



Exchange programme Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam - Exchange programme Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam - 2024-2025

Exchange

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam offers many English-taught courses in a variety of subjects, ranging from arts & culture and social sciences, neurosciences and computer science, to economics and business administration.

The International Office is responsible for course approval and course registration for exchange students. For details about course registration, requirements, credits, semesters and so on, please [visit the exchange programmes webpages](#).

Law and Ethics of Reproductive Technologies

Course Code	R_LERT
Credits	6
Period	P3
Course Level	300
Language Of Tuition	English
Faculty	Faculty of Law
Course Coordinator	prof. dr. mr. B.C. van Beers
Examiner	prof. dr. mr. B.C. van Beers
Teaching Staff	prof. dr. mr. B.C. van Beers
Teaching method(s)	Lecture, Seminar

Course Objective

This interdisciplinary course explores the bioethical, biolegal and biopolitical dilemmas that are raised by technological developments at the intersection of reproductive medicine and genetics.

This course will enable the student to critically reflect upon legal and ethical dimensions of current public debates on the regulation of assisted reproductive technologies. This course will teach the student to come to an understanding of the key concepts and categories within legal regulation of reproductive technologies, and to connect these with various normative ethical theories.

Through an examination of the existing legal frameworks surrounding reproductive and genetic technologies from the perspectives of law and bioethics against the background of ongoing contemporary political and societal discussions, the student will be trained to integrate ethical reasoning, daily practices and legal rules and regulations into a normative evaluation of these technologies. In this process the student will be encouraged to take a legally and ethically argued position in scientific debates on current developments in the field of assisted reproductive technologies through written and oral presentations of a legal and philosophical nature.

Course Content

Technologies at the intersection of reproductive medicine and genetics offer new ways of creating human life. These technologies make it possible to assemble, genetically screen, choose and, possibly, even design one's future children. How can societies decide who may access these technologies to create which kinds of children? Which rights, whose rights and which public values should be taken into account within the regulation of this complex field? And what are the legal and ethical limits to these currently emerging forms of 'liberal eugenics'?

The general focus in this course will be on the role and meaning of human rights and human dignity for the regulation of assisted reproductive technologies.

Topics in this course include:

- law and ethics of prenatal testing
- selective reproduction and 'designer babies'
- reproductive markets and reproductive tourism
- reproductive rights
- gestational and commercial surrogacy
- wrongful life claims
- the welfare of future children
- sperm and egg cell donation/selling
- eugenics and human enhancement
- the status of embryos and gametes

As students in this course are invited to discuss recent reproductive technologies and trends against the background of legal, ethical and societal approaches, this course fits in very well with the VU law school's focus on 'law in action'.

Additional Information Teaching Methods

This 3 week course will be taught through interactive tutorials and lectures.

Method of Assessment

Written open-book exam.

Literature

All literature will be made available on Canvas, and will include legal and philosophical academic literature, legal and political documents, policy reports, news articles and audiovisual materials.

Additional Information Target Audience

Because this course is also part of a university minor (Technology, Law and Ethics), it is open to students from various academic backgrounds.

Apart from regular students, the course is also available for:

- Students from other universities/faculties
- Exchange students
- Contractor (students who pay for one course)

Recommended background knowledge

No special knowledge of law, philosophy or bioethics is required to be able to participate in this course. A basic knowledge of human rights and a keen interest in the contemporary dilemmas surrounding reproductive technologies are a plus.