**Neuroethics**

Fall 2009

**Philosophy 3600:461/561**

Professor Howard Ducharme

TTH 10:45-12:00 CAS 400

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**OFFICE HRS**: 3-4 PM TTh, or by appointment

**TEXTS**:

1. Howard Ducharme, “Personal Identity in Samuel Clarke”, Journal of the History of Philosophy 24 (1986), 359-383.
2. Howard Ducharme, “The Image of God and the Moral Identity of Persons,” Current Issues in Law and Religion (Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 1-26.
3. Walter Glannon, Bioethics and the Brain (Oxford University Press, 2007).
4. Neil Levy, Neuroethics: Challenges for the 21st Century (Cambridge University Press, 2007).
5. Optional: Peter Singer, The Collapse of the Traditional Ethic
6. Optional: John Hick, The New Frontier of Religion and Science: Religious Experience, Neuroscience and the Transcendent

**GRADE**: **One Neuroethics Classroom Presentation** (50 points), **two research papers** (100 points each; 200 points total)**,** a **Neuroethics Dictionary** (50 points), **and** the student’s **attendance** (see below) will determine the grade (300 total points). Converting points into percentages and letter grades with plus/minus will determine the final grade (e.g., 270 total points from the scores above, minus 10 points [for 4 missed classes, being 2 over the limit] divided by 300 points = final percentage). The final grade will be assigned by the final percentage of points for the course according to the grading scale: A (100%-94%), A- (93%-90%), B+ (89%-87%), B (86%-84%), B- (83%-80%), etc., where 60% is the lowest D- and ≤59% is F.

**POLICIES**: **Attendance will be taken each class session.** **You will be allowed two absences throughout the semester. Each absence after those two will result in a 5 point per absence deduction from your total point accumulation for the course**. Missing a guest speakers lecture counts as two misses. There may be some extra credit offerings through the semester.

Make-Up Exams: Make up examinations are given only under exceptional conditions and only with prior approval of the instructor. If you know you will have a conflict, communicate ahead of time.

Cheating: Any student caught cheating or plagiarizing on an exam, paper, or other assignment will automatically receive a grade of 0 points (F) on that assignment. In addition to this, the student’s course grade will be lowered by an additional full letter grade. When appropriate, this issue will be reported to the proper University authorities.

Withdrawals: The University’s withdrawal deadlines are as follows:

# Sept 7 Last day to withdraw with no signature (advisor’s signature required after this date).

Oct 16 Last day to withdraw with only advisor’s signature (instructor’s signature also req. after this date).

Nov 13 Final day to process a withdrawal (no withdrawals after this date).

Incompletes: A grade of incomplete indicates that a student has done passing work but for reasons beyond his/her control, i.e., a serious medical problem, cannot complete all of the required work. The INC must be removed no later than the end of the following semester or it converts to an F. Before an INC is assigned, the student and the instructor must sign a statement indicating the reason for the INC, the specific work to be completed, and a reasonable deadline for removing the INC. Requests to do additional work for the course or the pressures of a normal academic workload are not sufficient reasons to give an INC.

Topics and Reading Schedule

**Part I: The Death of the Soul and the Mysteries of Neuroscience (Week 1-2)**

1. “Materialism is the religion of our time, at least among most of the professional experts in the fields of philosophy, psychology, cognitive science, and other disciplines that study the mind” (Searle, 2004, 38; in Hick, 55).
2. The classic, common sense, common-to-all-world-religions soul is an irreducible, non-biological living, self-conscious substance, directly knowable and essentially characterized as the self-conscious moral agent.
3. The core objective of neuroscience and neuroethics is neuro-reductionism -- to scientifically explain (without remainder) the self-conscious moral agent using only the biological activities of the physical brain.
4. So, we must first be crystal clear in understanding the human soul, to be able to understand and critically evaluate the success or failure of neuroscience/neuroethics to explain away the self-conscious moral agent as no more than biochemical and bioelectrical capacities and activities of neural networks of the physical brain.

**Read**:

Ducharme, “Personal Identity in Samuel Clarke” (JHP); and

Ducharme, “The Image of God and the Moral Identity of Persons,” Current Issues

**Part II: Bioethics and the Brain (Week 3-8)**

What does a brain scan scan? What is a neuroimage imagining? Glannon, 3-44

Ethical issues:

In Predictive and Diagnostic Neuroimaging Glannon, 45-75

In Pharmacological and Psychological Interventions Glannon, 76-115

In Neurosurgery, Psychosurgery, and Neurostimulation Glannon, 116-147

In Brain Death Glannon, 148-178

**Paper I (100 points)**

**Students class presentation scheduled throughout the semester (50 points)**

**Part III: The Challenges of Neuroethics (Week 9-15)**

Neuroscience Peering into the Extended Mind via the Brain Levy, 1-68

Changing our minds Levy, 69-87

Authenticity

Self-knowledge

Mechanization of the self

The Presumption against direct manipulation Levy, 88-132

The treatment/enhancement distinction

Inequality

Reading minds/controlling minds Levy, 133-156

The neuroethics of memory Levy, 157-196

The self of self-control Levy, 197-221

The neuroscience of free will Levy, 222-257

Self-deception and the pathological Levy, 258-280

The neuroethics of ethics Levy, 281-316

**Paper II (100 points)**

**Assignment: Dictionary Creation – create your own personal Neuroethics Dictionary (50 points) – collect these and any other important and relevant terms and concepts throughout the course; turn in via e-file the final week of class.**

Definitions of the basic concepts must include: matter, energy, activity, the “god particle”, DNA, chromosome, gene, human genome, cell, organism, neuron, neural network, brain, consciousness, self-consciousness, conscience, *synderesis*, perception, neural correlate of consciousness (NCC), “correlation is not cause”, qualia, mind, person, soul, capacity, causal powers, agent causation, determinism, environmental/social conditioning, free will, Reductive Physicalism, “Bundle of Perceptions”, Substance Dualism, Emergentism, Property Dualism, Personalism, AI, cognitive neuroscience, post-humanism, empiricism, rationalism, self-knowledge, perception, perceiver, feelings/emotions, idea/concept, abstract concept, reason, moral experience, ethical perception/moral judgment, ethical realism, ethical anti-realism, ethical naturalism, ethical non-naturalism, ethical intuitionism, moral agent, objective values, ethical subjectivism, altruism, evil, injustice, human worth/human dignity.