Why focus on disability?

1. Frailty and fluctuating capacities are the human condition – not a ‘special interest.’
   - We begin and usually end life disabled and dependent, and our capacities fluctuate in between.

2. Bodies vary in terms of what they can do, how they look, their social meaning, how we experience them.
Why focus on disability?

Disability bioethics can mean:

- Beginning ethical thought from these frail, fluctuating, dependent, diverse bodies.
- Thinking about how to respond to disability ethically, in policy, health care, and everyday life.

Independence as a vexed ideal

- We are all dependent – which dependencies do we notice?
- What is our paradigm of a disabled body? What does this exclude?
- Agency as self-determination and flourishing, not independence.
What is disability?

• The ‘medical model’ of disability
• The ‘social model’ of disability
  o Myopia
  o Inability to drive
  o Deafness
  o The ‘strong model’ and disability vs impairment

What is disability?

• What makes a bodily difference into a disadvantage?
• Why appeals to ‘biological function’ and ‘nature’ won’t help.
• Problems with the disability/impairment distinction.
• Problems with the treatment/enhancement distinction.
What is disability?

- Disability as a continuum.
- Different kinds of accommodation. Accommodation as a basic universal right.

Issue #1: Prenatal testing for Down syndrome

1. The expressivist argument: does testing devalue the lives of those with Down syndrome?
2. Medicalization of disabled bodies and the critique from the point of view of the social model.
   - Routinizing testing-abortion may block visibility of social solutions.
   - Fewer babies with Down syndrome may lead to fewer resources and less support.
   - Pathologizing these pregnancies and babies may enhance prejudice and create a ‘responsibility’ to abort.
   - More generally: enhanced responsibilities for designing humans?
Issue #2: Creating deaf/Deaf children

- Dena Davis on the ‘right to an open future.’
- Responses:
  - Not clear what counts as an ‘open’ future of the right sort.
  - We don’t generally insist on all reproductive choices making futures more open.
  - The ‘Deaf habitus’ and the real values of shared community/world.

Issue #3: Disability and end of life decisions

- An interesting case because there are disability advocates on both sides!
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<td>o The <em>Philosophers’ Brief</em> and control over end-of-life narrative as a basic right.</td>
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<td>o Concerns over which people and bodies are dispensable, or 'understandably' might want to die.</td>
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