

# Cyborg Ethics: Issues at the Limits of Personhood and Medical Technology

## Course Description

This course will move through several issues related to personal identity, bioethics and medical technology. We will think philosophically about what constitutes a person. We will consider contemporary philosophical work that challenges assumptions about personhood, such as Donna Haraway's *Cyborg Manifesto* and other work in queer and feminist theory that expands traditional accounts of personhood. And we will use this theoretical work to investigate ongoing issues in bioethics that relate to assumptions about the status of 'person', such as in advancements in reproductive technologies, sports and biotechnologies, and sex reassignment surgery.

Ultimately, we will be using philosophy, literature, and medicine to question the limits and current understandings of personhood. Accordingly, we will use philosophical and medical instantiations of the 'cyborg' to guide us through questions like: Who should count as a person? How we should (if we should at all) regulate the advancements in medical technology that affect and challenge notions of personhood? And, how can we best care for persons who exist at the limits of our moral-epistemic norms and medical categories and technology?

## CLASS SCHEDULE

Session	Readings
Week 1	<b>Introduction:</b> Mary Shelley's <i>Frankenstein</i>
Week 2	<b>Some Background from the Philosophy of Personal Identity:</b> (1) Excerpts from Aristotle, Descartes and Kant (on distinguishing persons from animals) (2) David Hume, "Our Idea of Identity", in Book I.IV.2, AND "Of Personal Identity" in I.IV.6 of Hume's <i>Treatise of Human Nature</i> , 1739. (3) John Locke, "Of Identity and Diversity", Ch. XXVII of Locke's <i>Essay Concerning Human Understanding</i> , 1694. (4) Baker, L. R., 2000, <i>Persons and Bodies: A Constitution View</i> , Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (selections)
Week 3	<b>Feminist Perspectives on the Self:</b> (1) Irigaray, L. (1977) "The Sex Which is Not One" trans. Claudia Reeder, in <i>New French Feminisms</i> , ed. Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron (New York, 1981), pp. 99-106. (2) Chodorow, Nancy. 1980. "Gender, Relation, and Difference in Psychoanalytic Perspective," In <i>The Future of Difference</i> , ed., Hester Eisenstein and Alice Jardine, Alice. Boston: G.K. Hall. (3) Butler, Judith. 1990. "Gender Trouble, Feminist Theory, and Psychoanalytic Discourse." In <i>Feminism/Postmodernism</i> , ed., Linda Nicholson. New York: Routledge.

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Session	Readings
Week 4-5	<p><b>Cyborgs</b></p> <p>(1) Haraway, D. (1991) "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and the Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century" in <i>Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature</i>. New York: Routledge, 149-181.</p> <p>(2) Clark, A. (2003). <i>Natural-Born Cyborgs: Minds, Technologies and the Future of Human Intelligence</i>. New York: Oxford. (selections)</p>
Week 6	<p><b>Embryos and Abortion</b></p> <p>(1) Thomson, Judith J. (1971) "A Defense of Abortion", <i>Philosophy and Public Affairs</i>, 1(1): 47-66.</p> <p>(2) Hursthouse, R. (1991) "Virtue Ethics and Abortion", <i>Philosophy &amp; Public Affairs</i>, 20(3): 223-246.</p> <p>(3) Fox, M. (2000) "Pre-Persons, Commodities or Cyborgs: The Legal Construction and Representation of the Embryo". <i>Health Care Analysis</i> 8 (2): 171-188.</p>
Week 7	<p><b>Disability</b></p> <p>(1) Wendell, S. "The Social Construction of Disability".</p> <p>(2) Kittay, E. "Disability, Eugenics, and Designer Babies".</p>
Week 8-9	<p><b>Genetics</b></p> <p>(1) Glover, J. (1984) <i>What Sort of People Should There Be?</i> New York: Penguin books. (selections)</p> <p>(2) Sandel, M., (2007). <i>The Price of Perfection: Ethics in the Age of Genetic Engineering</i>, Cambridge: Harvard University Press. (selections)</p> <p>(3) Mehlman, M.J. (2012). <i>Transhumanist Dreams and Dystopian Nightmares</i>, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. (selections)</p> <p>(4) Kamm, F. M., (2005). "Is There a Problem with Enhancement?" <i>The American Journal of Bioethics</i>, 5(3): 5-14.</p>
Week 10	<p><b>Sports and Biotechnology</b></p> <p>(1) Buchanan, A., Brock, D., Wikler, D., and Daniels, N. (2000). <i>From Chance to Choice: Genetics and Justice</i>, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press. (selections)</p> <p>(2) Murray, T. (2009). <i>Ethics, Genetics and the Future of Sport: Implications of Genetic Modification and Genetic Selection</i>, Washington: Georgetown University Press.</p>
Week 11	<p><b>Life Extension</b></p> <p>Cohen, Lawrence. 1998. <i>No Aging in India: Alzheimer's, the Bad Family, and Other Modern Things</i>: Berkeley: University of California Press. (selections)</p>
Week 12-13	<p><b>Transgendered Identity</b></p> <p>(1) Neslon, J.L. (2014). "Medicine and Making Sense of Queer Lives", <i>Hastings Center Report</i>: 44(s4):S12-S16.</p> <p>(2) Powell, T. and Stein, E. (2014). "Legal and Ethical Concerns about Sexual Orientation Change Efforts", <i>Hastings Center Report</i>: 44(s4):S32-S39.</p> <p>(3) Butler, J. (2001) "Doing Justice to Someone", <i>GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies</i>, 7(4): 621-636.</p> <p>(4) Case from <i>Cambridge Quarterly of Healthcare Ethics</i> 2012 21(2):281; <i>IVF Treatment for an HIV-Discordant Transgender Couple</i>. Commentary by Hunger, Murphy and Wahlert and Fiester.</p>