

## Topics in Bioethics: Autonomy (Spring 2018)

Morality, one may be quick to judge, solely regulates how people ought to treat others. On reflection, this view is problematic and most likely false. A wide variety of primarily self-affecting acts such as suicide, self-deprecation, and self-enslavement are often considered to be morally wrong. As a corollary, it is sometimes argued that the state may interfere with one's personal freedom with the aim of protecting its citizens from harming themselves. In this course, we will examine the extent to which various types of entirely self-affecting actions can be morally wrong and the extent to which third parties may permissibly interfere with such self-affecting acts. In discussing these topics, we will gain insight into the moral dimensions of personal autonomy, respect for persons, beneficence, and authority.

### Readings

#### Part I – Kant on autonomy

Kant – *Groundwork of the metaphysics of morals*  
Kerstein – *Treating oneself as a means*

#### Part II: Euthanasia and suicide

Beauchamp & Childress – *Principles of biomedical ethics*, chapter IV  
Brandt – *The morality and rationality of suicide*  
Hume – *On suicide*  
Schuklenk – *End of life decision making in Canada*  
Velleman – *A right of self-termination?*

#### Part III: Paternalism

Beauchamp & Childress – *Principles of biomedical ethics*, chapter VI  
Sunstein & Thaler – *Libertarian Paternalism*

#### Part IV: Self-respect

Telfer – *Self-respect*  
Dillon – *Self-forgiveness and self-respect*

#### Part V – Unity of Persons

Doris – *Persons, situations, and virtue ethics*  
Frankfurt – *Freedom of the will and the concept of a person*  
White – *Resisting Procrastination: Kantian Autonomy and the Role of the Will*  
Nietzsche – Part from *Beyond good and evil*