

## Phil 260: Core Course in Ethics Winter 2024

Dr. Reuven Brandt

[rbrandt@ucsd.edu](mailto:rbrandt@ucsd.edu)

Office hours: Wed/Thr: 2-3PM

Seminar time/place: Wed 11-1:50, RWAC 0472

### Description:

This seminar will focus on ethical questions raised by disability. The first few sessions will examine differing accounts of what constitutes disability. We will then examine Elizabeth Barnes' "mere-difference view", advanced in her influential book, *The Minority Body*. We will then examine questions specific to cognitive disability, including moral standing and autonomy. This will lead to an examination of the adequacy of various theories of justice for accommodating disability. With this theoretical background under our belt we will examine two pressing applied questions (a) how to best respect the autonomy of those with cognitive disability, and (b) whether we ought to permit the selection of children with disability.

### Assessment:

**Four Short papers (20%):** Each short paper should be between 500-800 words and engage with one of the assigned readings. The paper must do **one** of the following: (a) provide a reconstruction of one of the paper's central arguments; (b) assess the strength of one the paper's central arguments; (c) defend a view opposing that which is defended in the paper. **Papers are due by 9PM the day before the paper is to be discussed in class.** Papers should be submitted to me by email as a doc or PDF file. You may submit a paper on an article you are responsible for presenting.

**One Presentation (15%):** Each presentation should be about 15 minutes in length and focus on explaining a central portion of one of the assigned readings. The presenter should prepare question for the class and help guide the subsequent discussion.

**Participation (5%):** Students are expected to participate in class discussion by asking questions, raising objections, and highlighting possible novel consequences of the arguments under examination. Style of participation can vary widely. For example, some students might interject frequently and help deepen our understanding of the text with clarificatory questions while others might interject less frequently but with few well timed and insightful comments. There is more than one way to fully participate in the class. However, it is important that students do speak up. It is equally important that no one dominate discussion. If you have questions about where you stand in terms of participation please do not hesitate to ask me. If speaking in class is something you find difficult please let me know at the onset of the course.

**Term paper (60%):** One long term paper (4000 – 5000 words) due March 21<sup>th</sup> that substantially engages with the course material. I highly advise that students discuss paper topics with me ahead of time. I also encourage students to submit for feedback a paper outline no later than March 14 outlining the central argument you plan to defend and a sketch of how you plan to defend it. I may not have time to review and comment on outlines submitted after March 14<sup>th</sup>.

## Course Readings

All material will be available on the Canvas website. Readings marked with an \* are readings that I hope to cover, but will not prioritize unless someone chooses to focus on them for a presentation. The reading list is subject to minor adjustments – I will give you plenty of notice for any changes made to the required readings.

### Week 1: Jan. 10<sup>th</sup>

- (1) Beaudry, Jonas-Sébastien. "Theoretical strategies to define disability." From "The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy and Disability", Edited by David T. Wasserman and Adam Cureton. DOI 10 (2019).

### Week 2: Jan 17<sup>th</sup>

- (1) Ch. 1: Constructing Disability (*The Minority Body*)
- (2) Howard, Dana, and Sean Aas. "On valuing impairment." *Philosophical studies* 175 (2018): 1113-1133.
- (3) \*Barnes, Elizabeth. "Against impairment: replies to aas, Howard, and Francis." *Philosophical Studies* 175.5 (2018): 1151-1162.

### Week 3: Jan 24

- (1) Ch. 2: Bad-Difference and Mere-Difference (*The Minority Body*)
- (2) Ch. 3: The Value-Neutral Model (*The Minority Body*)
- (3) \*Crawley, Thomas. "Disability, Options and Well-Being." *Utilitas* 32.3 (2020): 316-334.

### Week 4: Jan 31 (12PM start)

- (1) Kahane, Guy, and Julian Savulescu. "Disability and mere difference." *Ethics* 126.3 (2016): 774-788.
- (2) Ch. 5: Causing Disability (*The Minority Body*)
- (3) Mosquera, Julia, 'Why Inflicting Disability is Wrong: The Mere-Difference View and the Causation-Based Objection', in Adam Cureton, and David T. Wasserman (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy and Disability*, Oxford Handbooks (2020; online edn, Oxford Academic, 8 May 2018)

### Week 5: Feb. 7<sup>th</sup>

- (1) McMahan, Jeff. "Cognitive disability, misfortune, and justice." *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 25.1 (1996): 3-35.
- (2) Kittay, Eva Feder. "At the margins of moral personhood." *Ethics* 116.1 (2005): 100-131.
- (3) \*Kagan, Shelly. "What's Wrong with Speciesism?(Society for Applied Philosophy Annual Lecture 2015)." *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 33.1 (2016): 1-21.

### Week 6: Feb 14<sup>th</sup>

- (1) Hartley, Christie. "Contractualism, disability, and inclusion." *The Oxford handbook of philosophy and disability* (2020): 195-211.
- (2) Riddle, Christopher A. "Disability and disadvantage in the capabilities approach." *The Oxford handbook of philosophy and disability*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020. 229-244.

- (3) Aas, Sean. "Disability, Society, and Personal Transformation." *Journal of Moral Philosophy* 18.1 (2020): 49-74.

**Week 7: Feb 21<sup>th</sup>**

- (1) Aas, Sean, and David Wasserman. "Natural and social inequality: Disability and fair equality of opportunity." *journal of moral philosophy* 13.5 (2016): 576-601.
- (2) Barclay, Linda. "Disability, respect and justice." *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 27.2 (2010): 154-171.
- (3) \* John, Tyler M., Joseph Millum, and David Wasserman. "How to allocate scarce health resources without discriminating against people with disabilities." *Economics & Philosophy* 33.2 (2017): 161-186.

**Week 8: Feb 28<sup>th</sup>**

- (1) Hofmann, Bjørn. "'You are inferior!' Revisiting the expressivist argument." *Bioethics* 31.7
- (2) Kittay, Eva Feder, 'The Ethics of Prenatal Testing and Selection', *Learning from My Daughter: The Value and Care of Disabled Minds* (New York, 2019; online edn, Oxford Academic, 17 Apr. 2019)
- (3) Savulescu, Julian, and Guy Kahane. "The moral obligation to create children with the best chance of the best life." *Bioethics* 23.5 (2009): 274-290.

**Week 9: March 6<sup>th</sup>**

- (1) Wasserman, David, and Jeff McMahan. "Cognitive surrogacy, assisted participation, and moral status." *Medicine and social justice: Essays on the distribution of health care* 2 (2012): 325-333.
- (2) Francis, L, "Understanding Autonomy in Light of Intellectual Disability", *Disability and Disadvantage*.
- (3) Maclean, D. "Respect without Reason: Relating to Alzheimer's", *Disability and Disadvantage*.

**Week 10: March 13<sup>th</sup>**

- (1) Schroeder, S. Andrew. "Well-Being, Opportunities, and Selecting for Disability." *J. Ethics & Soc. Phil.* 14 (2018): 1
- (2) Fahmy, Melissa Seymour. "On the supposed moral harm of selecting for deafness." *Bioethics* 25.3 (2011): 128-136.
- (3) Liao, S. Matthew. "Selecting children: the ethics of reproductive genetic engineering." *Philosophy Compass* 3.5 (2008): 973-991.