



Ethical Challenges in the 21st Century

4 Tuesdays at 7:30 PM - Fall 2008

Session 1: Ethics, Absolute Truths, Science, and Faith

Ideas about ethics and values in a historical and cultural perspective will be discussed. Specifically: Do ethics and values change? Where do our values come from? Plato argued the idea about absolute truth that lasted for 2,200 years – until Nietzsche objected to it. On the way, John Locke and David Hume formulated the concept about the Blank Slate, one of the most commonly accepted ideas about how Man perceives the world and develops values. We will also explore how we determine what is true? Can the idea about evolution and creation (Intelligent Design) coexist? Does Eastern philosophy offer a “new” and better way to understand truth?

Session 2: Transhumanism

Some people call transhumanism one of the world’s most dangerous ideas. Based upon the premise that the human species in its current form does not represent the end of our development as a species but rather a comparatively early step on our evolutionary path, transhumanists embrace the idea of Man-Machine hybrids that overcome limitations in our health, strength, intellect, and even life span. It will be argued that a modified human species is much closer to reality than we imagine. This raises issues of serious ethical consequences for this possible future – one that will amaze you as much as it will scare you.

Session 3: Bioethics and the frontier of neuroscience

We like to think that we are in control of our actions, but new results in neuro-science indicate that that may be wishful thinking. What does that mean for e.g. criminal behavior and society’s response to crime – and for our perception of being guilty? If we, by using biological intervention, can prevent or suppress criminal behavior, should we? Who should make those decisions? If it can be used in crime, why not in other areas? This lecture explores the frontier where science meets ethics. Be prepared to be challenged!

Session 4: Consciousness and Quantum Physics

When applying quantum physics to everyday situations in a completely new way, it offers a provocative understanding of the universe and ourselves. At the same time, phenomena we normally consider impossible or inconceivable, suddenly look startling possible and conceivable. Your perception of time will be warped and you will be sent to the edge of the universe without leaving your chair . . . well, actually, you will be at the edge of the universe! This promises to be a mind-opening and out-of-this world presentation.

For registration and venue information:

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