

GRAND ROUNDS



Thursday, November 20, 2025

Location: HSC, Level 3, Lecture Hall 6

4:30pm- 6:00pm

RSVP [here](#) or to

bioethics@stonybrookmedicine.edu

The Lives of Dr. Lewis Thomas: Science as Metaphor

Joseph J. Fins, MD, DHL (hc), DMSc (hc), MACP, FRCP (London)

Dr. Lewis Thomas had a storied life as a scientist and humanist. Author of "The Lives of a Cell" and "The Medusa and the Snail," Thomas was dean of NYU and Yale medical schools, president of Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center and later a University Professor at Stony Brook. A brilliant scientist and writer, his work laid the foundation for modern cancer immunotherapy and his essays have been heralded as amongst the finest of the genre. In his talk, "The Lives of Lewis Thomas: Science as Metaphor," his biographer Dr. Joseph J. Fins will share insights from his archival research and argue that Thomas's synthetic approach to the sciences and the humanities was the font of his creative genius.



Joseph J. Fins is *The E. William Davis, Jr. M.D.* Professor of Medical Ethics and Chief of the Division of Medical Ethics at Weill Cornell Medical College where he is a Tenured Professor of Medicine, Professor of Medicine in Psychiatry, Professor of Medical Ethics in Neurology, Professor of Medical Ethics in Rehabilitation Medicine, and Professor of Health Care Policy and Research. He is the founding chair of the Ethics Committee of New York-Presbyterian Weill Cornell Medical Center where he is an Attending Physician and Director of Medical Ethics. A member of the Adjunct Faculty of Rockefeller University and Senior Attending Physician at The Rockefeller University Hospital, he co-directs, the Consortium for the Advanced Study of Brain Injury (CASBI) at Weill Cornell Medicine and Rockefeller. In 2014, he served as the *Dwight H. Terry Visiting Scholar in Bioethics* and Visiting Professor in the History of Medicine at Yale. In 2015, he was appointed the *Solomon Center Distinguished Scholar in Medicine, Bioethics and the Law* at Yale Law School and directs CASBI@YLS. He is currently a Visiting Professor of Law at Yale Law School in addition to his appointment at Weill Cornell Medicine. He is chair of the Hastings Center Board of Trustees.

To learn more about the **MD with Scholarly Concentrations in Medical Humanities and Ethics track**, the **Master of Arts program**, and **Center for Medical Humanities, Compassionate Care and Bioethics**, please visit stonybrook.edu/bioethics