DO YOU WANT TO DIE?
USING BRAIN SCANS TO DETECT CONSCIOUSNESS IN PATIENTS DIAGNOSED WITH PERSISTENT VEGETATIVE STATE

WALTER SINNOTT-ARMSTRONG
CHAUNCEY STILLMAN PROFESSOR IN PRACTICAL ETHICS
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY AND THE KENAN INSTITUTE FOR ETHICS
DUKE UNIVERSITY

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 9
4:00 PM
341 BARDEEN

Recently, new techniques in brain imaging have detected consciousness in patients who had been thought to be in persistent vegetative states. These methods open up the possibility of asking such patients whether or not they want to be kept alive. What should doctors do if some of these patients clearly refuse to give consent to be treated and instead ask to be allowed to die? What should doctors do if the patient's family disagrees with the patient or among themselves? And if some patients ask to be kept alive, how much access should they be given to the expensive brain scanning technologies that are their only means of communicating? These moral and legal questions are raised by the new abilities provided by neuroscience.

For additional information or questions, contact Jessica Karis: karis@wisc.edu or 262-4932