

Reproductive Ethics

Phil 171B, Spring 2019

Harvard University

Instructor

K. Lindsey Chambers (lchambers@fas.harvard.edu)

Meeting

Emerson 106

T 3-5

Office Hours

Emerson 309

Thursdays from 12-2

Course Information

We are generally prohibited from acting on the bodies of other persons. I cannot decide for you what food you will put in your body, what exercise (if any) you will do, what color you will dye your hair, or whether you will have corrective eye surgery. However, parents are generally allowed to act on the bodies of their children: they feed them, change their diapers, cut their hair, make them play sports, make major medical decisions, etc. Reproductive technology has now made it possible for parents to shape their children's bodies by creating children with specific physical traits. In this seminar, we will explore the limits of parental permission to shape the bodies of their future children. We will ask the question: whose body is it anyway? We will consider questions like the following: Is there a moral difference between making a child wear glasses and selecting for a child with good eyesight? Should parents be permitted to select for disability? Do parents have an obligation to enhance their children's physical or mental capacities? We will consider how thinking about the obligations parents have to their existing children bears on what prospective parents owe their future children.

Evaluation

Your grade will be comprised of the following components:

Component	Weight	Due Date
Weekly discussion posts	25%	Sundays (midnight) or Tuesdays (noon)
Presentations	25%	TBD (twice)
1 st Paper (4-5 pages)	20%	March 12 th , 3pm (online and hard copy)
2 nd Paper (7-9 pages)	30%	May 10 th (online and hard copy)

Weekly Discussion Postings

Each week you will be required to either : 1) post a question on the course website about the week's readings by midnight Sunday the week you are presenting at seminar, or 2) post a response to a presenting classmate's question before seminar on Tuesday (3pm). Presenters should think about what question or questions you want your classmates to think about before you present in seminar. Respondents should bring a copy of your response (printed out) to seminar, so that you are ready to discuss your answers in class.

Papers

The papers should be submitted via the course website at 10:30am on the day they are due. Late papers will be docked 1/3 of a letter grade for each day it's late.

Writing Resources

I have posted a resource on how to write a philosophy paper on the course website. Philosophy papers are not research papers. You will be expected to have your own view about the arguments presented in class. Expect to begin working on your paper well ahead of the deadline.

I encourage you to brainstorm with classmates, discuss your ideas with me at office hours, and make use of the Philosophy Department's Writing Fellow, Noel Dominguez (ndominguez@g.harvard.edu). You can schedule a meeting with the DWF here (<https://projects.iq.harvard.edu/phil-dwf/writing-meetings>). Note that the meeting slots fill up quickly around mid-term and at the end of term.

Academic Integrity

Please familiarize yourself with Harvard University's honor code, available here (<https://honor.fas.harvard.edu/honor-code>) and on the course website. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please see me before turning in your work. All work is expected to be your own and original (not previously submitted to another class).

Presentations/Discussion Leading Sessions

During our first session, I will distribute a presentation schedule. I'll ask you to think about your preferences and email me within a couple of days so that we can get started with presentations by our second course meeting. Each of you will be expected to present two times during the semester.

Presentations include the following components:

- Complete the seminar readings and consult with any other presenters for the week to avoid overlap of content. You should have this conversation early enough to meet the discussion question posting deadline.
- Meet with me by the Thursday before your presentation to go over your plan and any questions you have on the reading. Meetings with me can take place in person or over Skype.
- Post two discussion questions on the relevant discussion page on our Canvas site. Discussion questions should be posted no later than midnight on the Sunday before the

seminar meeting, so that other students can respond to the discussion questions by noon on Tuesdays.

- Prepare (and duplicate for distribution) a one page, double-sided (or shorter) handout for your presentation. Where possible, you should make references to issues and questions raised during previous sessions, and to points raised by seminar members in their discussion postings.

Course Readings and Schedule

All readings will be posted on the Canvas website. Readings are subject to change.

Parents and Children: A tension	
Jan 29 th : The parent-child relationship	<p>Brighthouse and Swift, “Parents’ Rights and the Value of the Family” <i>Ethics</i> (2006)</p> <p>Brennan and Noggle, “The Moral Status of Children: Children’s Rights, Parents’ Rights, and Family Justice” <i>Social Theory and Practice</i> (1997)</p> <p>Optional:</p> <p>Schoeman, “Rights of Children, Rights of Parents, and the Moral Basis of the Family” <i>Ethics</i> (1980)</p> <p>Archard, “The Obligations and Responsibilities of Parenthood” in <i>Procreation and Parenthood</i> (2010)</p> <p>Clayton, “Childrearing Rights and Their Distribution” in <i>Justice and Legitimacy in Upbringing</i> (2006)</p>
Feb 4 th : Medical decision-making for children, therapeutic or enhancing?	<p>Loretta M. Kopelman, “The Best-Interests Standard as Threshold, Ideal, and Standard of Reasonableness” <i>Journal of Medicine and Philosophy</i> (1997)</p> <p>“Distinguishing Therapy and Enhancement”, Staff working paper, President’s Council on Bioethics (2002)</p> <p>Martin Benjamin, James Muyskens and Paul Saenger, “Short Children, Anxious Parents: Is Growth Hormone the Answer?” <i>The Hastings Center Report</i> (1984)</p>
Feb 12 th : Surgically shaping children	<p>Ellen Feder, “In Their Best Interests: Parents’ Experience of Atypical Genitalia” in <i>Surgically Shaping Children</i> (2006)</p> <p>Yael Tamir, “Hands Off Clitoridectomy,” <i>Boston Review</i> (1996)</p> <p>Michael Benatar and David Benatar, “Between Prophylaxis and Child Abuse: The Ethics of Neonatal</p>

	<p>Male Circumcision” <i>American Journal of Bioethics</i> (2003)</p> <p>Optional:</p> <p>Alice Dreger, “What to Expect When You Have the Child You Weren’t Expecting” in <i>Surgically Shaping Children</i> (2006)</p>
The Problem of Procreation	
Feb 12 th : Procreation and the metaphysics of harm	<p>Derek Parfit, <i>Reasons and Persons</i> (1987), excerpts</p> <p>Robert Adams, “Must God Create the Best?” <i>Philosophical Review</i> (1972)</p> <p>Gregory Kavka, “The Paradox of Future Individuals” <i>Philosophy & Public Affairs</i> (1981), excerpts</p> <p>Optional:</p> <p>Michael Hanser, “Harming Future People” <i>Philosophy & Public Affairs</i> (1990)</p>
Feb 19 th : The risks of procreation	<p>Rivka Weinberg, “Imposing Existence” in <i>The Risk of a Lifetime: How, When, and Why Procreation May be Permissible</i> (2015)</p> <p>Seana Shiffrin, “Wrongful Life, Procreative Responsibility, and the Significance of Harm,” <i>Legal Theory</i> (1999)</p> <p>Optional:</p> <p>Elizabeth Harman, “Can We Harm and Benefit in Creating?” <i>Philosophical Perspectives</i> (2004)</p>
Feb 26 th : Wronging without harming	<p>Mianna Lotz, “Feinberg, Mills, and the Child’s Right to an Open Future,” <i>Journal of Social Philosophy</i> (2006)</p> <p>Lindsey Chambers, “Wronging Future Children” <i>Ergo</i> (2019)</p> <p>Optional:</p> <p>James Woodward, “The Non-Identity Problem,” <i>Ethics</i> 1986)</p> <p>Rahul Kumar, “Who Can Be Wronged?” <i>Philosophy & Public Affairs</i> (2003)</p>
Reproductive Selection	
March 5 th : Should parents select <i>against</i> disability?	<p>John Harris, “Should We Attempt to Eradicate Disability?” <i>Applied Ethics in a Troubled World</i> (1998)</p>

	<p>Simo Vehmas, “Is It Wrong to Deliberately Conceive or Give Birth to a Child with Mental Retardation?” <i>Journal of Medicine and Philosophy</i> (2002)</p> <p>Adrienne Asch, “Can Aborting ‘Imperfect’ Children be Immoral?,” in <i>Ethical Issues in Modern Medicine</i>, 5th ed. (1999)</p> <p>Listen to: Michael Bérubé, “The Value and the Virtue of Raising a Child with Down Syndrome” (2016)</p> <p>Optional:</p> <p>Nicola Jane Williams, “Harms to “Others” and the Selection Against Disability View” <i>Journal of Medicine and Philosophy</i> (2017)</p>
<p>March 12th: May parents select <i>for</i> disability?</p>	<p>Liza Murdy, “A World of Their Own” <i>Washington Post</i> (2002)</p> <p>Julian Savulescu, “Deaf Lesbians, ‘Designer Disability,’ and the Future of Medicine,” <i>British Medical Journal</i> (2002)</p> <p>Melissa Fahmy, “On the Supposed Harm of Selecting for Deafness” <i>Bioethics</i> (2011)</p> <p>Harlan Lane and Michael Grodin, “Ethical issues in cochlear implant surgery: an exploration into disease, disability, and the best interests of the child” <i>Kennedy Institute of Ethics Journal</i> (1997)</p> <p>Optional:</p> <p>Edward Dolnick, “Deafness as Culture” <i>The Atlantic Monthly</i> (1993)</p>
<p>March 19th: Spring break!</p>	
<p>March 26th: Disability: disadvantage or mere-difference?</p>	<p>Jeff McMahan, “Causing Disabled People to Exist and Causing People to be Disabled” <i>Ethics</i> (2005)</p> <p>Elizabeth Barnes, “Valuing Disability, Causing Disability” <i>Ethics</i> (2014)</p>
<p>April 2nd: Sex-selection</p>	<p>Sophia Wong, “At Home with Down Syndrome and Gender” <i>Hypatia</i> (2002)</p> <p>Christine Overall, “Sex-preselection” in <i>Ethics and Human Reproduction: A Feminist Analysis</i> (1987)</p> <p>Rosalind McDougall, “Acting Parentally: An Argument Against Sex Selection” <i>Journal of Medical Ethics</i> (2005)</p> <p>Optional:</p>

	<p>David Heyd, “Male or Female, We Will Create Them: The Ethics of Sex Selection for Non-Medical Reasons,” <i>Ethical Perspectives</i> (2003)</p> <p>Laura Purdy, “Is Preconception Sex Selection Necessarily Sexist?,” <i>Reproductive BioMedicine Online</i> (2007)</p>
April 9 th : Duty of procreative beneficence	<p>Julian Savulescu, “Procreative Beneficence: Why we Should Select the Best Children” <i>Bioethics</i> (2001)</p> <p>Julian Savulescu and Guy Kahane, “The Moral Obligation to Create Children with the Best Chance of the Best Life” <i>Bioethics</i> (2009)</p> <p>Andrew Hotke, “The Principle of Procreative Beneficence: Old Arguments and A New Challenge” <i>Bioethics</i> (2012)</p> <p>Optional: Rebecca Bennett, “The Fallacy of the Principle of Procreative Beneficence” <i>Bioethics</i> (2009)</p>
April 16 th : Enhancement and the parent-child relationship	<p>David Archard, “Genetic Enhancement and Procreative Autonomy” <i>Studies in Ethics, Law, and Technology</i> (2007)</p> <p>Michael Sandel, “The Case Against Perfection” <i>The Atlantic Monthly</i> (2004)</p> <p>Anca Gheaus, “Parental Enhancement and Symmetry of Power in the Parent–Child Relationship” <i>Journal of Medical Ethics</i> (2016)</p> <p>Optional: Francis Kamm, “Is There a Problem With Enhancement?” <i>American Journal of Bioethics</i> (2005)</p>
April 23 rd : Fairness objection to enhancement	<p>Allen Buchanan, Dan Brock, et al, “Genes, Justice, and Human Nature” in <i>From Chance to Choice: Genetics and Justice</i> (2001)</p> <p>Julian Savulescu, “Justice, Fairness, and Enhancement” <i>Annals of New York Academy of Science</i> (2006)</p> <p>Michele Loi, “On the Very Idea of Genetic Justice” <i>Cambridge Quarterly of Healthcare Ethics</i> (2012)</p>
April 30 th : Emerging technologies: Three parent embryos, CRISPR, and cloning	<p>Tina Rulli, “The Mitochondrial Replacement ‘Therapy’ Myth” <i>Bioethics</i> (2017)</p> <p>He Jiankui et al, “Draft Ethical Principles for Therapeutic Assisted Reproductive Technologies” <i>The CRISPR Journal</i> (2018)</p>

Eric T. Juengst et al, "Is Enhancement the Price of Prevention in Human Gene Editing?" *The CRISPR Journal* (2018)

Brighouse and Ahlberg, "An Argument Against Cloning" *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* (2011)

Optional:

Tina Rulli, "What is the Value of Three Parent IVF" *Hastings Center Report* (2016)