

SPECIAL TOPICS: NEUROETHICS

Prof. Gross,
Thursdays 2-4PM
Meyer 815

NEUROETHICS

Neuroethics is the study of ethical, social, philosophical and political issues arising from discoveries in neuroscience. Some of these issues come from new technologies such as brain imaging and brain stimulation. Others come from new drugs that affect memory, mood, and thought. Others are far older. Among the questions we may consider are: How has neuroscience been used to justify racism and sexism? Can drugs or gene manipulation make us happier or smarter? Who are new drugs tested on? When does the fetus become conscious? Is this relevant for abortion and stem cell research? When does consciousness end from injury or disease? Can thoughts (or lies) be read? Can they be controlled? How does knowledge that the brain controls behavior impact on ethical and legal responsibility? What types of experiments should be allowed on humans and animals? What are the effects of abuse and deprivation on brain development? What is the role of the brain in sex and gender? What are the neural and evolutionary bases of ethics?

For the first few weeks there will be introductory and historical lectures, reading and discussion. After that, student presentations will be a major part of the course.

Recommended works will include *Henrietta Lacks*, *Project Nim* (film), *The Constant Gardener* (film), Allegra Goodman's *Intuition*, Sinclair Lewis's *Arrowsmith*.