

## Ethics of the (un)natural

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**Start date** 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2017 **Time** 10:00am – 16:45pm

**Venue** Madingley Hall  
Madingley  
Cambridge

**Tutor** Anna Smajdor **Course code** 1617NDX055

**Director of Programmes** Emma Jennings

**For further information on this course, please contact** Public Programme Coordinator, Clare Kerr  
[clare.kerr@ice.cam.ac.uk](mailto:clare.kerr@ice.cam.ac.uk) or 01223 746237

**To book** See: [www.ice.cam.ac.uk](http://www.ice.cam.ac.uk) or telephone 01223 746262

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### Tutor biography

Anna is Associate Professor of Practical Philosophy at the University of Oslo. Prior to that, she was Ethics Lecturer at Norwich Medical School, University of East Anglia. She has been offering philosophy courses at ICE for several years on themes related to her research interests, such as 'Ethics of the (Un)natural' in 2016/17. When not teaching at ICE, Anna spends her time at the University of Oslo and collaborating with colleagues at the University of Umeå in Sweden, where she is part of a research project- 'Close personal relationships-children and the family'.

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## Course programme

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09:30	Terrace bar open for pre-course tea/coffee
10:00 – 11:15	<b>Session 1 – Unnatural practices</b>
11:15	Coffee
11:45 – 13:00	<b>Session 2 – “Our niggardly stepmother”</b>
13:00	Lunch
14:00 – 15:15	<b>Session 3 – The naturalistic fallacy</b>
15:15	Tea
15:30 – 16:45	<b>Session 4 – Reasoning with nature</b>
16:45	Day-school ends

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## Course syllabus

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### Aims:

- To engage students in a critical analysis of the ways in which concepts of nature are used in moral reasoning
- To explore the degree to which the 'natural fallacy' sweeps aside the possibility of reasoning from nature
- To analyse several key bioethical questions (animal research, conservation, human/animal chimaeras) on which concepts of nature have a bearing

### Content:

This course will analyse the relationship between morality and nature in the context of key bioethical concerns, e.g. is it wrong to create organisms that combine human and animal DNA? Can we look to evolution to tell us how to live our lives? Students will explore and engage in deliberation about the scope of nature, and the so-called 'naturalistic fallacy'.

### Presentation of the course:

The course will involve tutor-led PowerPoint slide presentation, interspersed with informal class discussion and some group work. The structure will be flexible and responsive to students' interests and preferences.

**As a result of the course, within the constraints of the time available, students should be able to:**

- Understand the way that concepts of nature are employed in moral reasoning
- Recognise the logical challenges associated with the naturalistic fallacy and the is/ought distinction
- Recognise, evaluate and construct ethical arguments related to bioethical issues

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## Reading and resources list

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Listed below are a number of texts that might be of interest for future reference, but do not need to be bought (or consulted) for the course.

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Author	Title	Publisher and date
Engelhardt Jr, HT.	Looking for god and finding the abyss: bioethics and natural theology.	Theology and Bioethics. 1985;79-91
Habermas J	The future of human nature	Cambridge: Polity Press. 2003
Haldane JBS.	Daedalus; or, science and the future.	London: Kegan, Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co. 1924
Kass L.	The Wisdom of Repugnance.	In Kass L, Wilson JQ, eds. The Ethics of Human Cloning. American Enterprise Institute Press. p.3-61. 1998.
Landeweerd L.	Normative-descriptive and the naturalistic fallacy.	Global Bioethics. 2004;17(1): 17-23.
Mill JS.	Nature, the Utility of Religion and Theism.	London: Watts & Co. 1904
Moore GE.	Principia Ethica.	Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1993.
Newman SA.	Renatured biology: Getting past postmodernism in the life sciences.	Without Nature: A New Condition for Theology. 2009: 101-135
De Vries R, Gordijn B.	Empirical ethics and its alleged meta-ethical fallacies.	Bioethics. 2009; 23(4 ): 193-201
Wilmot I, Campbell K et al.	The second creation: Dolly and the age of biological control.	Farrar Strous and Giroux. 2000
Zwart H.	The Moral Significance of our Biological Nature.	Ethical Perspectives. 1994;1:71-78

## Website addresses

<http://nuffieldbioethics.org/project/naturalness/>

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## Additional information

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### Venue

Details of how to find Madingley Hall can be found on our website:  
<http://www.ice.cam.ac.uk/who-we-are/how-to-find-the-institute>

### Refreshments

Tea and coffee and lunch will be provided. If you have any specific dietary requirements or allergies and have not already advised us, please inform our Admissions Team on [ice.admissions@ice.cam.ac.uk](mailto:ice.admissions@ice.cam.ac.uk) or +44 (0)1223 746262.

**Note** Students of the Institute of Continuing Education are entitled to 20% discount on books published by Cambridge University Press (CUP) which are purchased at the Press bookshop, 1 Trinity Street, Cambridge (Mon-Sat 9am – 5:30pm, Sun 11am – 5pm). A letter or email confirming acceptance on to a current Institute course should be taken as evidence of enrolment.

*Information correct as of:* 01 December 2016