

**HUMAN RIGHTS AND BIOETHICS IN CROSS CULTURAL
PERSPECTIVE (PHIL/HRTS 2170W)
SPRING 2009**

Location: Art Building 106
Tuesday/Thursday 12:30 – 1:45

Professor Anne Hiskes
Office: Manchester Hall 204; Phone: 486-3676
Department of Philosophy
The University of Connecticut, Storrs CT
Email: anne.hiskes@uconn.edu

Professor Serena Parekh
Office: Manchester Hall 136; Phone: 486-3463
Department of Philosophy
The University of Connecticut, Storrs CT
Email: serena.parekh@uconn.edu

Purposes: This course is an introduction to a number of issues in bioethics through the lens of human rights. After first introducing basic concepts in human rights, ethics, and religion that are important to bioethics, we will look at some contemporary issues in bioethics including: human embryonic stem cell research, reproductive technologies, human enhancement, and race and genetics. Through writing about these issues, the student will develop a sense of the moral issues at stake in these technologies as well as their implications for human dignity, worth, and personhood, understood in a cross-cultural sense.

Course Requirements

All of the following are required to get credit for the course – you *cannot* pass this course without completing all requirements below. You *cannot* pass the course without passing the paper writing component of the course. Keep in mind that this is a writing course and consequently, you will be asked to write a lot during the course of the semester. Due dates for work appear in the schedule below. Overall course grade is weighted as follows: Dates are tentative.

1. One 3 page editorial (750 words each) = 10% total
 - Tues. Feb. 3. Draft Due. 5%.
 - Tues. Feb. 17. Final Draft Due. 5%
2. One 5 page paper (1250- 1400 words) = 20%
 - Thurs. Feb. 26. 10% first graded draft
 - Tues. March 24. 10% final draft and 1-2 page reflective analysis of your writing, revisions, and educational value of the assignment
3. One 7 page paper (1750 – 1900 words) = 30% total

- Thurs. April 9. 15% first graded draft
 - Thurs. April 30. 15% final draft and 1-2 page reflective analysis of your writing, revisions, and educational value of the assignment..
4. Final Exam = 30%. Wed. May 6, 3:30-5:30.
 5. Quizzes, homework, in-class exercises and discussion = 10%.
 - Lowest grade will be dropped
 - No make-ups or late work.

Writing Portfolio: You are required to keep a folder of all the written material you submit, and *to hand in this folder every time a piece of writing is due*. In this way you will develop a “writing portfolio” which will allow us to monitor your progress.

Required Texts: There are four texts that are required for this course. They are available at the UConn Co-op. All other readings will appear on the Husky CT page for this class. If you have any problems accessing Husky CT, contact the help desk (6-1187).

1. *Classics of Political and Moral Philosophy*, Steven M. Cahn ed. (Oxford University Press). There should be used copies available. Abbreviated below as: CPMP
2. *Enhancing Human Traits: Ethical and Social Implications*, ed. Eric Parens. (Georgetown University Press). Abbreviated below as: EHT
3. *Prenatal Testing and Disability Rights*, ed. Eric Parens and Adrienne Asch. (Georgetown University Press). Abbreviated below as: PTDR
4. Anthony Weston, *A Rulebook for Arguments*. (Hackett publishing co). The 2000 paperback edition is sufficient; you do not need the 2008 hardcover. This is a reference book.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Tuesday 1/20
Introduction to Course and Review of Logistics

Part I: Introduction to Human Rights, Bioethics, and Culture (Dr. Parekh)

Thursday 1/22
Introduction to Human Rights (all readings are on Husky CT)

- *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*
- *Universal Declaration of Bioethics and Human Rights*
- Brian Orend, “Basic Vocabulary and Core Concepts”

Tuesday 1/27

Cultural Relativism

- James Rachels, “The Challenge of Cultural Relativism” (Husky CT)

Part II: Foundations of Ethics, Politics, and Human Rights

Thursday 1/29

Foundations of Ethics: Deontology

- Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, First Section (“Transition from the Common Rational Knowledge of Morality to the Philosophical”) (in CPMP)

Tuesday 2/3

Foundations of Ethics: Utilitarianism/Consequentialism

- J.S. Mill, *Utilitarianism*, chapters 1 & 2 (in CPMP)

EDITORIAL FIRST GRADED DRAFT DUE

Thursday 2/5

Foundations of Politics: Liberalism, Autonomy, Individualism

- J.S. Mill, *On Liberty*, chapters 1 & 2 (in CPMP.)

Tuesday 2/10

- John Rawls, *Theory of Justice*, chapters 3, 4, 5, 11, 13, 17 (in CPMP.)

Thursday 2/12

Western Critics of Liberalism: Feminism

- Martha Nussbaum, “Feminist Critique of Liberalism” (in CPMP.)
- Margaret Olivia Little, “Why a Feminist Approach to Bioethics?” (Husky CT)

Tuesday 2/17

Western Critics of Liberalism: Disability Rights Perspective

- British Film Institute, “Medical Model vs Social Model [of Disability]” (Husky CT)
- Anita Ho, “The Individualist Model of Autonomy and the Challenge of Disability” (Husky CT)

EDITORIAL FINAL DRAFT DUE

Part III: Human Dignity, Personhood, and Human Embryonic Stem Cell Research (Dr. Hiskes)

Thursday 2/19

Introduction to Stem Cell Research and Stem Cell Ethics. (All readings on HuskyCT)

- President George W. Bush on Stem Cell Research
- Stem Cell Research: A Primer
- Editor’s Introduction to Moral Issues
- Novak, The Stem Cell Slide

Tuesday 2/24

Discussion of Personhood and Moral Status of Embryos. (All on HuskyCT)

- John Noonan, “Abortion is Not Morally Permissible”
- Mary Anne Warren, “Abortion is Morally Permissible”
- “Research With Human Embryonic Stem Cells: Ethical Considerations”

Part IV: Religion, Human Rights, and Bioethics (Dr. Parekh & Dr. Hiskes)

Thursday 2/26 (Dr. Parekh)

Judeo-Christian Worldview

- Jean Bethke Elshtain et. al, “Biotechnology and Competing Worldviews” (Husky CT)

PAPER 1, DRAFT 1 DUE

Tuesday 3/3 (Dr. Parekh)

Islamic Worldview

- Abdullah An’Naim, “Human Rights in the Muslim World” (Husky CT)

Thursday 3/5 (Dr. Hiskes)

Religious Perspectives on the Stem Cell Controversy (HuskyCT)

- pp. 173 – 207 in The Stem Cell Controversy, ed. Michael Ruse

(Spring Break 3/10 & 3/12)

Part V. Assisted Reproductive Technologies and Human Value (Dr. Hiskes)

Tuesday 3/17. Eggs for Sale: Commodification?

- Lori Gruen, “Oocytes for Sale” (Husky CT)

Thursday 3/19. Preimplantation Genetic Diagnosis, Disease, and Disability (In PTDR)

- Overview, pp. 3-43.
- Deborah Kent, pp. 57-63.

Tuesday 3/24. Preimplantation Genetic Diagnosis cont. (In PTDR)

- Bonnie Steinbeck, pp. 108-123
- Marsha Saxton, pp. 147-164
 - Recommended: Kittay, pp. 165-195. Letters between a mother of a disabled child and her nondisabled son.

PAPER 1 (FINAL) DUE

Thursday 3/26

Cultural Perspectives and Sex Selection

- Diemut Bubeck, “Sex Selection: The Feminist Response” (HuskyCT)

Tuesday 3/31

Cultural Perspectives on Surrogate Motherhood

- Julia Tao Lai Po-Wah, “Right-Making and Wrong-Making in Surrogate Motherhood: A Confucian Feminist Perspective” (HuskyCT).

Part VI: Human Enhancement, Autonomy, and Justice (Dr. Parekh)

Thursday 4/2

What is Enhancement?

- Michael Sandel, “The Case Against Perfection” (Husky CT)

Tuesday 4/7

Psychopharmacology

- Carol Freedman, “Aspirin for the Mind? Some Ethical Worries about Psychopharmacology” (in EHT.)
 - recommended: Carl Elliot, “The Tyranny of Happiness: Ethics and Cosmetic Psychopharmacology” (in EHT.)

Thursday 4/9

Paper Workshop

- **PAPER 2, DRAFT 1, Due in class. Required Class Exercise.**
- bring a copy of your paper to class to be exchanged with another student in order to receive feedback, criticism, etc.

Tuesday 4/14

Autonomy and Agency

- Susan Bordo, “Braveheart, Bebe, and the Contemporary Body” (in EHT.)

PAPER 2, DRAFT 1, DUE (to be submitted to the instructors)

Part VII: Race, Genes, and Human Identity (Dr. Hiskes)

Thursday 4/16 Human Genetic Diversity and Race - Basic Concepts

- Kassim, “‘Race,’ Genetics, and Human Difference” (Husky CT)
- On the web:
 - Go to the “Race: the Power of an Illusion” PBS website http://www.pbs.org/race/000_General/000_00-Home.htm
 - click on: “Learn More”
 - See materials under the link “Human Diversity” and the link “Go Deeper”.

Tuesday 4/21

Race and Genetics

- Screening of “Race: Power of an Illusion” (no new readings for class)

Thursday 4/23

Human Population Genetics, Race, and Medicine.

- Readings: 4 articles available on the Social Science Research Council website on the realities of race <http://raceandgenomics.ssrc.org>
1. [Straw Men and Their Followers: The return of biological race](#). By Evelyn M. Hammonds
 2. [What We Know and What We Don't Know: Human Genetic Variation and the Social Construction of Race](#). By Joseph L. Graves, Jr.
 3. [Race & Genes](#). By Ruth Hubbard
 4. [The Anatomy of a Medical Myth](#). By Jay Kaufman

Tuesday 4/28

The Human Genome Diversity Project, Racism, and Biocolonialism

- Barbara Katz Rothman, "The Human Genome Diversity Project" (HuskyCT)
- *Declaration of Indigenous Peoples of the Western Hemisphere* (HuskyCT and web <http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/IKS/declaration.html>)
- Tribal Resolution Template. (HuskyCT and web http://www.greenpolicy.us/index.php?title=Opposing_the_Human_Genome_Diversity_Project_Resolution)
- *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* <http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/instree/declra.htm>

Thursday 4/30

Review for Final Exam, and Course Evaluations

PAPER 2 (FINAL) DUE