

17th SUMMER COURSE IN BIOETHICS

July 9 to 13, 2018 – Rome, Italy

Human Enhancement: Bioethical Challenges of Emerging Technologies

17th Summer and International Refresher Course in Bioethics will take place from July 9 to 13, 2018 at our University Campus: Via degli Aldobrandeschi 190. 00165 Rome. Italy. The course, entitled *Human Enhancement: Bioethical Challenges of Emerging Technologies*, will be offered in English and Italian.

The course is organized by the School of Bioethics with the collaboration of the UNESCO Chair in Bioethics and Human Rights established at the Pontifical Regina Apostolorum Athenaeum and with the Università Europea di Roma.

Why this subject?

Human enhancement technologies are used not only to treat diseases and disabilities, but also to increase human capacities and qualities (motor, mental, emotional and aesthetic, and so on). Certain enhancement technologies are already available, for instance, reproductive technologies and plastic surgery. Other technologies are called emerging due to their innovative aspect, such as genetic engineering. There are also speculative technologies, which are only a work hypothesis in biomedical research, for example, mind uploading.

A study and analysis of human behavior, as well as the research, production and use of these technologies from bioethical, social, and legal standpoints, seem appropriate and necessary. On the one hand, the scientific community has taken an increasing interest in these innovations and allocated substantial public and private resources to them. On the other hand, such research can have an impact, positive or negative, on individuals, the society, and future generations.

Some have advocated the right to use such technologies freely, considering primarily the value of freedom and individual autonomy for those users. Others have called attention to the risks and potential harms of these technologies, not only for the individual, but also for society as a whole. Such use, it is argued, could accentuate the discrimination among persons with different abilities, thus increasing injustice and the gap between the rich and the poor. There is a dilemma regarding how to regulate such practices through national and international laws, so as to safeguard the common good and protect vulnerable persons.

What will you learn?

The course offers an interdisciplinary study of human enhancement to better understand the techniques, the benefits, and the inherent risks of these technologies. What will be the impact on our understanding of being human—human nature as we understand it today—and what are the possible consequences for future generations?

Participants will acquire the skills to make an ethical assessment of these cutting-edge technologies and learn to manage the use of these technologies in life and medical sciences and make consultations about them. In addition, they will be able to apply this knowledge professionally in the fields of science, medicine, politics, law, sociology, communication, and education.

Who should attend?

The course is open to all, but is of especial interest for physicians and health care workers; biologists, neuroscientists, psychologists, psychiatrists and psychotherapists; educators and professors; priests, religious, catechists and other pastoral agents; lawyers and jurists; journalists, communicators and sociologists, as well as those who are interested in the cultural and social dynamics of our times and wish to have informed and critical criteria on cutting-edge biotechnological, ethical and social issues.

What will be covered?

The course will undertake a bioethical, interdisciplinary and integral approach to study emerging technologies and the new generation biotechnologies in life and health sciences. The realization and the utilization of these technologies, be they in the human genome or the brain, might increase the gaps in the social, economic and cultural spheres. Without ethical criteria and political prudence, they carry the risk of accentuating the differences in individual abilities and skills with great consequences in what it means to be human and social co-existence.

Some topics:

- The dream of “improving” humanity: Convenience, temptations and challenges of perfection and immortality.
- Science and technology serving the person (body, mind, spirit).
- Body and mind control: emerging and converging improvement technologies.
- Theories and arguments for and against enhancement.
- Interventions on humans: therapy and enhancement.
- Genetic and biological enhancement: living healthier and living longer.
- Neuro-cognitive enhancement: becoming smarter.
- Neuro-emotional enhancement: becoming more empathic.
- Motor enhancement: becoming stronger, and faster. Sports performance and doping.
- Aesthetic enhancement: becoming more beautiful.
- Moral enhancement: become more social and better citizens.
- Gender perspective and enhancement.
- Human-machine interaction and robotics.
- Military use of human enhancement.
- Cultural and religious views on enhancement.
- Impact of enhancement on human nature, freedom, justice and the common good.
- National and international regulation on enhancement and impact on human rights.
- Nature and humanity in transhumanism and posthumanism.

How is this taught?

The course is structured in classes, conferences, Q&A sessions, movie-forums, and interactive group activities. An interdisciplinary study will be carried out with attention to the different cultural perspectives of our society. Professors of the School of Bioethics and other experts will participate as speakers and moderators of group dynamics.

At the end of the course students who require the European credits ECTS take an evaluation test.

How do I sign up?

The course will be immediately after the summer course of introduction to bioethics (July 2-6, 2018) and will be held from July 9 to 13, 2018.

The course will be held in English, with simultaneous translation into Italian.

The summer course is one of the elective courses of the Licentiate in Bioethics and is valid for 3 ECTS credits.

Registration Deadline: July 9, 2018

Course Director

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In Collaboration with

