do you identify whom to trust? So this does fit in with the trust theme in some ways as well. This is all sort of cross-referenced, and then the final panel will be civil liberties and pandemic responses.

Bill Glod ([20:22](#)):

So what kinds of issues have we faced in terms of state governors acting perhaps well out of their purview or well out of their legitimate authority? For instance, should people who maybe aren't terribly vulnerable to the virus in terms of just getting really, really sick, should they be required to quarantine for months and months when in fact, maybe this could have been contained much better and it could have been prevented? So some of it's going to be retrospective, but some of it's going to be forward looking like how do we keep this from happening again, and then another possibility is we'll have a lot more perspective on the vaccine rollout by then, and it'll probably be interesting to have a discussion of what worked and what didn't work there. So plenty to talk about. I think these different kinds of themes, we'll work them out in the months to come.

Anthony Comegna ([21:31](#)):

Yeah. That's great. I especially love that first topic on the spikes and all sorts of mental health issues and addiction right now because I know that another interest of yours for a long time here has been wanting to do more programming focused on the importance of mental health in a free society, and vice versa, the importance of personal liberty to mental health. For example, you were a huge partner with me on that mental health discussion colloquium we did over the summer with Sean Rife and we had him on the show. So tell me, maybe to lead us out here, tell me about how you, as the program owner here and the designer of our academic research seminars now, what's your thinking when you gather together topics and ideas for a new year? What do you really want to accomplish with these programs?

Bill Glod ([22:29](#)):

So a large part of it is how these kinds of themes tier up with our wider IHS goals of our discourse initiative and our key challenges project, where we really want to dive into topics where classical liberals may disagree among themselves or people who are open to a lot of classical liberal thought, but maybe are somewhat skeptical of certain elements can bring their challenges to the table. So I definitely want to encourage a discussion, not just an in-house discussion among classical liberals, but also across the aisle, as it were, a discussion where we can hear the most, I guess, the best challenges to a lot of maybe

the popular classical liberal positions. So that discussion is one part of it, but another is, I hope to see these to be opportunities for people to collaborate.

Bill Glod ([23:30](#)):

And as I mentioned earlier, perhaps come out with work that can reach a wider audience. So you may not necessarily be an expert on a particular topic, but you might be able to write intelligently about it to a popular audience and just advance the discussion along those channels as well. So there isn't necessarily a specific tangible outcome like there might be with a manuscript workshop, but the hope is that this stirs the pot, this gets people thinking, gets people talking and that down the road, what comes out of this is written work more or less, but also opportunities to discuss, to interview, things like that.

Anthony Comegna ([24:16](#)):

All right everybody, thanks so much for joining us again here on *Ideas in Progress*, and a special thanks to Bill Glod for joining us to talk academic research seminars. They really are great programs, hors d'oeuvres or no hors d'oeuvres, open bar or Zoom call. So hop on over to the [ihs.org](#) and check out all the options Bill has opened for you at the moment, and since we're always planning new things, be sure to just go ahead and bookmark it and drop in every month or so good practice all around on the IHS website, really. Well, that's enough for me from now, wonderful listeners, and thanks as ever for doing your parts out there to keep the progress coming, and while you're at it, you can also check out Bill's book, *Why It's OK to Make Bad Choices*.