

COSUMNES RIVER COLLEGE & SACRAMENTO STATE'S
CENTER FOR PRACTICAL AND PROFESSIONAL ETHICS PRESENT

14TH ANNUAL
FALL ETHICS SYMPOSIUM

*The Ethics of
Having Children*

NOVEMBER 18, 2019

SACRAMENTO STATE
REDWOOD ROOM, UNIVERSITY UNION

NOVEMBER 19, 2019

COSUMNES RIVER COLLEGE
RECITAL HALL

ABOUT THE CENTER FOR PRACTICAL AND PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

Founded in 2005 by the Philosophy Department as a complement to its teaching and scholarly focus upon ethics, The Center for Practical and Professional Ethics takes as its overriding mission to foster and enhance the place of ethics in professional and public discourse, and to foster and support ethical practice, both in the University Community and in the broader Sacramento Region. Its mission is, therefore, educative, scholarly and practical. For further information about this and future ethics events, to support our activities, or for consultation services, please visit:

www.csus.edu/center/practical-professional-ethics/



SACRAMENTO STATE

Center for Practical and Professional Ethics

The Ethics of Having Children

Decisions we make about bringing other people into existence and parenting them are ethically fraught, and perhaps increasingly so. Additionally, these decisions are influenced by, and in turn influence, any number of developments in medical practice, public policy and law. Join us for an important conversation about the ethics of having children, as our visiting speakers address the following set of issues:

- Having children adds people to an increasingly crowded and warming world. Should these concerns justify any moral or legal constraints on the decision to procreate? Is there an obligation to adopt already-existing children rather than create new ones?
- Women facing the prospect of giving birth are subject to a dizzying array of solicited and unsolicited advice from any number of people — everyone from trusted medical professionals to random strangers on the street. How much of it is necessary? How much of it preserves the autonomy of the mother? How much of it promotes the welfare of the mother or the fetus? When does the institutional environment of giving birth lead to bad outcomes, especially in populations of marginalized racial groups? To what extent should we trust the reproductive medical and legal establishment?
- Parents are typically thought to have an outsized influence over the person their child becomes. What responsibilities attach to this influence? In particular, what obligations do parents have to instill, or avoid instilling, their values in their children? Is it wrong to cause your child to be a Giants fan? Or a Christian? Or a Democrat?

REDWOOD ROOM

UNIVERSITY UNION, SACRAMENTO STATE

8:30 am

MORNING RECEPTION

Continental Breakfast

8:45 am

INTRODUCTION & WELCOME

Kyle Swan, Associate Professor of
Philosophy and Director, Center for Practical
and Professional Ethics, *California State
University, Sacramento*

Tonya Williams, Dean of Social &
Behavioral Sciences, *Cosumnes River College*

Christina Bellon, Associate Dean, College
of Arts & Letters, *California State University,
Sacramento*

9:00 – 10:20 am

**SESSION #1: WHY YOU SHOULD LEARN
TO LOVE THE (POPULATION) BOMB**

Main Speaker:

Lyman Stone, Adjunct Fellow, *American
Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research*

Abstract:

It is popularly argued that “unlimited population growth” presents serious threats to the sustainability of human and non-human life on earth, and especially to comfortable life on earth, thanks to population-induced ecosystem degradation or climate change. This argument is incorrect. In fact, population management not only has virtually no effect on ecological degradation, but many very-low-fertility societies have especially negative impacts on the wider world, in some cases as a result of low fertility. More generally, population growth is a necessary component of the actually-plausible solutions

to environmental challenges, both through the channel of innovation, and through the role of population pressure motivating necessary policy changes. Thus, far from presenting an ethical problem, having additional children is a positive ethical good for individuals and society, and should be encouraged as a vital investment in a better future. While there may be some limit to the sustainable population of earth, with very modest amounts of innovation, and entirely reasonable policy choices around land use and agriculture, the Earth can support many billions more decent and worthwhile human lives, the presence of which enriches every other human who is living in that future. Finally, there are serious ethical complications involved in population management: its actual historical implementation has usually been grossly inhumane, and even today putatively noncoercive efforts to reduce high fertility rates in developing countries perpetuate colonialist relations and power imbalances, while squandering billions of dollars of developmental aid that could be spent on more socially beneficial projects.

Lyman Stone is an Adjunct Fellow at the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, a Research Fellow at the Institute for Family Studies, and a former International Economist at the US Department of Agriculture. He blogs about migration, population dynamics, and regional economics at In a State of Migration. He also writes regularly for Vox's Big Idea vertical, and for The Federalist. His work has been covered in the The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal, and numerous local outlets.

REDWOOD ROOM

UNIVERSITY UNION, SACRAMENTO STATE

Session Chair:

Kris McCandless, California State University, Sacramento

Additional Panelists for this Session:

Tina Rulli, University of California, Davis

Saray Ayala Lopez, California State University, Sacramento

10:30 – 11:50 am

**SESSION #2: BIRTH IN AN ETHICAL
'UPSIDE DOWN'**

Main Speaker:

Lauren Hall

Associate Professor of Political Science
Rochester Institute of Technology

Abstract:

Despite the centrality in medical discourse of bioethical principles like autonomy, justice, and beneficence, the reality of medical care dictates that such principles will always be imperfectly preserved. In pregnancy and birth in particular, conflicts between the duties physicians owe to mothers and infants make ethical decision making complex and often fraught. At the same time, an increasing amount of evidence suggests that even in the easiest of all possible cases, those cases in which maternal desire, fetal health, and economic costs all point in the same direction, physicians consistently make decisions that violate the most foundational ethical principles they claim to uphold. I trace this failure to the policy framework in which physicians operate, arguing that the combination

of authoritarian medicine and protectionist regulations leads to a coercive environment in which ethical decision making is seriously constrained. Having children, at least in the concrete act of giving birth itself, occurs in a kind of ethical Upside Down where individual patients and physicians are controlled in ways they do not understand and where the violation of the most foundational ethical principles is not only routine but even mandated.

*Lauren Hall is an Associate Professor of Political Science at Rochester Institute of Technology. She is the author of *Family and the Politics of Moderation* (Baylor University Press, 2014) and the co-editor of a volume on the political philosophy of French political thinker Chantal Delsol. Her current research is on the politics of women and the family in classical liberalism, and she also writes on related areas in evolutionary theory and bioethics.*

Session Chair:

Shawnee Ellis, California State University, Sacramento

Additional Panelists for this Session:

Keisha Ray, UT Health Science Center at Houston

Chong Choe-Smith, California State University, Sacramento

REDWOOD ROOM

UNIVERSITY UNION, SACRAMENTO STATE

12:00 – 1:30 pm

LUNCH BREAK

1:30 – 2:50 pm

**SESSION #3: EVERYDAY PREGNANCY
& THE ETHICS OF EXPECTING**

Main Speaker:

Jessica Flanigan, Associate Professor of Leadership Studies and Philosophy, Politics, Economics and Law, Jepson School of Leadership Studies, University of Richmond

Abstract:

If abortion is permissible then women are not required to remain pregnant and provide gestational services to their unborn children. If refusing to provide any gestational services is permissible then women are not required to provide high-quality gestational services either. So for most women, pregnancy is much less morally fraught than they were led to believe. In this talk, I critically analyze some common pregnancy advice in light of these claims. Not only is pregnancy advice often factually mistaken, even when it is empirically credible it is morally misguided. I also argue against the 'dual patient standard' in obstetrics and argue that it is a mistake for physicians, researchers, and policymakers to characterize pregnant women as a vulnerable population. To close, I discuss the implications of this argument for cases of accidental prenatal injury and pregnancy loss.

Jessica Flanigan the Richard L. Morrill Chair in Ethics and Democratic Values at the University of Richmond, where she teaches Leadership Ethics, Ethical Decision Making in Healthcare, and Critical Thinking. Her

*research addresses the ethics of public policy, medicine, and business. In **Pharmaceutical Freedom** (Oxford University Press, 2017) she defends rights of self-medication. In **Debating Sex Work** (Oxford University Press, forthcoming) she defends the decriminalization of sex work.*

Session Chair:

***Michael Brook**, California State University, Sacramento*

Additional Panelists for this Session:

***Michael Austin**, Eastern Kentucky University*

***Russell DiSilvestro**, California State University, Sacramento*

RECITAL HALL

COSUMNES RIVER COLLEGE

8:30 am

MORNING RECEPTION

Continental Breakfast

8:45 am

INTRODUCTION & WELCOME

All symposium participants are welcome!

GREETINGS AND OPENING REMARKS

Rick Schubert, Professor of Philosophy,
Cosumnes River College and Executive Director,
CRC-CPPE Fall Ethics Symposium Series

Christina Bellon, Associate Dean, College
of Arts & Letters, *California State University,
Sacramento*

Tonya Williams, Dean of Social &
Behavioral Sciences, *Cosumnes River College*

Ed Bush, President, *Cosumnes River College*

9:00 – 10:20 am

**SESSION #4: GIVING BIRTH WHILE
BLACK: RACIAL DISPARITIES IN
MATERNAL MORTALITY RATES & WHAT
IT MEANS FOR BLACK WOMANHOOD**

Main Speaker:

Keisha Ray, Assistant Professor,
*University of Texas Health Science Center at
Houston*

Abstract:

Black women in America are three times more likely to die during or soon after childbirth than white women. Even when black women's education and income surpasses white women's education and income black women still have a greater risk of mortality when

giving birth. Explanations for this gender and racial disparity that have been cited include black women's lesser access to health care and their lesser access to social goods and opportunities before they enter the clinical setting. The quantitative data certainly supports these explanations. But after an examination of these explanations we also see the influence of medical racism and historical tropes about what it means to be a black woman. I will explore both the quantitative data on black maternal mortality as well as the role racial biases play in the disproportionate deaths of black women during birth and after birth. To keep black women at the forefront of the discussion I will also discuss testimonies from black women whose experience of childbirth was marred with racial bias.

Keisha Ray is an Assistant Professor in the McGovern Center for Humanities and Ethics at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston. Most of her work focuses on the justice questions related to biomedical enhancement and racial disparities in health care, however, she has a more general interest in the field of bioethics. She also has interests in research ethics and medical humanities. She has contributed to peer-reviewed journals, edited volumes, and textbooks. She is Associate Editor of the American Journal of Bioethics online blog site to which she is also a regular contributor.

Session Chair:

Esther Turay, Cosumnes River College

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Additional Panelists for this Session:

Lauren Hall, Rochester Institute of Technology

Iris Dimond, Cosumnes River College

10:30 – 11:50 am

SESSION #5: SHOULD PARENTS INSTILL THEIR VALUES IN THEIR CHILDREN?

Main Speaker:

*Michael Austin, Professor of Philosophy,
Department Chair, Eastern Kentucky University*

Abstract:

Many people believe that parents not only have the right to instill their values in their children, but are morally obligated to do so. In this talk, I will consider whether or not parents have such a right, and what their obligations are in this dimension of the parent-child relationship. I will focus on values related to ethics, religion, and politics, and consider the arguments for and against the claim that parents have a right and a duty to instill such values.

*Michael Austin is Professor of Philosophy and Chair of the Department of Philosophy and Religion at Eastern Kentucky University. He has published eleven books, including *Humility and Human Flourishing* (Oxford University Press, 2017) and numerous journal articles related to ethics, philosophy of religion, philosophy of the family, and philosophy of sport.*

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Session Chair:

Anastacia Dobson Bell, Cosumnes River College

Additional Panelists for this Session:

Jessica Flanigan, University of Richmond

Nadia Noab Connolly, Cosumnes River College

12:00 - 1:30 pm

LUNCH BREAK

1:30 - 2:50 pm

SESSION #6: THE DUTY TO ADOPT

Main Speaker:

Tina Rulli, Assistant Professor of Philosophy, University of California, Davis

Abstract:

I argue that there is a duty of prospective parents to adopt children rather than procreate in many instances. The duty arises from the familiar duty to rescue. When one can provide critical life benefits to another person without sacrificing too much of their own good, then they are morally required to do so. Some people cannot afford to adopt; for those people there may be no duty. But many others can afford to do so. The remaining cost to them is the cost of having a non-genetically related child rather than a genetically related one. I argue that the genetic relationship does not have enough moral significance to count as a cost that would override a duty to adopt.

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***Tina Rulli** is an Assistant Professor in the Philosophy Department at UC Davis. She works in normative ethics, applied ethics, and bioethics. Her research focuses on the duty to rescue, the ethics of adoption and procreation, the ethics of procreative technologies, and population ethics.*

Session Chair:

***Jennifer Barnhart**, Cosumnes River College*

Additional Panelists for this Session:

***Lyman Stone**, American Enterprise Institute*

***Jacob Velasquez**, Cosumnes River College*

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