

Bioethics as a Governance Practice. Centre for Health, Ethics and Law Annual Lecture

Professor Jonathan Montgomery

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Lecture Theatre A – Nuffield Theatre (Building 6)
Highfield Campus

The nature and scope of bioethics has been long debated. Some see it as a descriptor of a field of study; covering topics such as research ethics, death and dying, genetics, reproductive technologies and behavioural control. Others suggest it is an academic discipline, perhaps with its roots in moral philosophy. Others still suggest that it is an academic enterprise bringing to bear a constellation of disciplines to make sense of issues in the field. The public and policy facing aspects of this work have given rise to considerable controversy over the nature and legitimacy of bioethical expertise, giving rise to ‘culture wars’ in the USA. This lecture examines the nature of bioethics as a governance practice. It explores the range of mechanisms that have been adopted for regulation, oversight and mediation of public concerns and discusses some of the implications of this movement of bioethics from academic and clinical contexts into institutions in the public square.

Jonathan Montgomery is Professor of Health Care Law at University College London. He will draw on his wide experience of bioethics governance bodies including his current work as Chair of the Health Research Authority and Chair of the Nuffield Council on Bioethics. He was Chair of the Human Genetics Commission from 2009 to 2012 and has been a member of various bioethics bodies including the Organ Donation Taskforce, the Committee on the Ethical Aspects of Pandemic Influenza, the Medical Ethics Committee of the British Medical Association, and the Ethics Advisory Group of the British Paediatrics Association. He served on local NHS boards in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight for over twenty years up to March 2013.



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