

GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY
School of Continuing Studies

Neuroethics and Society
LSHV-6048-40 Summer 2024

Instructor: John Shook PhD, with James Giordano PhD, M.Phil
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Dates: May 20 – August 17, 2024 **FIRST CLASS IS MAY 23**
Class Meetings: Thursdays 6:00 PM–9:00 PM, ONLINE with Canvas and Zoom
Office Hours: Thursdays 4pm–6pm, or by appointment

Course Description

The brain sciences are changing our minds, materially as well as intellectually. Vast social impacts are already arriving. Brain scanning is mapping the mind’s cognitive areas, and starting to read our thoughts. Brain stimulation is changing how consciousness and thinking perform their mental tasks. Neurointerfacing is connecting computing with thinking to control prosthetics and engage the internet. Neuroenhancements offer brain boosts and faster learning, and maybe better decisions. Neuroscientific technologies are proving to be enlightening and empowering, but also ethically and socially challenging. Are we ready for re-thinking what we think the mind is? Are we prepared to alter or abandon traditional views about free will, agency, character, and moral responsibility? Brain tech in the classroom might distribute improved learning unfairly. Brain science in the courtroom may change how criminals are judged and sentenced to rehabilitation. Neurowearables could invade privacy and expose minds to hacking or propaganda. Leaving our minds in the hands of neuro-technoscience could impede progress towards liberation, equality, and justice. This course addresses issues, questions, and problems of neuroscience and technology that are the focus, tasks and practices of the relatively new, but ever more important, necessary and growing field of neuroethics. Key ethical concerns arriving with such neuroscientific and neurotechnological progress will be examined as the 21st century continues to astonish us with innovations in brain science. Along the way, a new paradigm for neuroethical principles to guide research and implementation will be presented.

In the wake of the United States Decade of the Brain (1990-2000), the Brain Research through Advancing Innovative Neurotechnology (BRAIN) initiative, the European Union’s Human Brain Project, and large scale projects including the China Brain Project, Korea Brain Project, and the Japan Brain-MIND initiative, neuroscience and technology have impacted medicine (neurology, neurosurgery, psychiatry); law and jurisprudence; bioengineering; civic institutions; national security and defense; and many areas of public life. While such progress might be construed as beneficial, the discovery and development and use(s) of new devices, information and knowledge could incur profound ethical, legal and social issues – both arising in the research itself, and stemming from misuse and/or purloined application of these technologies in ways that negatively impact public health and security.

This Grad Liberal Studies course can apply as a general elective (MALS and DLS) or as a MALS Science and Society OR Norms and Ethics Foundation (MALS only).

Learning Objectives

Students will:

Understand the history and development of “neuroethics” as a discipline;

Be familiarized with the basis and reciprocity of the two primary disciplinary and practical foci of neuroethics: the “neuroscience of ethics” and “the ethics of neuroscience”.

Address key issues and questions in neuroethics, and articulate their technical, theoretical and practical dimensions;
and,

Appreciate the importance of neuroethical discourse to formulation of domestic and international guidelines and policy for brain science and its applications.

Required Texts

Shook and Giordano, *Bioethics and Brains: A Disciplined and Principled Neuroethics*. MIT Press, 2024 (provided in class).

May, *Neuroethics: Agency in the Age of Brain Science*. Oxford University Press, 2023 (purchase).

Additional readings, distributed through Canvas.

Course Requirements

1. Class Participation. Regular participation in classes AND frequent participation in class Discussion via Canvas. There is a discussion area to serve as the student forum for conversations about the weekly course material. For each of the five discussion areas during the semester, a student should contribute the Observation (see below) as well as at least three additional substantial Replies to other students in the forum threads. 200 points possible. 20% of total grade.

2. Discussion Observations. Five discussion areas during the semester will begin with a discussion prompt from the instructor, explain how to write your Observation. Five Observations during the semester are each worth 20 points maximum. 100 points possible. 10% of your final grade.

3. Analysis Paper. 2500 words. On a topic selected from the subjects discussed in the assigned books. This paper will fulfill two goals: (1) explain how a neuroscientific innovation is altering a common belief about thought and the human mind; (2) describe how this revolution in thinking about thinking in turn may influence society (positively or negatively). 300 points possible. 30% of total grade.

4. Research Paper. 5000 words. On a topic of students’ choice from the course topics, except for the topic chosen for the analysis paper. You will first develop a one-page outline about your plan, to be approved by the instructor. A successful term paper will synthesize relevant information gained throughout the course (lectures and readings), and additional information from secondary literature. 400 points possible. 40% of total grade.

Citation Style: The APA Style (APA Publication Manual 6th Edition) is used widely in SCS courses. Consult <http://pitt.libguides.com/citationhelp/APA>

5. Final Grade

ASSIGNMENT	PERCENT OF TOTAL GRADE	POSSIBLE POINTS
Class Participation	20%	200
Discussion Observations	10%	100
Analysis Paper – 2500 words	30%	300
Research Paper – 5000 words	40%	400
	TOTAL	1000 points

Total Points	Grade	Quality Points
920-1000	A	4.00
900-919	A-	3.67
881-899	B+	3.33

800-880	B	3.00
781-799	B-	2.67
761-780	C+	2.33
700-760	C	2.00
690-699	C-	1.67
680-689	D+	1.33
660-679	D	1.00
Less than 660	F	0.00

Course Policies: Remote Course Delivery

Announcements: Announcements related to this course will be posted in Canvas regularly. They will appear on your Canvas dashboard when you log in and/or they will be sent to you directly through your preferred method of notification. Please make certain to check them regularly, as they will contain important information about upcoming projects or class concerns.

Email: Set your notifications to your preferred method of contact. Please check your Georgetown email at least once per day. When submitting messages, please do the following:

- Put a subject in the subject box that describes the email content with your name and module
- Do not send messages asking general information about the class, please post those in the “Ask the Instructor Discussion Form” in the Canvas course

Academic Support: Services and resources may include an online orientation; access to library resources; a readiness assessment or survey; testing services; tutoring; non-native language services; writing and/or math centers; tutorials or other forms of guidance on conducting research, writing papers, citing sources, using an online writing lab, and using institution-specific technology; supplemental instruction programs; and teaching assistants.

Writing Center: The Georgetown University [Writing Center](#) is a free resource open to all enrolled Georgetown students and offers online appointments.

Technical Support for Students:

- Canvas - Students have 24/7 access to <http://canvas.georgetown.edu/getting-help>, including live chat and a support hotline at (855) 338-2770
- Zoom - For support with Zoom, email: zoom@georgetown.edu
- Use of [Georgetown University-issued accounts](#) for Google Mail, Calendar, Groups, Talk, Docs, Sites, Video, and Contacts is governed by the contract between Georgetown University and Google. For help managing your Google Documents, visit [Google Drive Help Center](#).
- Contact the UIS Service Center at help@georgetown.edu if you have a question regarding your GU netID and/or password; your GU email account; any connectivity issues.

Support Services:

SCS offers a variety of support systems for students that can be accessed online, at the School of Continuing Studies downtown location, and on the main Georgetown campus:

- [Academic Resource Center](#)
- 202-687-8354 | arc@georgetown.edu
- [Counseling and Psychiatric Services](#)
- 202-687-6985

- [Institutional Diversity, Equity & Affirmative Action \(IDEAA\)](#)
- (202) 687-4798

Students' Religious Observances: The following is university policy: Georgetown University promotes respect for all religions. Any student who is unable to attend classes or to participate in any examination, presentation, or assignment on a given day because of the observance of a major religious holiday or related travel shall be excused and provided with the opportunity to make up, without unreasonable burden, any work that has been missed for this reason and shall not in any other way be penalized for the absence or rescheduled work. Students will remain responsible for all assigned work. Students should notify professors in writing at the beginning of the semester of religious observances that conflict with their classes.

Disabilities: Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, individuals with disabilities are provided reasonable accommodations to ensure equity and access to programs and facilities. Students are responsible for communicating their needs to the Academic Resource Center, the office that oversees [disability support services](#), (202-687-8354; arc@georgetown.edu;) before the start of classes to allow time to review the documentation and make recommendations for appropriate accommodations. The University is not responsible for making special accommodations for students who have not declared their disabilities and have not requested an accommodation in a timely manner. Also, the University need not modify course or degree requirements considered to be an essential requirement of the program of instruction. For the most current and up-to-date policy information, please refer to the [Georgetown University Academic Resource Center website](#). Students are highly encouraged to discuss the documentation and accommodation process with an Academic Resource Center administrator.

Extreme weather, Emergencies, and Instructional Continuity: During inclement weather or other emergencies on a day when we are scheduled to meet face-to-face, check the university's Web site or call (202) 687-7669 for information on whether the university is open. If the university is open, this class will meet. Check your e-mail for a message from me on how we will proceed in that situation. Due dates for written assignments submitted through Blackboard will not be changed due to campus closings. The university recently has acquired the capability to send text messages and recorded messages about emergencies to cell phones and other mobile devices. Sign up on MyAccess.

Georgetown Honor System: All students are expected to follow Georgetown's honor code unconditionally. We assume you have read the honor code material located at <http://scs.georgetown.edu/academic-affairs/honor-code>, and in particular have read the following documents: Honor Council Pamphlet, What is Plagiarism, Sanctioning Guidelines, and Expedited Sanctioning Process. Papers in this course will all be submitted to turnitin.com for checking.

Submitting material in fulfillment of the requirements of this course means that you have abided by the Georgetown honor pledge: *In the pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and uphold the Georgetown Honor System: To be honest in any academic endeavor, and to conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community, as we live and work together.*

Plagiarism: In accord with university policy, all incidents of suspected plagiarism or other Honor Code violations will be reported to the Honor Council without fail. If the Honor Council finds that a student has plagiarized or has violated the Honor Code in any other way, the student may receive a grade of F for the course.

Turnitin.com: Students acknowledge that by taking this course all required papers can be submitted for a Textual Similarity Review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the terms of use agreement posted on the Turnitin.com site.

Plagiarism and Chatterism are not allowed because they violate Academic Integrity and Honesty, constitute Academic Fraud, and will result in severe loss of points or a failing grade. You may not submit any work generated by someone else or by an AI program as your own, even if you change some wording or sentence order. At any time, the instructor may require an interview during class time, during office hours, or by live zoom about your assignment submission, to confirm that you can fully explain your work on your own.

“Chatterism” is defined here: Submitting work that has the appearance of the result of prompting any AI chatbot, regardless of whether you actually wrote some of it, or even if you really did write all of it. Arguing that “I didn’t copy it from an AI system, and I really wrote it” is not relevant, because the quality matters, not the origins. The instructor does not have to prove that Chatterism is submitted: if it looks like Chatterism then it is Chatterism, and it falls below the intelligence and intelligibility levels expected of students in this course. Students should show the instructor draft versions to help ensure compliance.

Sexual Misconduct: Georgetown University and its faculty are committed to supporting survivors and those impacted by sexual misconduct, which includes sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, and stalking. Georgetown requires faculty members, unless otherwise designated as confidential, to report all disclosures of sexual misconduct to the University Title IX Coordinator or a Deputy Title IX Coordinator. If you disclose an incident of sexual misconduct to a professor in or outside of the classroom (with the exception of disclosures in papers), that faculty member must report the incident to the Title IX Coordinator, or Deputy Title IX Coordinator. The coordinator, will, in turn, reach out to the student to provide support, resources, and the option to meet. [Please note that the student is not required to meet with the Title IX coordinator.]. More information about reporting options and resources can be found on the [Sexual Misconduct Website](#).

If you would prefer to speak to someone confidentially, Georgetown has a number of fully confidential professional resources that can provide support and assistance. These resources include:

1. Health Education Services for Sexual Assault Response and Prevention: confidential email sarp@georgetown.edu
2. Counseling and Psychiatric Services (CAPS): 202. 687.6985 or after hours, call 202. 444.7243 and ask for the on-call CAPS clinician.

Thank you for supporting our students impacted by sexual violence. If interested, other helpful more general resources are included below:

- [Georgetown Self-Care Resource Guide](#)
- [Georgetown Wellness Wheel](#)
- [Georgetown Guide to Recognizing Students in Distress](#)

Georgetown has a number of fully confidential professional resources who can provide support and assistance to survivors of sexual assault and other forms of sexual misconduct. These resources include:

Jen Schweer, MA, LPC

Associate Director of Health Education Services for Sexual Assault Response and Prevention
[\(202\) 687-0323](tel:(202)687-0323)
jls242@georgetown.edu

Erica Shirley

Trauma Specialist
Counseling and Psychiatric Services (CAPS)
[\(202\) 687-6985](tel:(202)687-6985)
els54@georgetown.edu

More information about campus resources and reporting sexual misconduct can be found at:
<https://sexualassault.georgetown.edu/get-help>.

Pregnancy Adjustments and Accommodations: Georgetown University is committed to creating an accessible and inclusive environment for pregnant and parenting students. Students may request adjustments based on general pregnancy needs or accommodations based on a pregnancy-related complication. Specific adjustments will be handled on a case by case basis and will depend on medical need and academic requirements. Students seeking a pregnancy adjustment or accommodation should follow the process laid out at the [Pregnancy Adjustments and Accommodations for Students webpage](#).

Class Schedule

This tentative schedule is subject to change as necessary.

Week	Topics	Readings, Events
Week 1. May 23	Neuroscience and Ethics	May, <i>Neuroethics</i> , chap. 1 Shook & Giordano, <i>Bioethics and Brains</i> , chap. 1
Week 2. May 30	Neuroscience, Free Will, and Agency	May, <i>Neuroethics</i> , chap. 2
Week 3. June 6	Brains, Minds and Identity: Whence Self?	May, <i>Neuroethics</i> , chap. 3
Week 4. June 13	Neuroethics: Combining Science and Humanities	Shook & Giordano, <i>Bioethics and Brains</i> , chap. 2
Week 5. June 20	Interventional Neurotech: Linking Brains to Machines to Brains	Shook & Giordano, <i>Bioethics and Brains</i> , chap. 3
Week 6. June 27	Mental Disorder and Addiction	May, <i>Neuroethics</i> , chaps. 4, 5
Week 7. July 4	NO CLASS	
Week 8. July 11	Neuroethics, Moral Judgment, and Moral Enhancement	May, <i>Neuroethics</i> , chap. 6, 7
Week 9. July 18	Neuroscience and Human Ethics	Shook & Giordano, <i>Bioethics and Brains</i> , chap. 4 Analysis Paper due July 20
Week 10. July 25	Neuroethics and the Naturalistic Worldview	Shook & Giordano, <i>Bioethics and Brains</i> , chap. 5
Week 11. Aug 1	Neurolaw, Criminal Justice, Neurorights	May, <i>Neuroethics</i> , chap. 8, 9 Shook & Giordano, <i>Bioethics and Brains</i> , chap. 6
Week 12. Aug 8	NeuroS/T, Military, and Global Biosecurity	Shook & Giordano, <i>Bioethics and Brains</i> , chap. 7
Week 13. Aug 15	Neuroethics Looks Forward	May, <i>Neuroethics</i> , chap. 10 Research Paper due Aug 15