This course focuses on the increasing power wielded by biomedicine. The acquisition and use of this power raises issues of ethics – of virtue, right and wrong, good and bad; of politics – who should decide; and of religion – who are we, what is our fate. The course ultimately revolves around one issue: to what extent should persons or communities attempt to master the fate and quality of life of individuals? Should we think of ourselves primarily as designers, rule followers or responders? There are many related issues: Who should make the kinds of decisions that will need to be made? What criteria should be used in decision making? We are interested in morally assessing alternative resolutions of biomedical problems; we will give attention to the possible role of religion in their resolution.

We will give serious attention to these topics:

- Experimentation with human subjects and non-human animals
- Current ways of enabling or controlling reproduction
- The moral status of zygotes, embryos and fetuses
- Abortion
- Care for the disabled, demented and dying
- The definition of death
- Euthanasia and physician assisted suicide