The once mythic prospect of the enhancement of human physical and mental powers is quickly becoming a reality. We now have the ability to change our brain chemistry and the expression of our genes in ways that promise to make us smarter, stronger, and even more ethical. The availability of enhancement technologies raises a host of philosophical questions that we will examine in this course. Does biomedical enhancement represent a fundamental departure from other ways (e.g. improved living standards, education) of making people better off? Ought there to be restrictions on which kinds of biomedical enhancements people are allowed to pursue? Is the option of biomedical enhancement for those who can afford it likely to reinforce the inequality among human beings, making it objectionable on grounds of justice? Is biomedical enhancement leading us beyond what is recognizable as a human life (toward the “transhuman”), and if so, is that something about which we should be concerned?

The goal of the course is to approach these questions from the perspective of philosophical theories of human well-being. If biomedical enhancement is likely to become part of many people’s lives, it is essential to understand how it can, and possibly cannot, make us better off than we would otherwise be.

I. Texts:

All assigned readings will be made available on the class TritonEd site.

II. Assignments and Grading (100% total)

1. In-class midterm, on Tu 4/25 (Week 4) (25%).

2. First paper, 4-6 pp., due on Tu 5/16 (Week 7) (30%).

3. Final paper, 6-8 pp, due in final exam period (35%).

4. Unannounced reading quizzes (10%)
III. Other Important Information

• Regular attendance and completion of the required reading ahead of class are critical. Engagement with the course presupposes that you have done the assigned reading and are prepared to discuss it in class.

• Use of computers and other electronic devices is allowed in class for legitimate pedagogical purposes, **not for web surfing, social media updates or personal communications.** In general, you should remain as focused on the content of the class as possible.

• If accommodations are needed for a disability or for religious reasons, please discuss the matter with me as soon as possible.

• Extensions will only be given to those who present evidence of a valid excuse in a timely manner. Note that computer or printer failure does **not** usually constitute a valid excuse, so be sure to take all necessary precautions to safeguard your work (backup, backup, backup!). If at any time you believe you have a legitimate claim to an extension, bring it to my attention as soon as possible (e.g., if you are going to be out of town for a legitimate purpose, such as a university-sponsored concert performance, athletic event, conference, or the equivalent). Unexcused late papers will be penalized the equivalent of one +/- letter grade per day.

• Students should familiarize themselves with the UCSD Policy on Integrity of Scholarship: [http://students.ucsd.edu/academics/academic-integrity/policy.html](http://students.ucsd.edu/academics/academic-integrity/policy.html). There is a zero-tolerance policy on plagiarism in this class. **If you are pressed for time or blocked, it is always better to talk with me and to take the late penalty if necessary, than to submit work that is not your own.** All written work will be submitted to turnitin.com, so there is a high probability that plagiarism will be detected. Anyone who is found to plagiarize work will receive an automatic F. Additional disciplinary penalties may be assigned by the UCSD administration. Receipt of this syllabus constitutes an acknowledgement that you are responsible for understanding and acting in accordance with UCSD guidelines on academic integrity.
IV. Schedule of Classes

Week 1
Tu 4/4  Introduction
Th 4/6  What is “Ethics”?  

Week 2
Tu 4/11 Therapy versus Enhancement

Th 4/13 The CRISPR Revolution
1. Siddhartha Mukherjee, “Now That We Can Alter Our Genetic Code, Should We?” (Tonic, 24 February 2017)  

Week 3
Tu 4/18 Enhancement: Against and For
2. The President’s Council on Bioethics, Beyond Therapy (2003, pp. 309-350)

Th 4/20
1. Allen Buchanan, Better than Human (2011), chaps. 1-3 (pp. 3-83)  
2. John Harris, “Enhancements are a Moral Obligation” (in Human Enhancement, ed. Savulescu and Bostrom, 2009, pp. 131-154)

Week 4
Tu 4/25 MIDTERM EXAM
Th 4/27 The Specter of Eugenics
Week 5  
**The New Eugenics**

Tu 5/2  

Th 5/4  

Week 6  
**Thinking About Disability**

Tu 5/9  

Th 5/11  
Paper Workshop

Week 7  
**Enhancement of Love**

Tu 5/16  

Th 5/18  

Week 8  
**Cognitive and Moral Enhancement**

Tu 5/23  

Th 5/25  

Week 9  
**Cognitive and Moral Enhancement**

Tu 5/30  

Th 6/1  
Week 10  **Transhumanism**


Final Paper due during final exam week.