Recitation 13: Rights, Responsibilities, and Public Health

1. Administrivia
   Please complete the Student Writing Survey [distributed in class]
   Please complete the course evaluation

2. Presentations: Ansah, Erik, and Yuki

3. Rights
   When (if ever) is a government justified in limiting individual rights in the interest of public health?
   Consider a few scenarios:
   - A virulent flu pandemic.
   - The current swine flu concern.
   - HIV/AIDS.
   - Obesity and diabetes.
   - Helmet laws.

   What sorts of measures (if any) is the government permitted to take?
   Is there a good slippery slope argument here against government intervention?

4. Responsibilities
   Do we have a responsibility to be healthy? Consider two scenarios:
   - My personal health decisions have no impact on anyone else.
   - My personal health decisions have an impact on other people.

   Suppose a person does have an obligation to be healthy. Should there be penalties for failing to fulfill this obligation/incentives for fulfilling this obligation (beyond the natural penalties/incentives, like bad/good health)? If so, what should these penalties/incentives be?
   When (if ever) are companies to blame when an individual develops a health problem related to their product (e.g., food, alcohol, tobacco)? What should the consequences be?

5. Public Health
   Why should we care whether other people are healthy?
   - The Egocentric response: when other people are unhealthy, it adversely affects us.
   - The Paternalistic response: we have some sort of duty to take care of other people.
   - Other responses?