

PHL/NEU 251: NEUROETHICS

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Philosophy/Neuroscience

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Siena 125

Class time: MWF 12:20 – 1:20

Office hours: MRF 2:20 – 3:20

Other times available by appointment!

Course Description

What should we do with our discoveries in neuroscience? Do discoveries in neuroscience inform what we should do?

Required texts

- May, J. 2023. *Neuroethics: Agency in the Age of Brain Science* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- Additional readings are available on Canvas as PDFs

Assessment

1. **Discussion pieces** (25%) – Each week, you will submit a short (150-200 word) summary of a “target article” that provides some critical questions to launch discussion during the relevant class meeting. Discussion pieces must be submitted by 5pm the day before the relevant meeting. These pieces should show that you’ve done the reading and spent some time thinking about it. The target article is determined by random draw announced each Friday (so, e.g., if you are assigned to Group 1, your target article is Monday. Group 2? Your article is Wednesday. And 3? Friday. If we have an abbreviated week, then we’ll do two groups). I’ll provide an example summary in Week 2, so this assignment will not start until Week 3. You do not need to work together with people in your group, although it’s fine to talk about the article with others as you prepare your summary.
2. **Mid-term exam** (25%; *due Oct. 11*): There will be a mid-term exam on basic elements of moral theory and neuroscience methodology. The format of the exam will consist of short answer questions, short essays, and one “synthetic” essay. This will be a take-home exam due by 5pm on October 11.
3. **Research paper** (20%; *due Nov. 25*): You will write one short paper (4 – 6 pages) on an ethical issue covered between Week 7 and Week 10. A rubric will be provided later in the semester. This paper will consist of three stages: (1) a proposal/introductory paragraph, (2) a rough draft, and (3) a final draft. Each stage must be submitted to me for comments.
4. **Final exam** (30%): There will be one cumulative final at the end of the term. A study guide will be made available before the end of the semester.

5.

Schedule (Changes will be announced in class and through Canvas)

<i>Week</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Friday</i>
Sep. 2 – 6 (1)	LABOR DAY	<i>Introduction to Neuroethics</i>	<i>Background Neuroscience</i> - Complete Module 2 of “Medical Neuroscience” in Coursera. <i>Optional:</i> Ruff and Huettel, “Experimental methods in cognitive neuroscience”
Sep. 9 – 13 (2)	<i>Functional neuroanatomy</i> - Kean, “Phineas Gage, Neuroscience’s most famous patient” - Verplaetse, “Conscientiousness or the moral organ in phrenology”	<i>Frontal lobotomies</i> - Szszepanski & Knight, “Insights into human behavior from lesions to the prefrontal cortex” - Taber-Thomas et al., “Arrested development”	<i>Functional neuroimaging</i> Poldrack, “fMRI grows up”
Sep. 16 – 20 (3)	<i>Metaphysics of action</i> Williams, “Human freedom and agency”	<i>Judgment and volition</i> - Aquinas, <i>Summa theologiae</i> (IaIIae Q. 14) - Greene and Haidt, “How (and where) does moral judgment work?”	<i>Integration or antagonism</i> Jeffrey & Mehari, “Surprising Empirical Directions for Thomistic Moral Psychology: Social Information Processing and Aggression Research”
Sep. 23 – 27 (4)	<i>Virtue theory</i> Stump, “The non-Aristotelian character of Aquinas’ ethics”	<i>Moral virtues</i> Stump, “A representative moral virtue: Justice”	<i>Intellectual and moral virtues</i> Zagzebski, “The relation between intellectual and moral virtues”
Sep. 30 - Oct. 4 (5)	<i>Morality and moral theory</i> Driver, selections from <i>Ethics: The Fundamentals</i>	<i>Morality and emotion</i> - Crockett, “Models of morality” - Greene, “The secret joke	<i>The neuroscience of moral judgment</i> May, <i>Neuroethics</i> ch. 6

<i>Week</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Friday</i>
		of Kant's soul"	
Oct. 7 – 11 (6)	<i>Neuroscience and determinism</i> May, <i>Neuroethics</i>, ch. 2	<i>Neuroscience and bypassing</i> Nahmias, "My brain made me do it, so what?"	NO CLASS – SAM IN DURHAM
Oct. 14 – 18 (7)	COLUMBUS DAY	<i>Neuroscience and responsibility</i> Maoz & Yaffe, "What does recent neuroscience tell us about criminal responsibility?"	<i>Neuroscience and identity</i> - May, <i>Neuroethics</i>, ch. 3 (pp. 70 – 80) - Northoff and Wagner, "Personal identity and brain identity"
Oct. 21 – 25 (8)	<i>Memory</i> Kolber, "Ethical implications of memory dampening"	<i>Enhancement</i> - May, <i>Neuroethics</i>, ch. 7 - Chatterjee, "Cosmetic neurology"	<i>Changing your mind</i> Glannon, "Stimulating brains, altering minds"
Oct. 28 - Nov. 1 (9)	<i>Direct brain stimulation</i> Roskies, "Agency and intervention"	<i>Neurotechnology and volition</i> Schönau et al., "Mapping the dimensions of agency"	<i>Developmental Neuroscience</i> Baird et al., "Juvenile neurolaw"
Nov. 4 – 8 (10)	<i>Addiction</i> May, <i>Neuroethics</i>, ch. 5	<i>Mental disorders</i> May, <i>Neuroethics</i>, ch. 4	<i>Psychopathic diagnosis</i> Blair, "The cognitive neuroscience of psychopathy"
Nov. 11 – 15 (11)	<i>Treatment</i> Maibom, "The mad, the bad, and the psychopath"	<i>Criminology</i> Kiehl and Hoffmann, "The criminal psychopath"	<i>Lie detection</i> Seaman, "Your brain on lies"
Nov. 18 – 22 (12)	<i>Neuroscience and legal evidence</i> Roskies et al., "Neuroimaging in court: Less biasing than feared"	<i>Privacy</i> Wolpe, "Neuroprivacy and cognitive liberty"	<i>Neuropolitics</i> Schreiber, "Neuropolitics: Twenty years later"

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Nov. 25 – 29 (13)	<i>Neuroeconomics</i> • Levallois et al., “Translating upwards” RESEARCH PAPER DUE	THANKSGIVING	
Dec. 2 – 6 (14)	<i>Neuromarketing</i> • Stanton et al., “Neuromarketing: Ethical implications of its use and potential misuse”	<i>Detecting consciousness</i> • Friedrich & Jox, “Disorders of consciousness and the use of neurotechnologies”	<i>Neuroprediction</i> Poldrack et al., “Predicting violent behavior: what can neuroscience add?”
Dec. 9 – 13 (15)	<i>Lifestyle drugs</i> • Mann and Sahakian, “Modafinil and the increasing lifestyle use of smart drugs by healthy people”	<i>The translation problem</i> • Frankcen & Slors, “The translation problem”	<i>Neurohype</i> • Lilienfield et al., “Neurohype: A field guide to exaggerated brain-based claims”