

ANTH 3052: An Anthropological Approach to Bioethics

T 3:30-6:30pm
MUSE 329

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Meetings by appointment
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Course description:

Bioethics and anthropology have a complicated relationship. Though the two disciplines have long studied overlapping topics, the contribution of anthropological work to bioethical discussions and associated health policy interventions has been limited. This course will investigate whether and how anthropology can contribute to ethics and characterize the unique perspective that the discipline adds to bioethics topics.

We will begin by carrying out an anthropology of bioethics, exploring how bioethics developed as a field with a specific philosophical and political orientation and a particular conception of which issues in health, illness, and medicine are worthy of attention as ethical problems. Next, we will clarify how anthropology can contribute to bioethical theory by considering decades-old, ongoing debates about the relevance of (descriptive) social scientific findings to the development of (prescriptive) bioethics frameworks. Finally, we will apply an anthropological lens to bioethical problems. We will use anthropology's global, ethnographic orientation to explore a series of classic bioethics topics, examining how anthropologists' conclusions about these topics might differ from bioethicists', why, and with what ramifications.

Format:

As a seminar, this course will focus heavily on discussion of weekly readings in large- and small-group formats. There will be occasional lectures. We will also regularly watch relevant media to examine how they frame contemporary bioethical issues and/or to provide supplementary context to the week's readings.

Learning objectives:

By the end of the class, students should be able to:

- (1) Understand the cultural, philosophical, and political foundations of Western bioethics and how they have contributed to a focus on particular problems in health and medicine.*
- (2) Reflect on the role of anthropology and adjacent social sciences in contributing to discussion and debate about bioethics (and ethics more generally).*
- (3) Form positions on ethical problems in health and medicine using a global perspective informed by ethnographic data and anthropological theorizing.*

Assessment:

Participation [15%]

Consistent attendance, preparation, and participation are important components of enrollment in this seminar course. If you must miss a class session, you will be expected to catch up on the material discussed by completing the readings as usual and by asking a classmate for notes.

Journal club [20%]

See standalone assignment description.

Mid-term exam [20%]

A take-home, essay-based mid-term will be administered roughly halfway through the semester to assess your understanding of the ideas discussed in assigned readings and your ability to connect these ideas.

Essay [25%]

See standalone assignment description.

Final exam [20%]

A timed, essay-based final exam will be administered at the end of the semester. The exam will be broadly synthetic—not based on memorization of details. It will be open book (assigned readings and class notes only).

SCHEDULE

UNIT I: ANTHROPOLOGY OF BIOETHICS ... ANTHROPOLOGY IN BIOETHICS?

8/30: Bioethics: foundational concepts

Tom Beauchamp and James Childress (2019) *Principles of Biomedical Ethics*, 8th ed. (ch. 1 'Moral Norms' and ch. 9 'Moral Theories')

9/6: Social science *of* bioethics I: the contested history & institutionalization of American bioethics

Albert Jonsen (2004) 'The History of Bioethics as a Discipline'

David Rothman (1991) 'Human Experimentation and the Origins of Bioethics in the United States'

Roger Cooter (2000) 'The Ethical Body'

Renee Fox (1991) 'The Evolution of American Bioethics: A Sociological Perspective'

9/13: Social science *of* bioethics II: examinations of contemporary bioethics in practice

Adam Hedgecoe (2010) 'Bioethics and the Reinforcement of Socio-technical Expectations'

Katrina Hauschildt and Raymond De Vries (2020) 'Reinforcing medical authority: clinical ethics consultation and the resolution of conflicts in treatment decisions' [JOURNAL CLUB]

Paul Brodwin (2008) 'The Coproduction of Moral Discourse in U.S. Community Psychiatry'

Renee Fox (1999) 'Is Medical Education Asking Too Much of Bioethics?'

9/20: Social science *in* bioethics I: 'is' vs. 'ought', fact vs. value, & the role of empirical research in developing ethical theory

Stephen Toulmin (1982) 'How Medicine Saved the Life of Ethics'

Barry Hoffmaster (1992) 'Can Ethnography Save the Life of Medical Ethics?'

Franklin Miller & David Wendler (2006) 'The Relevance of Empirical Research in Bioethics' [JOURNAL CLUB]

Justin Clapp (2020) 'Keeping Bioethics Concrete: How Social Scientific Research Generates Values'

9/27: Social science *in* bioethics II: anthropology & the specter of relativism

Lila Abu-Lughod (2002) 'Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and Its Others' [JOURNAL CLUB]

Melford Spiro (1986) 'Cultural Relativism and the Future of Anthropology'

Clifford Geertz (1984) 'Anti-Anti-Relativism'

John Eidson (2019) 'Anti-Relativism Since the '80s'

10/4: Social science *in* bioethics III: moral anthropology & ordinary ethics

Jarrett Zigon (2007) 'Moral breakdown and the ethical demand: A theoretical framework for an anthropology of moralities'

Cheryl Mattingly (2012) 'Two virtue ethics and the anthropology of morality'

Veena Das (2012) 'Ordinary Ethics'

Michael Lempert (2013) 'No ordinary ethics'

UNIT II: Anthropological perspectives on bioethical issues

10/11: Living donor organ transplantation, autonomy, coercion, & the gift

DUE: Midterm exam

Lainie Ross & Richard Thistlethwaite (2018) 'Developing an ethics framework for living donor transplantation'

Nancy Scheper-Hughes (2007) 'The Tyranny of the Gift: Sacrificial Violence in Living Donor Transplants'

Benjamin Hippen & James Taylor (2007) 'In Defense of Transplantation: A Reply to Nancy Scheper-Hughes'

Megan Crowley-Matoka & Sherine Hamdy (2016) 'Gendering the Gift of Life: Family Politics and Kidney Donation in Egypt and Mexico'

10/18: Justice, inequity, & global health

Paul Farmer & Nicole Gastineau Campos (2004) 'New Malaise: Bioethics and Human Rights in the Global Era'

Nancy Jecker (2008) 'A Broader View of Justice'

Megan Carney (2015) 'Eating and Feeding at the Margins of the State: Barriers to Health Care for Undocumented Migrant Women and the "Clinical" Aspects of Food Assistance' [**JOURNAL CLUB**]

Ezekiel Emanuel, et al. (2020) 'An ethical framework for global vaccine allocation'

Cal Biruk (2012) 'Seeing Like a Research Project: Producing "High-Quality Data" in AIDS Research in Malawi'

10/25: Clinical trials, scientific validity, & exploitation of research subjects

Ezekiel Emanuel, et al. (2004) 'What Makes Clinical Research In Developing Countries Ethical? The Benchmarks of Ethical Research'

Franklin Miller & Howard Brody (2002) 'What Makes Placebo-Controlled Trials Unethical?'

Adriana Petryna (2005) 'Ethical variability: Drug development and globalizing clinical trials'

Joseph Dumit & Emilia Sanabria (2022) 'Set, Setting, and Clinical Trials: Colonial Technologies and Psychedelics'

Rebecca Walker & Jill Fisher (2019) "'My Body is One of the Best Commodities": Exploring the Ethics of Commodification in Phase I Healthy Volunteer Clinical Trials' [**JOURNAL CLUB**]

11/1: Bioenhancement, values, & value

Franklin Miller, et al. (2000) 'Cosmetic Surgery and the Internal Morality of Medicine'

Alvaro Jarrin (2012) 'The Rise of the Cosmetic Nation: Plastic Governmentality and Hybrid Medical Practices in Brazil'

David DeGrazia (2000) 'Prozac, Enhancement, and Self-Creation'

Michael Oldani (2009) 'Uncanny Scripts: Understanding Pharmaceutical Emplotment in the Aboriginal Context' [**JOURNAL CLUB**]

Stefan Ecks (2022) *Living Worth: Value and Values in Global Pharmaceutical Markets* (ch. 3, 'Never Enough: Markets in Life')

11/8: Non-human animal experimentation, moral status, & interspecies relations

Carl Cohen (1986) 'The Case for the Use of Animals in Biomedical Research'

Hope Ferdowsian, et al. (2020) 'A Belmont Report for Animals?'

Steve Cooke (2019) 'Betraying Animals' [**JOURNAL CLUB**]

Lesley Sharp (2017) 'The Moral Lives of Laboratory Monkeys: Television and the Ethics of Care'

Radhika Govindrajan (2015) "'The goat that died for family": Animal Sacrifice and interspecies kinship in India's Central Himalayas"

11/15: Life-sustaining care, futility, & the definition of death

Lawrence Schneiderman (2011) 'Defining Medical Futility and Improving Medical Care'

Janet Shim, et al. (2006) 'Risk, life extension and the pursuit of medical possibility' [**JOURNAL CLUB**]

Scott Stonington (2012) 'The good death in Thailand, where ethics sit in places'

Margaret Lock (1996) 'Death in Technological Time: Locating the End of Meaningful Life'

Robert Truog (2007) 'Brain Death – Too Flawed to Endure, Too Ingrained to Abandon'

11/22: NO CLASS (Thanksgiving week schedule)

DUE: Essay

11/29:

Mental illness, capacity, commitment, & the morality of physician-assisted death

Mark Munetz, et al. (2003) 'The Ethics of Mandatory Community Treatment'

Paul Brodwin (2014) 'The Ethics of Ambivalence and the Practice of Constraint in U.S. Psychiatry'

Brent Kioussis & Peggy Battin (2019) 'Physician Aid-in-Dying and Suicide Prevention in Psychiatry: A Moral Crisis?'

Anita Hannig (2019) 'Author(iz)ing Death: Medical Aid-in-Dying and the Morality of Suicide'

12/6: Final exam

DURING CLASS: Final exam