

BIOETHICS BULLETIN

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Alan Wertheimer retires from NIH Bioethics



Alan Wertheimer, bioethicist and philosopher, retires from his faculty position at NIH Bioethics beginning in July. Bioethics Fellow Daniel Sharp caught up with Alan to discuss Dr. Wertheimer's time at the department, his work, and future plans.

How has your time at the department of bioethics enriched or changed your scholarship?

I think it has enriched it more than it has changed it. I'm still struggling with many of the same issues, but in different contexts than I had previously discussed. It is not self-deprecation when I say that I knew next to nothing about biomedical research or research ethics before my contact with the department, and this is so even though I spoke to the Joint Bioethics Seminar on two occasions before I joined the department – first on exploitation and then on coercion.

It has enriched my scholarship in two other ways. First, I have become more involved with empirical analysis. Indeed, I was involved in the first empirical study in my life just a few years ago, when Christine, Frank, Emily Largent (then a predoctoral fellow) and I did a study of the way

in which IRB members think about coercion and undue influence with empirical analysis.

Second, I found myself involved in collaborative projects for the first time in my life. I'm not sure that collaboration is particularly efficient, but I am sure that it has deepened my work.

I will add that my time in the department has enriched my scholarship because I have the joy of being in an academic setting without having to grade. I retired (after thirty-seven years) principally because I just got tired of grading. My life in the department has been like an extended sabbatical leave. It's amazing that one gets paid for this.

Over the years, you've done a lot of work on deepening the way bioethicists and philosophers understand consent,

exploitation, and coercion – a quite unique set of difficult issues. How did you first become interested in these topics? What changed about your interest in them upon moving to bioethics?

I had long been interested in consent in a different context. All political philosophers cut their teeth on the question of political obligation. My dissertation concerned “the consent theory of political obligation,” namely, whether people have an obligation to obey the law because they have consented to do so. Plato says that they do. So does Locke. I argued that they were wrong.

I am a strong believer in “path-dependence.” My work has not followed any general plan, but once it took a certain turn, other issues just followed. I first became interested in coercion when I read an article that claimed that plea bargaining was coercive, that when prosecutors threaten a more serious penalty if a defendant is convicted at trial than if he pleads guilty, the prosecutor is equivalent to the robber who says “your money or your life.” I thought the argument was fishy, but I didn’t know why it was wrong. So I started working on that issue, including a lot of legal research into court decisions on the voluntariness of plea bargaining. I found that I learned a lot from reading the law (the old fashioned way; I didn’t have access to LexisNexis at the time). I then expanded my work on coercion to other areas of law, e.g. contracts, duress as a defense to a crime, marriage, etc. That culminated in my book (1987) *Coercion*. I have no idea what I would have been working on if I hadn’t read that original misconceived article.

As I was working on coercion, I became convinced that some cases are better described as exploitation than coercion, but I wasn’t sure I understood exploitation. I had been working on some other issues concerning freedom of association as well. I had a sabbatical leave coming up (1989-90) and had two opportunities. I used the freedom of association project in one application and an exploitation project in

another. When I was offered a fellowship in what is now the Safra Ethics Program at Harvard, they wanted me to work on exploitation. So that’s what I did, and I published *Exploitation* in 1996. Path dependence again.

I can tell a similar sort of story about my work on consent that resulted in my book on *Consent to Sexual Relations* (2003).

When I was asked to join the department as a visiting scholar in 2005 (actually, I was asked to come in 2004, but I had made a commitment to a new course at the University of Vermont and felt that I couldn’t come then), I hadn’t fully appreciated the extent to which the issues on which I had been working were central issues in research ethics. At that point, I thought that I would be with the department as a visitor for just one year. Path dependence again. One year turned into eight.

It’s a rare achievement to make huge contributions in two fields, but you’ve done this on a number of issues in both bioethics and philosophy. How have these two communities responded differently to your work?

It’s a flattering question, but I’m not sure the adjective is accurate. I don’t think I’ve made “huge” contributions in either field, but I do think that I have helped to clarify some central concepts. My work on coercion has had some impact in the law and philosophy of law, but I don’t think it’s had a big impact in political philosophy where people are more interested in what justifies coercion than in what constitutes coercion.

Although I’ve probably been cited more in legal academia than in bioethics, the latter is a smaller field and I think I’ve probably had a relatively greater impact there. Before my arrival at NIH, I hadn’t realized the extent to which people worried about exploitation in clinical research. Unfortunately, I’ve also been frustrated by the fact that many people continue to use concepts such as coercion and

exploitation in ways that I find dubious. I sometimes feel as if I have spent too much time pointing out what I take to be mistakes than in making genuine progress on the issues.

Of the various questions you've tackled in bioethics and philosophy, which has been the most difficult and why?

Hmm. Probably three. First, I think I can explain how it can be that a person is not coerced and that consent is valid even if they have no reasonable alternative. I've had a harder time explaining why and how such consent is voluntary. Second, I think I'm right that mutually advantageous and consensual transactions can be unfair, but I do not have a satisfactory account of fairness. I've struggled with that. Third, I've struggled with what I've called the "non-worseness claim." Many people reject it or, perhaps more accurately, have intuitions that go against it. That claim maintains that it can't be morally worse for A to transact with B in a way that is better for B and to which B consents than for A not to transact with B at all. And yet it seems that we often want to condemn A for such transactions while we wouldn't condemn A for doing nothing. I find that paradoxical.

What does retirement look like for a philosopher? Are there any projects or questions you'll be continuing to work on?

Most obviously, I don't know. If Christine has her way, I won't completely retire, but I will be even more retired than I am now. I suppose one project is to work on my bridge game. I'm a serious bridge player and I look forward to being able to play more often and to travel to tournaments more than I now do. My wife will be moving to 50% in August, and so we're looking forward to being able to travel a bit more and spend more time with our children and grandchildren (3). I have one big project – a huge messy manuscript on my desk – that concerns whether consent *should* be a requirement for participation in research. To put it in other terms, I take seriously the question as to whether we could justify coercing people to

participate in research. In the final analysis, my present view is that we probably should not use coercion, but that no simple principle explains why. The manuscript is much too long for any journal but is not long enough for a book, and so I haven't figured out what to do with it when it's done, much less figure out what I want to say.

What will you remember most about your time in the department? Is there an anecdote or experience that encapsulates your tenure with the NIH?

I know this sounds trite, but I will surely most remember the good friends and intellectual colleagues that I have made. I had the chance to work with several very talented fellows and colleagues. In my view, the department comes closer to my ideal of an academic department than did the department that I left. Many academic departments now seem like a group of individual entrepreneurs (I don't mean the latter derisively) without any sense of a shared intellectual mission.

On the downside, I will not miss the countless hours in airports, and occasional massive delays or mishaps (I was not happy when one engine failed on a trip down and we had to make an emergency landing).

An incident? Zeke and I had written a short article on allocating flu vaccine and antivirals. It appeared in *Science*. Japanese public television was doing a documentary on avian flu. I think they wanted to interview Zeke, but he asked me to do it. They came to the department to interview me. I'm not Art Caplan. I don't know how to give good punchy sound bite responses. I tend towards excessive qualification. They were clearly very frustrated with me and we must have done about 10+takes of the interview until I gave them the kind of answers that they wanted. ■

Presidential Commission for the Study of Bioethical Issues

Christine Grady

For the past 2 ½ years, I have had the honor of serving as a member of the Presidential Commission for the Study of Bioethical Issues. The Commission was created by an Executive Order of President Obama in late 2009 and had its first meeting in July 2010. Since then, we have completed six reports

and are embarking on a new topic at the next meeting (April 30, 2103 in Washington DC). The Commission is lucky to have exceptional leaders. The Chair is Amy Guttmann, the President of the University of Pennsylvania, and the Vice Chair is Jim Wagner, the President of Emory. Both of them are extraordinary and very accomplished in their own fields, smart and thoughtful, as well as warm and generous. The Commissioners represent many disciplines including medicine, law, philosophy, science, and each brings her or his unique perspective, expertise, and style. It is a great group and we have worked very well together. Interestingly (thanks to Zeke!), for the first time in the history of US Bioethics Commissions, individuals who work for the federal government are included as commissioners (3 of us are government employees). In addition, the Commission has a fabulous staff (including our own Lizzy Pike), all of whom are smart and hardworking, excellent at organizing meetings and drafting reports, and very on top of the issues. And a lot of fun, too!

As a federal advisory committee, the Commission deliberates in public. The advantages of this are democratic deliberation in action, and an opportunity to increase public awareness about the complex issues at hand. Yet, it is interesting how hard it can sometimes be to articulate coherent thoughts about an issue in front of a camera without necessarily having the time to adequately reflect, research, deliberate, etc.



The President's Commission team.

The first topic the Commission took on was the ethics of synthetic biology. In response to some expressions of concern about “creating life” after a May 2010 experiment from Craig Venter’s lab, the President asked the Commission to review the developing field of synthetic biology and identify appropriate ethical boundaries. Our first report

“New Directions” was just months later after a few public hearings and reviewing volumes of fascinating material.

Our second project was also in response to a request from President Obama after Susan Reverby uncovered the US sponsored Guatemala STD studies from the 1940s. The Commission did an extensive historic investigation to better characterize what happened in Guatemala, as well as a contemporary review of research ethics and protections for human subjects especially in international research. Three reports emerged from this project.

The third major project focused on the exciting new possibilities available through Whole Genome Sequencing and the many important implications and need for attention to privacy.

The most recent project, completed in March 2013, was a response to a request from Secretary Sebelius to conduct a thorough review of the ethical considerations surrounding pre and post event testing of medical countermeasures in children. All of these reports are available at www.bioethics.gov.

Our next topic is incidental findings- a complex and timely topic of interest to several in our department. I look forward to some exciting discussions and challenging decisions on this topic. Stay tuned for public hearings- which you can attend or watch via videocast.

■

Interview: Visiting Scholar Jeff Brand



What is your previous experience in bioethics and why were you interested in coming here?

I had previously attended the Joint Bioethics Colloquium (JBC) and been impressed with the quality of the dialogue and the speakers. And my colleague, David Degrazia, who had been here as a visiting scholar, always spoke highly of the stimulating environment. I don't consider myself an applied ethicist. But I've done a little highly theoretical bioethics—I had a piece in the *Kennedy Institute* journal a number of years ago about reflective equilibrium and common morality. What I didn't know about was research ethics. You can't help but be swept up in that here. I've learned so much.

Your background is in both law and philosophy? Is that interdisciplinary training an asset in bioethics?

The legal background affects everything I do; familiarity with law is familiarity with the ways in which people have tried to develop systems of norms on the ground that are highly imperfect but responsive to specific, nonfictional contingencies. And in law you don't have the luxury of awaiting the pure solution; you have to make do with the second or third best. Law simultaneously rewards and punishes too much attention to consistency and philosophical scruples. That frames the whole way I think about morality. That's the nexus that I see with bioethics. The practical and the idealistic are in a constant kind of dialogue.

What are some of your projects while you're here?

The first project I've worked on most here is about the debunking of moral intuitions. This comes off of attempts by empirical researchers to suggest rather

quick paths from neuroscientific and evolutionary hypotheses to normative conclusions. I'm sympathetic to the overall project, but they're moving too fast

My second project is about health outcomes and QALY maximization. In bioethics and health policy, QALY maximization is the stand-in for utilitarianism. That's awfully quick. There are many ways a sophisticated consequentialism could play out as a prescription for the allocation of health resources. I'm interested in the space in between consequentialism and QALY maximization; whether there are things for consequentialism to say that don't devolve into QALY maximization, which has a mixed reputation.

Would you say there's a continuous narrative informing your work?

The motifs are there. I'm interested in cases in which norms misfire. A norm that might be the best norm for some purpose might nonetheless have results that are suboptimal. This runs through my legal philosophy and ethics.

Also, I defend relocating consequentialism; defending it at the cost of even backgrounding it a bit. A backgrounded consequentialism is more aspirational. It infuses our normative lives in a certain way without dictating a particular decision-making procedure.

I often feel like a voice in the wilderness against a sort of deontological orthodoxy. I was expecting to be a voice in the wilderness here, too, but I found that people's views are very balanced. There isn't the sense that arguments that reference maximization are morally bankrupt. One often finds that in academic philosophy.

I have lots more I want to say about the intellectual culture of the department. People are extremely productive and collegial. There's a very good sense of how to criticize other people's projects, how to listen and read charitably. The quality of the fellows is unbelievably strong. Fellows are pushed to do work at a higher level than people at their stage would ordinarily be expected to do. And they do it.

Another thing that makes me love this department is that I aspire to be simultaneously big-hearted and hard-headed, and that's the way people are here. I admire what I see as very pure motivations, in the fellows all the way up to Christine. And yet, no one here gets lost in the clouds or confuses the way things ought to be with the way things are, or vice versa. I found people really talking to each other; physicians sensitive to

philosophy, philosophers sensitive to scientific research. That's what it should be like throughout academia and certainly in philosophy. And yet it's not always what you see. That's something I admire about this place and will miss a lot. I'll try to bring some of that spirit back with me to GW. Hopefully, I'll be back here too, through JBC. It's been an honor to spend a year here.

Jeff Brand is Associate Professor of Philosophy at George Washington University.

Interview: New Faculty Member, David DeGrazia

How did you first become interested in bioethics?

For some reason, I felt excited about the field as soon as I heard of it—without even having a clear sense of its scope or major contents. Maybe I reacted this way because I sensed the possibility of uniting, in one body of work, my love of philosophy and my interest in seeking solutions to important practical problems. I have been interested in bioethics since that time while also being interested in more theoretical areas of philosophy such as ethical theory, philosophy of mind, and personal identity theory.

You've done exciting work on a variety of questions – reproductive ethics, animal ethics, disability, to name a few– is there a theme you see as tying it all together?

I'm not sure there is! The truth is, I follow my interests and they are wide-ranging. For example, I've done work on the metaphysics of personal identity as well as work on the ethics of health care finance. I see no connection at all between these two topics. On the other hand, most of my work is at least loosely connected by the common thread of ethics. While I see ethics as intellectually interesting and enjoy ethical theory, I care more about work in ethics as a means to making the world a better place.

You've given some illuminating presentations on the ethics of gun ownership and gun control. Tell me a little about this work, and how it became an area of interest for you.

My interest in ethics and gun ownership is almost entirely driven by a feeling of practical importance. Right now, felons in this country (who are not in prison) can easily buy a large number of guns, even assault weapons, without a background check. Much of the



David DeGrazia on vacation with his daughter

American gun policy status quo is due to a very influential gun lobby operating within our unique political system. But also contributing to the status quo is a lot of sloppy, uninformed thinking about gun rights, gun control, and the relationship between weapon availability and high rates of gun violence. I like the idea of ethics scholars putting more of their talents and energy into improving the public discussion of these matters. The public deserves such a contribution.

What excites you most about joining the bioethics department?

NIH's Department of Bioethics is a truly remarkable academic center. I had the pleasure and honor of being a visiting scholar in the department seven years ago. It is a place in which everyone is expected to produce high-quality research while taking a genuine interest in, and supporting, the research of everyone else from the Chief to the pre-doctoral fellows. It is a place that makes valuable contributions to the Clinical Center through the Ethics Committee, various IRBs, ethics consultations, and teaching. Within the department, people interact constantly, with true collegiality, and the interaction helps them to meet the high expectations I mentioned. I have never seen a better work environment in which scholarship is a central activity.

What issues do you envision working on in your coming time at the department?

Because I tend to follow my interests, which sometimes change unexpectedly, I cannot predict my future research with perfect confidence. Nevertheless, in the near future I expect to do research in the areas of gun control and ethics, pediatric research ethics, and ethical issues associated with assisted reproduction. Longer-term, I plan to write a book on bioethical theory and another on moral status. Interactions with colleagues may lead me to collaborate on articles addressing particular issues in research ethics, health-care reform, and other topics.

You've recently published a book- *Creation Ethics: Reproduction, Genetics, and Quality of Life*, in which you discuss a number of ethical issues concerning human reproduction -- moral status, enhancement, wrongful life, bearing children, and obligations to future generations. Which of these ethical issues gave you most trouble when writing the book, and why?

That's an interesting question. Maybe I had the most trouble with the last chapter, on obligations to future generations. Some of the issues are remarkably abstract. Can non-existing individuals have interests or rights? If not, on what can our present obligations to future generations be based? Should we discount the interests of people who do not now exist but are likely to inherit a higher standard of living than we currently enjoy (if, indeed, that is likely)? Also, I was getting a bit tired, having drafted the first six chapters without much of a break. Thankfully, and here I should specifically thank both George Washington University and the National Endowment for the Humanities, I had a full year off from teaching and administrative responsibilities, so I had enough time to complete the project.

David DeGrazia is Professor of Philosophy at the George Washington University. He will join the Department of Bioethics in July.

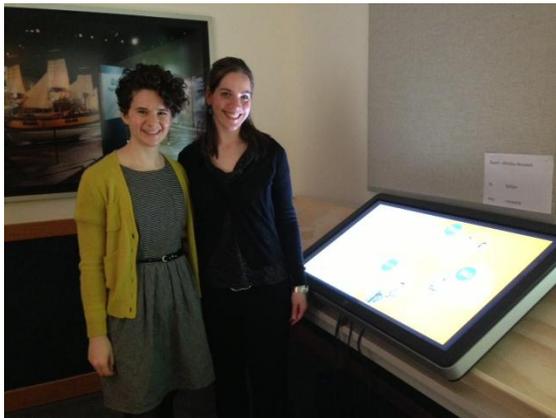
NIH Bioethics at the National Museum of Natural History

Bioethics fellows Lisa Eckstein and Catie Gliwa have been working with the Smithsonian Institution and the National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI) on a high-tech, interactive exhibit about the human genome at the National Museum of Natural History in DC, titled *Genome: Unlocking Life's Code*. The exhibit marks the 10th anniversary of the first complete human genome sequencing and the 60th anniversary of Watson and Crick's discovery of the double helix. It aims to bring museum visitors up to speed on genomic science and its ever-increasing influence on our understanding of human health and identity. The exhibit will open mid-June of this year, staying at the Museum of Natural History for 1 year before traveling across the country for at least another 5 years.

Much of the exhibit is scientific in nature, explaining the relationship between gene traits and disease predisposition, genomic understandings of ancestry, and the close interplay between gene expression and the environment. Eckstein and Gliwa were brought on board to develop the content for the ethics component of the project, an interactive touchscreen activity entitled "What Do You Think?" Museum visitors will encounter 7 different topics on the touchscreen: Privacy, Health Care, Discrimination, Children, Society, Identity, and Research. After selecting a topic, they will be faced with a broad question. "Do you think genomic information should be private?" They can now offer a more reasoned Yes, No, or Maybe response. Upon selecting an answer the visitors are presented with a breakdown of previous participants' answers. A "Learn More" button presents the visitor with further information and resources on the topic.

In developing the ethics content, Eckstein and Gliwa leveraged their research experience prior to and from the bioethics fellowship. They also collaborated with knowledgeable investigators in NHGRI, and experts at the Smithsonian Institution, and delved into the research literature for concrete examples or cases in writing the survey questions. One challenge they faced was carefully crafting hypothetical

scenarios that would engage the visitor and inspire reflection on difficult issues without misrepresenting hypotheticals or worst case scenarios as reality. For example, the genomic discrimination question allows visitors to consider whether employment discrimination is justified in certain circumstances. The challenge was to find a genomic predisposition that could—at least in some visitors' minds—support such an answer. They finally settled on a genomic predisposition to seizures in airline pilots, but made it clear that any such predisposition was still just hypothetical and that hiring discrimination is prohibited under the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act.



Caite and Lisa posing near a pilot version of "What Do You Think?," the interactive ethics exhibit they helped designed.

Eckstein and Gliwa report that developing the exhibit content has been both exciting and educational for them. "Public engagement is hard," said Eckstein, adding, "Whittling down complex issues so that they are understandable to the average person" can pose quite a challenge. At the same time, the two found that the average museum goer, a self-selected audience of sorts, is eager to learn. Though the target audience of the exhibit is 16 years or older, curious middle-schoolers who helped test the materials enthusiastically engaged with them. As Eckstein and Gliwa explain, seeing members of the public grapple with, and ultimately form more informed opinions on, complex ethical and social issues stemming from genomics is an incredibly rewarding experience.

The *Genome* exhibit is coupled with other educational programming, including a series of lectures and essay and art contests. NHGRI scientists will be present to offer additional information and answer visitors' questions. Members of the Bioethics Department will volunteer to give "ethics tours" of the exhibit.

For more information on the *Genome* exhibit, visit: www.genome.gov/smithsonian

Interview: Visiting Scholar David Wasserman

Your background is in law and psychology. How and when did you become interested in philosophy and bioethics?

It was a tortuous route with several detours. I was a philosophy major at Yale. I held philosophy as this ideal, austere and demanding intellectual calling. So when my father, who desperately wanted to me become a doctor, kept sending me these clippings about a new field of "bioethics" (this was in the early 1970s), I was disdainful. This was impure! I went into law school instead, thinking my interest in practice would crystallize. But it didn't. After various stints as a lawyer, I joined my undergraduate philosophy advisors at the Institute of Philosophy and Public Policy at the University of Maryland. In 1990, while the human genome project was getting under way, I flew out to San Diego for a meeting to discuss a new technology -- DNA typing. After that, I acquired a grant to fund graduate training in genetics so I could write credibly on issues in ethics and genetics. Without knowing it I was fulfilling my father's ambitions. My father lived until 2007 so he got some gratification out of this. By then, I was describing myself as doing bioethics, the very thing I dismissed in the 1970s.

Since then, I got the opportunity to work at Yeshiva University with Adrienne Asch, helping to run a new ethics center. I had a very rewarding 6 years as research director, but we were ultimately done in by the financial meltdown and Madoff.

So that brings us to your year at NIH. But you had a prior history with the department, right?

I was introduced to NIH through the JBC, while I was at Maryland. I gave a presentation one semester on disability. This turned into the basis for a four-authored *Stanford Encyclopedia* entry on disability in four installments. This was a tremendously valuable experience. Interestingly, we have now come around to the same colloquium topic I started with: complicity.

So now you're here with us. What are you working on? Any collaborations?

I'm working on an exploratory project with Christine and Dave to find out what kind of neuroscience is going on around NIH that would raise interesting ethical and moral psychology issues. The classic, most notorious example comes from Josh Greene who used neuroimaging to "solve" the trolley problem. He found that people in an fMRI displayed heightened activity in the prefrontal cortex when turning the trolley; heightened activity in the amygdala when refraining from pushing the man off the bridge. He concluded that the consequentialist judgment informing the first decision was reason-guided, while the deontological judgment informing the second was emotion-driven. Almost everyone now agrees that that was an oversimplification. But it helped get a whole field going. There are many people on campus doing work of great relevance, including work on the developmental pathways for psychopathy. We're just starting to scratch the surface here. We see the prospect of many collaborations between people in the department and NIH neuroscientists.

What other bioethics projects interest you?

I have an interest in reproductive ethics—which I share with David Degrazia, who is coming next year. I have a book contract with David Benatar, who'll be visiting in a year, to challenge his antinatalist view and develop a positive account of when it's acceptable to procreate. Also, I am very interested in issues in the allocation of resources and priority setting, trade-offs between life and limb, and role morality – interests shared by some of the current fellows. ■



David Wasserman is the former Director of Research, Center for Ethics, Yeshiva University.

Meet the New Fellows:

The Bioethics Class of 2014

The Postdocs

Lisa Eckstein received law and genetics degrees in Sydney, Australia and started her working life developing policies on genetics and research ethics for Australian government health departments. After picking up a sufficient quota of three-letter acronyms to satisfy any Ministerial briefing, she returned to her lawyerly roots and worked with the Australian Law Reform Commission on its inquiries into privacy laws, secrecy laws and family violence. In 2010, she packed up her bags to start a Doctor of Juridical Science (S.J.D.) at Georgetown University Law Center, via a stint in Samoa advising the newly established Samoa Law Reform Commission. Lisa defended her thesis on the use of racial and ethnic categories in biomedical research in December 2012. At the NIH, Lisa is working on issues relating to genetic research and the regulation of clinical trials.

Luke Gelinas is interested in all areas of ethics, with a focus on the theory of virtue. He also has interests in ancient and medieval philosophy, philosophy of religion, and social and political philosophy. While at the NIH he is working on the relation between cognitive heuristics and biases and evaluative concepts such as informed consent, paternalism, and autonomy. He did his PhD work in Philosophy at the University of Toronto; holds an MA in religion from Yale Divinity School; and a BA from Calvin College.

Amina White is a first year postdoctoral fellow with a background in medicine. She received her MD from Harvard Medical School and completed her residency in Obstetrics and Gynecology at Georgetown University Hospital. Currently, she is taking leave from her position as an Assistant Professor at the Howard University College of Medicine to learn more about clinical bioethics, which she would eventually like to incorporate into the residency training curriculum. In the department, she is working on issues involving patient activation in vulnerable populations, health disparities, and the role-specific obligations of obstetricians to provide trauma-informed and resilience-enhancing prenatal care for trauma survivors.

The Predocs

Rebecca Johnson is a first year pre-doc fellow coming from Stanford, where she earned a B.A. in Psychology, focusing on how causal attributions about mental disorders affect stigmatization and resource allocation, and an M.A. in Modern Religious Thought, Ethics, and Philosophy, focusing on the role of religious reasons in public deliberation. In the department, she's currently working on an empirical project on the risks of phase I research with healthy volunteers—does phase I research pose similar risks as hazardous occupations?— and a conceptual project on sharing revenue with healthy tissue contributors.

Daniel Sharp earned his B.A. in philosophy and interdisciplinary studies at UC Berkeley, where he first became interested in many of the ethical issues surrounding the biosciences. His undergrad thesis offered an account of the history of the concept of neuroplasticity, and examined the ethical implications of its deployment in popular culture. Daniel is broadly interested in ethical and political philosophy, and has a serious side-interest in all things Wittgenstein. In the department, Daniel is working on priority setting for global health, specifically on what ways of being disadvantaged ought to be utilized for purposes of assigning priority to the worst off when distributing medical resources globally.



The first-year fellows, from left to right: Daniel Sharp, Luke Gelinas, Amina White, Rebecca Johnson, Lisa Eckstein.

NIH Staff and Faculty Updates

Mertis Stallings-Johnson was married to Edward Johnson last fall.



Joe Millum can report no new houses, children, marriages, or books. But he has been thinking a lot about *death*.



Marion Danis became a grandmother since her oldest daughter has had a baby girl. She is figuring out ways to be a working and commuting grandma. She has been doing some thinking about the ethics of patient activation and is planning some possible new collaborations on this topic.

Seema Shah is happy to introduce her daughter, Salila Shah Somashekhar, born August 30, 2012. She reports that they are delighted, exhausted, and incredibly fulfilled to have her in their lives. As you can see from the pictures, though, she's already growing up too fast.



Fellow Doug Mackay and his son, August; Seema Shah and Salila; Ben Berkman and Jasper.

The Alumni Corner

Class of 1999

Neal Dickert is still at Emory, but is now Assistant Professor, Department of Medicine, Division of Cardiology.

Last year, **Agnieszka Jaworska** received a \$640,000 Templeton Foundation Grant to study the role of love and caring in human freedom alongside colleagues at Vassar and Franklin & Marshall colleges. For more on her project, see <http://ucrtoday.ucr.edu/5014>

Class of 2002

Maria Merritt was promoted to Associate Professor at Johns Hopkins in May 2012.

Class of 2003

Avi Astor received a PhD in Sociology from Michigan and is now a Post-Doctoral Fellow in the Department of Political and Social Sciences at Pompeu Fabra University in Barcelona.

Sarah Gollust is completing her third year as an assistant professor in health policy at the University of Minnesota School of Public Health, and she also has an affiliate faculty position in the Center for Bioethics. She somehow manages to stay busy between chasing down tenure and chasing down her toddler (two-year-old Ilan James, born March 2011). She encourages her bioethics friends and colleagues to come visit the Twin Cities soon and promises the snow will melt by July!

Samia Hurst is waiting for news on her promotion to associate professor as this goes to press. During the past year, she increased her family size by 500% first by falling in love and then by moving in with her partner Pietro Majno and four children. They are very happy. Don't worry, there's still plenty of room to house you should you come through Geneva.

The photo was taken during a holiday in Greece this spring. From right to left: Lucia (20), Teresa (21), Irene (13), Pietro, Samia, Andrea (14) and Samia's dad.

Class of 2004

Nir Eyal married Leah Price last summer. In the fall, he was promoted to associate professor at Harvard.

Adrienne Martin had a second daughter, Lorelei Mila Martin Hayes, on Feb 19, 2013. She was promoted to associate professor in the U Penn philosophy department and has a book forthcoming from Princeton University Press, November 2013, titled *How We Hope: A Moral Psychology*.

Class of 2005

Lindsay Hampson got married last year and is finishing her fourth year of urology residency. She will be starting a research fellowship next year with the Institute for Health Policy Studies at UCSF and will be looking at financial ownership and utilization.

David Shalowitz is heading into his fourth and final year as a resident in Obstetrics and Gynecology. He plans to start a fellowship in Gynecologic Oncology in the summer of 2014.

Class of 2008

Govind Persad has been working on his dissertation on socioeconomic mobility and security as a visiting scholar at the Department of Medical Ethics at Penn. He reports that Zeke has brought the departmental tea tradition to Philly, though scaled back to twice a week. Next August, he'll begin a year-long judicial clerkship in Denver with Judge Carlos Lucero on the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals. He's looking forward to playing Settlers of Catan with Colorado-based former fellow **Eric Chwang**, and would be excited to hear from other Colorado alumni.



Class of 2008, cont.

Ori Lev reports that after thirteen years on the "road" (UK and the US), he has returned to Israel with his family. He has taken a lecturer position in Sapir College, south of Israel, teaching public policy and bioethics.

Class of 2009

In September, **Elselijn Kingma** delivered her inaugural lecture for the Socrates Professorship in Philosophy and Technology in the Humanist Tradition at the University of Eindhoven. ([PDF](#)) The Socrates Professorship is a 20% honorary appointment. She moved in January this year from a Post-Doc in Philosophy of Medicine at King's College London to a two-year teaching and research post in the Department of History and Philosophy of Science, University of Cambridge. She is also expecting a second child in May. Her first child was born in June 2011.

Collin O'Neil has a publication, "Lying, Gratitude, and Trust" in *Philosophy & Public Affairs!* [40(4), 2012.]

Annette Rid moved to King's College London in October 2012 where she is helping to set up the bioethics strand and MA in Bioethics in the newly founded Department of Social Science, Health and Medicine. The job is great fun and she reports that she and Thomas are thoroughly enjoying London. Visitors welcome!



Class of 2010

Robert Goodin recommends the opening to the review in the *Guardian* of his latest book *On Settling*, (which NIH colleagues might recall him talking about while there). The review says: "Goodin is a philosopher, not a dating expert..."

Emily Largent is busy with school and with her baby Meara.



Owen Schaefer tied the knot this past July with Poh Lin Tan, and is very much enjoying married life. No kids yet, though they do have two cats eating them out of house and home. He has also transitioned to the DPhil in philosophy at Oxford, on track to complete the degree in 2014.

Class of 2011

Ben Chan is starting as Assistant Professor of Philosophy at St. Norbert College (just outside of Green Bay) in the fall. It's the future site of a new campus of the Medical College of Wisconsin, where he also may be teaching. He recently delivered a paper at the Pacific APA (on Kant and cannibalism) and heard an excellent paper on egalitarianism in medical treatment from fellow alumnus **Rob Hughes**.

Class of 2012

Ruqayyah Abdul-Karim is currently a first-year medical student at George Washington University School of Medicine and Health Sciences. While working in the Department, she was bitten by the policy bug and is following a health policy track within the MD program. This summer, Ruqayyah will be interning at the Presidential Commission for the Study of Bioethical Issues working on incidental findings under the guidance of her CC/BEP partner in crime **Lizzy Pike**.

Robert Hughes will be continuing next year at his current position as a Post-doctoral Scholar in the Law and Philosophy program at UCLA.

Lizzy Pike is now working as a Senior Policy and Research Analyst at the Presidential Commission for the Study of Bioethical Issues, and will be the staff lead on their upcoming report on incidental findings. (If anyone has articles that they would like the Commission to consider on the topic, please feel free to send them along!). Same great husband!

Roseanna Sommers is enjoying her first year of law school at Yale. Highlights have included traveling with classmates to DC to see oral arguments at the Supreme Court and getting to meet Sandra Day O'Connor; taking Contracts with the infamous "Tiger Mother," Professor Amy Chua; and getting to hang out with various NIH Bioethics Department alumni around Yale: **Becky Wolitz** (another JD/PhD student here), **Walter Sinnott-Armstrong**, and **Miriam Rosenbaum** (who has decided to join her at YLS!). She got to see **Francis Kamm** speak on trolley problems at the Law and Philosophy series.

She is in the legal ethics clinic and organizing a conference for the fall on Stanley Milgram, to mark the 50th anniversary of the publication of his paper on obedience. She will be back in DC this summer for an internship at the Office of General Counsel at the American Psychological Association and hopes to visit the Department for tea!

Second-Year Fellows, Class of 2013

Remy Brim started a new position with U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-MA). She is the Legislative Assistant responsible for the Senator's health care work on the Health Education Labor and Pensions Committee and Special Committee on Aging, as well as other health-care related issues.

With his fellowship coming to a bittersweet end, **Justin Lowenthal** has enjoyed his time in the Department immensely and wants to thank everyone – faculty, fellows, and an alumni community of which he is honored to be a part – who has made this one of the best decisions he has ever made. He has enjoyed getting to work on so many different, fascinating, cutting-edge bioethics topics – ranging from informed consent, to stem cells/regenerative medicine, to personalized medicine, to off-label prescription, to biobanking, to organ transplantation, to deceased biospecimen donation. Justin is proud to announce that he will remain nearby for the next 7-8 (ish?) years in pursuit of a combined MD/PhD at Johns Hopkins, where he will pursue research on stem cell biology and tissue engineering while continuing related work in bioethics. If any NIH bioethics alumni are ever in Baltimore, Justin and his miniature schnauzer Darby would love to see you!

Tina Rulli was married in January of this year to her partner of 11 years, Stephen Jerguson. She will start as Assistant Professor in Philosophy at Purdue University this fall.



Announcements

Our Alumni Newsletter will be published annually. If you would like to include an update in next year's newsletter, please email Becky Chen at bchen@cc.nih.gov. Updates might include any of the following: personal life happenings, publications, new professional involvements or activities, or anything you'd like to share with the current and former department members.

We also have an alumni listserv to share relevant news articles, job opportunities, and conference announcements. If you are not already on the listserv and would like to join, contact Becky at bchen@cc.nih.gov. To post to the listserv, send an email to bioethics-alumni@googlegroups.com and it will go out to the 100+ members on the list.