

MHB 734 Topics in Biomedical Ethics BRAIN MATTERS

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This course deals with the social and ethical study of emerging neurosciences and technologies. Recent theories and innovations in neuroscience will not only alter diagnoses and treatment of disease and disorders, but some believe there may be significant impacts on criminal and civil law, social policy, and cultural notions of the self. The course includes readings from the Social Study of Science & Technology, Biomedical Ethics, Legal Studies and case studies from Neurology. Topics include: the implications of using brain imaging to determine "normal" and "abnormal" brain states or to predict behaviors; the use of psychopharmaceuticals for enhancing cognitive performance or changing behaviors; the ethics of using innovations such as neural prosthetics and neural stem cells; social and scientific theories of neural plasticity; neuroeconomics; and brain death & disorders of consciousness. In addition to ethical issues of basic research and clinical use, we will explore broader social and policy issues, including the potential for changing relations among the State, citizens (as patients and consumers), commercial interests, employers, policymakers, the courts and more.

The course is of interest for graduate students in the social sciences, law, policy studies & population health sciences, as well as students in the Clinical Neuroscience and Neuroscience and Public Policy Programs and medical & biological sciences and biomedical engineering. (3 credits). A 1-credit option may be available as needed.

Linda Hogle, Ph.D. is a medical anthropologist and an affiliate of the Neuroscience and Public Policy Program and the Center for Stem Cells & Regenerative Medicine. Her research and teaching interests include social and cultural issues related to emerging medical technologies and interdisciplinary perspectives on health, medicine and society.

