

Fall 2019

**(Tentative) Phil 285: Ethics and the Family**  
Tuesday 4:00-7:00PM  
HSS 7077

Instructor: Reuven Brandt  
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Office hours: Thur. 2-4PM  
Office: HSS 8029

**Seminar Description:**

This seminar is an introductory survey of ethical questions that arise in the domain of family-making. In the first part of the course we will look at various accounts of the conditions that give rise to parental responsibilities. In the second section we will look at the philosophical basis for parental rights, and what parents owe their children. In the final section of the course we will look at criticisms of the institution of marriage and examine what role, if any, the state should have in governing this kind of intimate personal relationship.

**Evaluation:**

**Seminar participation: 10%**

Each student is expected to arrive having read the readings and prepared to discuss them. If possible, please inform me of any absences ahead of time.

**Presentations: 20%**

Each student must give two presentations geared towards guiding class discussion. Each student presentation will have two parts: 20-30 min of presentation about one of the readings followed by 20-30 min of discussion guided by the student. Only the better presentation will count towards your final grade.

**Paper(s):70%**

Choice of either, (a) one 4000-5000 word final paper worth 70% due at the end of the day Friday Dec. 13<sup>th</sup>, or (b) two 2500-3000 words papers, one due by the end of the day November 8<sup>th</sup>, the other due by the end of the day Friday Dec. 13<sup>th</sup>. Essays must substantially engage with at least one of the required readings and topics must be approved by me in advance.

**Accommodation:**

If you require any accommodation (religious, medical, disability, etc.) please alert me in writing as soon as possible and I'll be more than happy to assist.

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**Course readings (all available online)**

**Oct 1**

Introductions

Bayne, Tim, and Avery Kolers. "Toward a pluralist account of parenthood." *Parental Rights and Responsibilities*. Routledge, 2017. 103-124.

**Oct 8**

Fuscaldo, Giuliana. "Genetic ties: are they morally binding?." *Bioethics* 20.2 (2006): 64-76.

Brake, Elizabeth. "Fatherhood and child support: Do men have a right to choose?." *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 22.1 (2005): 55-73.

*Recommended:*

Archard, David. "The obligations and responsibilities of parenthood." (2010).

Brake, Elizabeth. "Willing parents: A voluntarist account of parental role obligations." *Procreation and Parenthood: The Ethics of Bearing and Rearing Children*. Oxford University Press, 2010.

**Oct 15**

Benatar, David. "The unbearable lightness of bringing into being." *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 16.2 (1999): 173-180.

Weinberg, Rivka. "The moral complexity of sperm donation." *Bioethics* 22.3 (2008): 166-178.

Brandt, Reuven. "The transfer and delegation of responsibilities for genetic offspring in gamete provision." *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 34.5 (2017): 665-678.

*Recommended*

Porter, Lindsey. "Why and how to prefer a causal account of parenthood." *Journal of social philosophy* 45.2 (2014): 182.

Asymmetries, Sexual. "Procreators' Duties." *The Oxford Handbook of Reproductive Ethics* (2016): 301.

**Oct 22**

Brighouse, Harry, and Adam Swift. "Parents' Rights and the Value of the Family." *Ethics* 117.1 (2006): 80-108.

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Page, Edgar. "Parental rights." *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 1.2 (1984): 187-203.

*Recommended*

Schoeman, Ferdinand. "Rights of children, rights of parents, and the moral basis of the family." *Ethics* 91.1 (1980): 6-19.

Montague, Phillip. "The myth of parental rights." *Social Theory and Practice* 26.1 (2000): 47-68.

## Oct 29

GHEAUS, ANCA. "The Right to Parent One's Biological Baby." *The Journal of Political Philosophy* 20.4 (2011): 432-455.

Millum, Joseph. "How do we acquire parental rights?." *Social theory and practice* 36.1 (2010): 112.

## Nov 5

Steinbock, Bonnie. "Surrogate motherhood as prenatal adoption." *Law, Medicine and Health Care* 16.1-2 (1988): 44-50.

Allen, Anita L. "The black surrogate mother." *Harv. Blackletter J.* 8 (1991): 17.

Gheaus, Anca. "Biological parenthood: gestational, not genetic." *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 96.2 (2018): 225-240.

*Recommended:*

Anderson, Elizabeth S. "Is women's labor a commodity?." *Philosophy & public affairs* (1990): 71-92.

Arneson, Richard J. "Commodification and commercial surrogacy." *Philosophy & Public Affairs* (1992): 132-164.

## Nov 12

Feinberg, Joel. "The Child's Right to an Open Future". In: Aiken, William and LaFollette, Hugh eds. *Whose Child? Children's Rights, Parental Authority, and State Power*. Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1980: 124-153

Mills, Claudia. "The child's right to an open future?." *Journal of Social Philosophy* 34.4 (2003): 499-509.

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Lotz, Mianna. "Feinberg, Mills, and the child's right to an open future." *Journal of social philosophy* 37.4 (2006): 537-551.

*Recommended:*

Millum, Joseph. "The foundation of the child's right to an open future." *Journal of social philosophy* 45.4 (2014): 522.

**Nov 19**

Brighouse, Harry, and Adam Swift. "Legitimate parental partiality." *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 37.1 (2009): 43-80.

McLeod, Colin. "Parental responsibilities in an unjust world." (2010).

*Recommended:*

Parker, M. (2010-10-01). *An Ordinary Chance of a Desirable Existence. In Procreation and Parenthood: The Ethics of Bearing and Rearing Children.* : Oxford University Press.

**Nov 26**

Brake, Elizabeth. "Minimal marriage: What political liberalism implies for marriage law." *Ethics* 120.2 (2010): 302-337.

Clare Chambers, VII—the Marriage-Free State, *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, Volume 113, Issue 2\_pt\_2, 1 July 2013, Pages 123–143, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9264.2013.00348.x>

**Dec 3**

Landau, Iddo, 2004, "An Argument for Marriage," *Philosophy*, 79: 475–481.

Moller, Dan. "An argument against marriage." *Philosophy* 78.1 (2003): 79-91.