Research Seminar
Institute for Ethics & Society

Dr. Christopher Mayes
Australian bioethics, a distinct history

Speaker

Christopher Mayes is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Centre for Values, Ethics and the Law in Medicine, University of Sydney. Christopher’s research interests are in continental philosophy, bioethics, public health and food studies. His latest book ‘The Biopolitics of Lifestyle: Foucault, Ethics and Health Choices’ (Routledge, 2015) investigates the use of ‘lifestyle’ as a device through which choices and behaviours are governed in response to the purported obesity epidemic.

Abstract

This paper traces pivotal developments of Australian bioethics. As a relatively young field of inquiry, bioethics emerged in the 1980s at the intersection of the university, medical industry, medical profession, scientific research, religious organizations, feminist movement, legal profession and government. Some of Australia’s most prominent philosophers and public intellectuals participated in public debate and government inquiries over reproductive technologies, abortion, euthanasia and stem cell research. To date, the history of these developments and their social significance has not been examined. Australian bioethics is often assumed to share the history of American or English bioethics. This paper aims to advance understanding of the distinctive contribution of Australian bioethics and its unique history that is tied to the advancement of biotechnology industries, growth of the neoliberal university and debates about secularism in Australia.

Date: Wednesday 24th February 2016 (Semester 1, Week 1)
Time: 12.30 pm – 1.30 pm
Venue: Meeting Room, Pioneer House (NDS5-609), Broadway

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