

## 24.06 / STS.006 Paper 3 Questions

Paper 3 is due on Thursday April 20, in lecture. Please answer one of the following questions, and remember to type the question at the top of your paper.

(1) Consider two claims that a moderate advocate of eugenics might make:

A: The government should discourage people with certain genetic disabilities from reproducing.

B: The government should encourage parents to terminate fetuses that have genetic diseases, such as thalassemia.

Pick one of these claims and construct the best *slippery slope argument* that you can against it. Every slippery slope argument describes a series of claims, the last of which is untenable. Be sure to describe your series in detail. In light of the history of the eugenics movement in America (claim A), or the thalassemia prevention program in Cyprus (claim B), how plausible or implausible is your argument? (You may wish to consider, for instance, whether society today is more or less vulnerable to slippery slopes than in the past.)

(2) Although the odds of having a successful pregnancy are now better than ever, prospective parents worry about subtler and subtler risks during pregnancy. What historical changes have contributed to changing perceptions of risk during pregnancy? Can you suggest a mechanism for distinguishing between what should be parental choices or obligations during pregnancy? (i.e. are recommendations to exercise well, terminate fetuses with thalassemia, take folate, and avoid certain fish all equivalent? are some advice and others obligations?). As the odds of good outcomes continue to improve, will Rifkin's future of intervening to enhance capabilities (and not just to reduce risks) become more acceptable?

(3) Sometimes actions affect who ever exists. Derek Parfit argues that this gives rise to a problem -- the 'non-identity problem'. What is this problem? (You may wish to consider some of the examples in Parfit's chapter, and/or some of the examples we looked at in class) What is his solution? Is it the best solution?