

PHIL 210A: BIOMEDICAL ETHICS

Spring 2022

Class schedule: TR 1:00-2:20pm
Class Instructor: Katherine Valde
Office Hours: Thursdays 10am-12pm

Class Location: CCES 109
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Office: DB 206

Philosophy, though unable to tell us with certainty what is the true answer to the doubts it raises, is able to suggest many possibilities which enlarge our thoughts and free them from the tyranny of custom. Thus, while diminishing our feeling of certainty as to what things are, it greatly increases our knowledge as to what they may be; it removes the somewhat arrogant dogmatism of those who have never traveled into the region of liberating doubt, and it keeps alive our sense of wonder by showing familiar things in an unfamiliar aspect.

-Bertrand Russell

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course will survey ethical issues that arise in connection with research, medicine, and biotechnologies. It will examine topics such as the right to healthcare, research on human subjects, euthanasia, abortion, cloning, genetic selection, disabilities, and the biomedical enhancement of human capacities. Students can expect to gain not only training in philosophical ethics and argumentation, but also the resources needed for assessing ethically difficult questions that medical professionals routinely face.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

This course is designed both to provide you with an introduction to some problems in biomedical ethics and to provide you with skills to approach solving such problems. You will learn to:

- Identify and understand philosophical arguments in text and verbal forms.
- Draw connections between the principles operating in different arguments
- Evaluate the relative strength of different positions on particular issues
- Understand the relationship between the different parts of the biomedical system

Through gaining a deeper understanding of the complex nature of the biomedical problems, and why we inevitably are answering them, it is the ultimate goal of this course that you will come to an appreciation of how rigorous philosophical thought can and should help us navigate our everyday lives.

REQUIRED TEXT:

A Companion to Bioethics Edited by Helga Kuhse and Peter Singer (2012) **must be purchased through Perusall**

All other readings will be provided as PDFs.

CLASS EXPECTATIONS:

Do the readings. *Think* about the readings. Our class will not be engaging for you if you do not come prepared. Treat each other and the professor with respect. Be prepared to be challenged. Growth (intellectual and personal) comes from moving beyond our comfort zones!

GRADING:

PERUSALL – 20%

Students are expected to complete readings on Perusall. You will be expected to read the entire document, make high quality annotations, and return to reply to other student comments. You make at least 4 high-quality comments/responses per assignment. Annotations are substantive questions, engaging comments, and thoughtful responses to your peers' questions and comments. More meaningful engagement will earn a higher grade.

PARTICIPATION – 15%

Participation will be assessed on student's active engagement with the material and each other during class period. Merely showing up and listening respectfully is considered C-level (75%) participation.

CURRENT ISSUES JOURNAL– 10%

Students will be asked to make a minimum of 3 journal entries that connect course material to news events. Journal entries must reference a specific source, summarize that source, and discuss the principles, ideas, or concepts from our course that the source or event reflects. Students will also be asked to share something from their journal in class at the end of the semester. Further guidelines will be provided in class.

SHORT PAPERS – 30%

Students will complete two short papers for this class (worth 15% each). Short papers will be approximately 750 words. Further guidelines for the construction of good academic papers will be provided in class.

TAKE-HOME FINAL EXAM– 25%

The comprehensive take home final will consist of short answer and long answer questions designed to promote students understanding and engagement with the ideas of this course.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVES (WEEKS 1-4):

Week 1: Welcome to Biomedical Ethics

T 2/8	Welcome to Biomedical Ethics ☺
R 2/10	<i>What is Bioethics? A Historical Introduction</i> by Helga Kuhse and Peter Singer

Week 2: How do we do bioethics?

T 2/15	<i>Exceptionless Rule Approaches</i> by Joseph Boyle
R 2/17	<i>A Virtue Ethics Approach</i> by Justin Oakley

Week 3: How do we do bioethics?

T 2/22	<i>A Principle Based Approach</i> by James Childress
R 2/24	<i>The Way We Reason: Reflective Equilibrium in Bioethics</i> by John Arras

Week 4:

T 3/1	<i>Culture and Bioethics</i> by Segun Gbadegsin
R 3/3	<i>Religion and Bioethics</i> by Eric Gregory
F 3/4	CURRENT ISSUES JOURNAL 1 DUE by noon

BIOMEDICAL ETHICS AT THE COMMUNITY SCALE (WEEKS 5-10):

Week 5: Is Health Care a Right?

T 3/8	<i>Is There a Right to Health Care and, If So, What Does it Encompass?</i> by Norman Daniels
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R 3/10	In-class paper review!
F 3/11	SHORT PAPER 1 DUE by noon

Week 6: COVID-19

T 3/15	Selection from <i>Uncontrolled Spread: Why COVID-19 Crushed Us and How We Can Defeat the Next Pandemic</i> by Scott Gottlieb
R 3/17	<i>It Didn't Have to Be This Way</i> by Silvia Camporesi

Week7: Allocation of Resources

T 3/22	<i>Society's Allocation of Resources for Health</i> by Daniel Wilker and Sarah Marchand
R 3/24	<i>Global Health Responsibilities</i> by Christopher Lowry and Udo Schüklenk

Week 8: Health Care for the community

T 3/29	<i>Health Care Justice for the Chronically Ill and Disabled</i> by Anita Silvers
R 3/31	<i>Racial Groups, Distrust, and the Distribution of Health Care</i> by Howard McGary
F 4/1	CURRENT ISSUES JOURNAL 1 DUE by noon

SPRING BREAK (NO CLASS 4/4 – 4/8)

Week 9: Abortion

T 4/12	<i>How to Talk About Abortion</i> by Laurie Shrage
R 4/14	<i>A Defense of Abortion</i> by Judith Jarvis Thompson

Week 10: Race and Medicine

T 4/19	<i>Debating the Cause of Health Disparities: Implications for Bioethics and Racial Equality</i> by Dorothy Roberts
R 4/21	<i>What Role Should Race Play in Medicine?</i> By Jennifer Tsai
F 4/22	SHORT PAPER 2 DUE by noon

BIOMEDICAL ETHICS AT THE INTERPERSONAL SCALE (WEEKS 11-12):

Week 11: Biomedical Decision Makers

T 4/26	<i>Ethics in Nursing Practice</i> by Janet L Storch
R 4/28	<i>Ethics Committees and Ethical Consultants</i> by Jonathan D. Moreno

Week 12: Patients Decisions

T 5/3	<i>Informed Consent and Patient Autonomy</i> by Robert Young
R 5/5	<i>Patients Doubtfully Capable or Incapable of Consent</i> by Carl Elliott
F 5/6	FINAL CURRENT ISSUES JOURNAL DUE by noon

Week 13: Exam Review

T 5/10	Current Issues Journal Show & Tell
R 5/12	Exam Review

Week 14: Exam due!