



## **Seminar: Bioethics, biolaw and emerging technologies – HS 2024**

**PD Dr. Roberto Andorno**

### **1. Goals**

This seminar aims to introduce students to the ethical and legal challenges posed by emerging biomedical technologies. The label “emerging technologies” is used to refer to fast-growing, radically novel technologies that have a great potential to exert a considerable impact on society, and are marked by the uncertainty and ambiguity of their possible outcomes. Such technologies hold great promise in revolutionizing medicine, such as nanomedicine, brain imaging, brain-computer interfaces, genomic medicine combined with Big Data analytics, human gene editing procedures, and a variety of AI-based tools. However, these same developments create new risks and could be potentially used for unprecedented forms of human rights violations. Special emphasis is placed on the international legal frameworks relating to bioethics, and on relevant Swiss legislation. Lectures are complemented with case studies, excerpts from movies and documentaries, and group discussions. Participants are expected to give a short presentation (15 minutes) about their topic during the seminar.

### **2. Obligatory preparatory meeting (*Vorbesprechung*)**

The preparatory meeting will take place on **Monday, 6 May 2024, between 12:15 and 13:15** (room to be determined). The topics proposed for Bachelor’s and Master’s theses are mentioned below and will also be sent to participants by e-mail. However, other topics not included in the list can be selected in agreement with the Lecturer. Participation in the preparatory meeting is mandatory.

### **3. Outline of the thesis (*Disposition*)**

Seminar participants must submit a 2-page outline of the thesis and 1 page of provisional literature no later than **15 July 2024**. The outline should very briefly describe the topic, identify the main ethical and legal issues to be explored and provide a list of possible thesis chapters.



#### **4. Requirements**

- Attendance at all sessions and active participation in the discussion
- 15-minute presentation about the selected topic
- Writing and submitting the Bachelor's or Master's thesis

#### **5. Seminar's dates**

The seminar will take place on **Monday 16, and Tuesday 17 September 2024 between 9:00 and 17:00.**

#### **6. Deadline**

The deadline for submission of the thesis is **13 October 2024**

#### **7. Formal Requirements for Master's and Bachelor's Thesis**

- A Master's thesis is worth 12 ECTS and comprises between 90'000 and 100'000 characters without spaces (approx. 40 pages).
- A Bachelor's thesis is worth 6 ECTS and comprises between 45'000 and 50'000 characters without spaces (approx. 20 pages)

The number of characters does not include the cover sheet, indices, and footnotes. A thesis includes a cover sheet (thesis title, name and surname, address, email address, matriculation number, semester), table of contents, table of abbreviations, list of references, main text, and declaration of authorship.

#### **Formatting**

- Font: Times New Roman, Arial, or another readable font
- Font Size: 12
- Line spacing: 1.5
- A signed declaration of authorship must be included at the end.

#### **Submission**

- a) 1 hard copy to:  
PD Dr. Roberto Andorno, Faculty of Law, Rämistrasse 74/65, 8001 Zurich  
and
- b) 1 Word or PDF file (by email) to: roberto.andorno@uzh.ch



**Citation method: Footnotes with name and year, and full references at the end**

- **Footnotes:** author's family name and year; page number if relevant.

Example:

4 Anscombe 1958.

5 MacIntyre 1981, 132.

- **Full references at the end** (in alphabetical order)

Example:

Anscombe, Elisabeth (1958): Modern Moral Philosophy. In: *Philosophy* 33, p. 1–19.

MacIntyre, Alasdair (1981): *After Virtue. A Study in Moral Theory*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame.

**8. Language:** The seminar will be held in English, and the thesis should be written preferably in English.

**9. Indicative list of topics for the thesis** (other topics can be considered upon request):

- Neurotechnologies and the right to mental privacy
- Human germline gene editing and the integrity of future generations
- Biolaw at the Council of Europe
- Dignity versus autonomy in bioethics and biolaw
- Bioethical principles in the Swiss Federal Constitution: History and analysis
- Broad consent to research with human biological samples and genetic data
- Minimal risk in biomedical research: meaning and implications
- Financial compensation to participants in clinical trials
- Genetic testing in children
- Genetic discrimination
- The rights of psychiatric patients
- Intercountry surrogacy and the judgments of the ECtHR
- The right of children conceived through gamete donation to know the donor's identity
- The moral and legal status of the human embryo
- Organ selling
- Preimplantation genetic diagnosis
- Assisted suicide in Switzerland and abroad
- Withholding *and* withdrawing life-sustaining interventions: ethical and legal issues