

Higher Institute of Philosophy


FILO2200 Fundamentals of Biomedical Ethics

[30h] 4 credits

Teacher(s): Mylene Botbol, Michel Dupuis
Language: French
Level: Second cycle

Aims

By the end of this course, the students will be able: to identify the different strands of Anglo-Saxon and Continental bioethics; to define applied ethics; and to problematize the possibility of grounding a practical reason in the context of our pluralist democracies; to use bioethical notions as tools in questions on the beginning and end of life, as well as of experimentation. The last part of the course will deal with global bioethics and development.

Main themes

Objectives for the first part: "Bioethics"

- a) Summary of the different philosophical arguments
- b) The agenda of the field and its links to contemporary biopolitical questions

The question we shall pose is: on what could we base the conflicting bioethical discussion, or discussions. This question will lead us to address the problem of the possibility of a cognitivist ethics which would form the base of a normative bioethics which could, in turn, limit relativist ethics that paralyze action. We shall thus probe into the pragmatic dimension of bioethical discourses in order to think about the conditions of applied ethics, now seen primarily as feeble and casuistic. (Ricoeur, Levinas, Jonas, Arendt).

In a second part:

In this part we shall consider the necessary dialogue between biomedicine and bioethics through a reflection on the metaphors of biomedicine, which hesitate between heuristics and ideology. This reflection will stem from:

the question of euthanasia

philosophies of consciousness and their practical impact in neurophysiology and neuropsychiatry

genetic of development and " medically assisted reproduction" from a gender perspective, which require philosophical discourse to rethink the universality of the human paradigm.

- Capabilities and human rights in global bioethics form a gender perspective.

Content and teaching methods

The course takes an interdisciplinary approach, linking reflections upon contemporary medicine, biotechnology, and the questions these issues raise to philosophical discourse. The goal is to think through a reconstructivist ethics which tend to define science(s) and ethics in terms of both moral responsibility and the precautionary principle.

Other information (prerequisite, evaluation (assessment methods), course materials recommended readings, ...)

Pre-requisites

Introductory Ethics course.

Assessment:

Oral presentation and essay stemming from the presentation.

Supporting material:

Class notes and

"Bioéthique et culture démocratique," by Lukas Sosoe and Yvette Lajeunesse.

Other:

Web site of Biomedical Ethics Division [unité d'éthique biomédicale].

i-campus

Other credits in programs

ISLE3DA/IS	Diplôme d'études approfondies en philosophie et lettres (philosophie)	(4 credits)
ISP20	Licence à durée réduite en philosophie	(4 credits)
ISP21	Première licence en philosophie	(4 credits)
ISP22	Deuxième licence en philosophie	(4 credits)
ISPB9CE	Certificat universitaire en philosophie (approfondissement)	(4 credits)