First Friday Lecture Series
The Basic Program of Liberal Education for Adults

Moral Enjoyment: Virtue in Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s *Emile*
August 5, 2016 | 12:15 PM

Claudia Cassidy Theater
Chicago Cultural Center
78 E. Washington

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While predominant accounts of virtue understand it to involve the disciplining of our enjoyments in order to achieve a true and lasting happiness, a minority report argues that there is a form of enjoyment intrinsic to virtue. On this latter report, the cultivation of virtue itself constitutes the achievement of happiness. I argue that Rousseau represents this point of view in his work on pedagogical theory, *Emile*. For Rousseau, virtue is the exercise of moral strength against civilization’s corrupt influences, whereby we enjoy ourselves and others in a way that avoids the zero-sum game of domination.

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