

Beyond human performance: ethical and regulatory challenges to cognitive enhancement

Dr. Nicholas G. Evans, Ph.D. is Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Massachusetts Lowell, where he co-directs the Modelling Individual and Networked Decisions (MIND) Lab. His work focuses on the intersection of ethics, infectious disease, emerging technologies, and national security.

Dr. Evans is best known for his work on “dual-use research of concern,” beneficial scientific research that has a risk of misuse in the development of weapons of mass destruction. Dr. Evans completed one of the first Ph.D. dissertations on the ethics of dual-use research of concern in 2013, where he wrote on the scope and strength of scientific freedom in the face of national security concerns. He has since published more than 20 articles on the topic, and worked in several capacities in government initiatives to prevent the misuse of the life sciences. In February 2025, he published *Gain of Function with The MIT Press Essential Knowledge Series*, providing a thoroughgoing guide to the topic, its controversies, and future.



More recently, Dr. Evans has conducted research with funding from the US Air Force Office of Scientific Research on the ethics of human enhancement among serving members of the military. His 2021 *The Ethics of Neuroscience and National Security* provided a wide ranging assessment of the possibilities and limits of the use of neuroscience to promote legitimate military aims, and his “How do we justify research into enhanced warfighters?” (*J. Law Biosciences*) is the premier ethical assessment of how to conduct performance enhancement. In 2027, he will release *Human Enhancement at War: Ethics, Law, and the Making of Gods of War* with Oxford University Press, co-edited with Dr. Blake Hereth.

Dr. Evans is also a recognized expert in public health ethics, writing on the ethics of social distancing, research ethics during health emergencies, and the use of force in pandemic response. His 2016 collection, *Ebola's Message: Public Health and Medicine in the 21st Century* received favorable reviews in *Nature* from Dr. Peter Piot. His new book on the ethics of pandemic preparedness and response, *War on All Fronts: A Theory of Health Security Justice*, was published in May 2023. Both are available open access at The MIT Press Website.

Nick lives in Lowell, Massachusetts with his wife Kelly and their three cats. His preferred form of human enhancement is espresso.

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Research Week Highlights:

- **Poster Session and Vendor Exhibits**
- **Poster Competition Winners**
- **Live Lectures**
- **Keynote Lecture Presentation**
- **Buffet Luncheon**

More Information:

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