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CS 681 Bioethics: Technology, Culture and the Future

James R. Thobaben

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BIOETHICS: Technology, Culture & the Future
CS 681
James R. Thobaben, Ph.D., M.P.H.
ASBURY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Thursday 16 March 2005 4:00 – 9:00 pm
Friday 17 March 2005 8:00 am – 6:00 pm
Saturday 18 March 2005 8:00 am – 6:00 pm

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Office Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 1:30 - 3:30 pm & by appointment

Purpose:
To prepare students for ministry by training them to analyze and address issues in the arenas of healthcare and biotechnology from a Christian perspective. In particular to introduce students to concerns arising with the increased use of various human biotechnologies (including in vitro fertilization, cloning, and genetic engineering), abortion, and transplantation. To develop ministers who are responsive to the needs, contexts, and insights of parishioners and members of the larger community who are patients, family members of patients, or practitioners. To enable ministers to equip their congregations for understanding their moral responsibility in decisions about the delivery and receiving of health care and the impact of social decisions in health care and biotechnology on the broader community.

This course is one of three 2-hour courses focusing on bioethics. The other two examine ecological concerns and clinical care concerns (specifically focusing on sickness, disability, and death).

OBJECTIVES:
Students will be able:
To demonstrate competence with various Biblical and Christian traditions used in responding to moral issues in the fields of health care and biotechnology, specifically those of abortion, birth technologies, organ transplantation, genetic testing, stem cell research, and genetic alteration.
To demonstrate competence with various ethical categories and frameworks used in responding to health care and biotechnology issues.
To demonstrate competence in utilizing social and cultural analysis in response to contemporary health care and biotechnology issues.
To explain how technology can assist and/or hurt various individuals and groups in society
To apply ethical analysis in developing responses to health care and biotechnology issues at a congregational and/or institutional level.
To explain how responses to moral problems and moral integrity shape congregational life.
To recognize the distinctive insights arising from particular social locations (these include particularity
arising from ethnic, gender, and class location; also, specific recognition of the insights of persons with disabling conditions).

To describe how responses to bioethical concerns, in particular those arising from biotechnologies, shape society.

As a second course in ethics, students will be able:

**Students will be able:**

- To demonstrate competence with various Biblical and Christian traditions used in responding to selected moral issues.
- To demonstrate competence with various ethical categories and frameworks used in responding to specific contemporary moral issues.
- To demonstrate competence in utilizing social, cultural, and/or historical analysis in response to contemporary moral issues.
- To apply ethical analysis in developing responses to moral issues at a congregational and/or institutional level.
- To recognize the distinctive insights arising from particular social locations (these may include, but are not limited to, particularity arising from ethnic, gender, class, and geographic location).

**TEXTS:**

**REQUIRED:**

Teays, Wanda & Purdy, Laura. _Bioethics, Justice, and Health Care_  
Section 3: Medical Experimentation  
Section 4: The Body as Property  
Section 4: Individual Decision Making  
Section 6: Abortion & Birth Control  
Section 7: Reproductive Tech & Surrogacy  
Section 8: Genetics & Cloning

Peterson, James C. _Genetic Turning Points_

Chia, Cooper, Thobaben, Fergusson, and Kilner, _Bioethics: Obstacle or Opportunity for the Gospel_  

Hauerwas, Stanley, “Abortion: Theologically Understood”  
[http://www.lifewatch.org/abortion.html](http://www.lifewatch.org/abortion.html)

Durham Declaration  
[http://www.lifewatch.org/durham.html](http://www.lifewatch.org/durham.html)

President’s Council on Bioethics, _Beyond Therapy: Biotechnology & the Pursuit of Happiness_  

National Human Genome Research Institute "Genetics and the future of Medicine"  
[http://www.nhgri.nih.gov/Pages/EducationKit/brochure.html](http://www.nhgri.nih.gov/Pages/EducationKit/brochure.html) (SCAN: “Policy & Ethics” and “Glossary”)

Human Genome Program, Department of Energy, “Genomics and Its Impact on Science and Society: The Human Genome Project and Beyond”  

**EXPECTATIONS:**

*Bioethics: Technology, Culture, and the Future is a full two hour course. Students should read all of the material before the intensive class sessions begin. The exam is given about a week after the class meetings end. The final paper is due one week after. Think of this as a one-month course; do not try to cram all the reading into the week of classes.*

_Spring2006_  
_bioethics-tech&future-S2006_
Written Work:  12 - 14 page term paper. Term paper options #1, #2, & #3 do not require approval of topic; #4 does. Make sure the paper includes a "fair" consideration of all major positions and a clear assertion of the position you hold. The papers should include moral reasoning explicitly intended for the Christian community, as well as arguments that would be coherent in a highly secularized setting. **Do not** focus on counseling issues, but on social and cultural factors and on moral reasoning.

#1 Is a “chimera” with human genes moral?
#2 Is the use of human stem cells for research and/or treatment morally acceptable?
#3 What are the moral limits to protest against or for abortion “rights?”
#4 Open topic, but must focus on ethics, not counseling or pastoral care.

All written work must be typed with 12 point type, one inch margins on all four sides, and true double spacing. Do not include substantial quotes from Scripture; use citations. Written material will be evaluated for reasoning, referencing, and for structure and grammar. All references must be noted properly; include page numbers or download information, when appropriate. Follow page limit requirements. Required length of paper does not include reference or title pages. In accordance with ATS policy, all written work must use inclusive language when reference is made to human beings (male and female). This provides for both greater inclusion and greater precision.

Papers are graded anonymously. Each paper should include a title page with the student’s name and birthday (in the month/day form; the year is not necessary). All subsequent pages should include only the birthday number, written in the top right corner.

**Papers are due at 12:00 noon on Monday April 3 (Monday of Reading Week) at Dr. Thobaben’s office in Wilmore.** There will be a penalty for late papers commensurate with the degree of lateness and the adequacy of the excuse.

**Final Examination:** A one-hour, in-class final. Part of the exam will be an objective examination over concepts in medical ethics and part will be a response to a case study. **The exam will be given on Thursday March 23 at 12:00 noon** (time subject to change). As with the papers, the exam will be graded anonymously. Students NOT living in or near Wilmore may negotiate to have the exam taken off-site.

**Participation:** Students are required to complete all assigned readings. Acknowledgement of completion will be sought the last day of class. Failure to complete readings on time may result in a lowering of the final grade, as will poor attendance for class. The deduction for low participation and/or late or incomplete reading of assigned material will be up to 10% against the final grade (a full letter grade reduction).

**FINAL GRADE:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Date:</th>
<th>Time:</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Examination</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>March 23</td>
<td>12:00 noon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term Paper</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>April 3</td>
<td>12:00 noon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>Deduction if lacking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Deduction if lacking</td>
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**Grade Range:** Work for CS 635 will be evaluated at a graduate/professional school level.

- A (93-100) = Unusually high quality, exceptional work
- A- (90-92) = Far above average, fine work
- B+ (87-89) = Above average for graduate work
- B (83-86) = Very good, but average for graduate work
- B- (80-82) = Slightly below average for graduate work
- C+ (77-79) = Meets requirements, with noticeable inadequacies for graduate work
- C (73-76) = Meets requirements, with gaps for graduate work
- C- (70-72) = Meets requirements, but with significant gaps for graduate work
- D+ (67-69) = Minimal work, acceptable
- D (63-66) = Minimal work, barely acceptable
- D- (60-62) = Acceptable, but only with great reservation
- F (> 60) = Failure; unacceptable work
Session #1  
**INTRODUCTION TO COURSE**

**REVIEW OF MORAL REASONING**

**SCIENCE, RELIGION, POLITICS, THE MARKET, & TECHNOLOGY**
- Two cultures, or a whole lot more
- Progress and technology
- Creation & Creator
- Does this mean anything for the local church?

Sessions #2  
**AN INTRODUCTION TO THE BASIC SCIENCE (Neil Lamb, Ph.D.)**

Sessions #3  
**BEGETTING, REJECTING, AND "PERFECTING"**
- Prenatal diagnosis
- Eugenics
- Birth technologies (in vitro, etc.)
- Cloning
- Etc.

10:00 am: **FIELD TRIP: Central Baptist ART Facility** (Hosts: Dr. Larry Gray, VP and Chair, Institutional Ethics Committee; Dr. Christina Bastias, Director, Reproductive Endocrinology Laboratory)

1:00 pm: Session #3 will continue after returning from Central Baptist.

Sessions #4  
**RESEARCH AS DONATION OF THE SELF**
- Stem Cell Research
- History: Progress & Tragedy
- Concept of “Risk”
- Etc.

Session #5  
**ABORTION: SOLUTION OR FINAL SOLUTION**
- History
- Women and Preborns: Power & Powerlessness

Session #6  
**GIVING AND GETTING: The Donation of Human Substance**
- Blood Donation
- Organ Transplant
- Stem Cell Research & Therapy
- Human research
- Etc.

Session #7  
**OTHER SPECIES**
- Using animals in research
- Monocultures
- “Kudzu Effect” (Invasive Species)
- Chimeras
- Safety of foods
- Pollution control
- Patenting life
- Etc.

**FINAL THOUGHTS AND CONSIDERATIONS**