

**Course Syllabus**  
**Philosophy 3340 (Online)**  
**Biomedical Ethics**

**Course Description:** Biomedical ethics is composed of two separate fields: bioethics and medical ethics. Bioethics is the study of the ethics of life (and death), and includes familiar topics such as abortion, cloning, stem cell research, allocation of scarce medical resources, and euthanasia. We shall spend approximately the first two-third of the course on these issues. For the last third of the course, we shall discuss topics in medical ethics, which is concerned with “micro” issues such as the moral underpinnings of doctor-patient relationships as well as “macro” issues such as the structures of medical institutions or the duties that societies have to provide health care for those in need. No previous coursework in philosophy is required for this course and fundamental concepts in moral philosophy (e.g., consequentialism and deontology) will be explained as they become relevant. This is a course on *theoretical* (as opposed to clinical) bioethics.

**Professor:** Dr. Fritz Allhoff  
3006 Moore Hall; Monday 1:00-3:00  
[fritz.allhoff@wmich.edu](mailto:fritz.allhoff@wmich.edu), 269.387.4503 (w)

**Graduate Assistant:** Chris Boss  
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**Course Website:** <http://elearn.wmich.edu>

**Text:** All readings are available online at <http://www.wmich.edu/library/reserves/>. The first time that you visit that site, you must create an account and add this course to that account. The password is ethics.

**Technical Support:** For any technical support pertaining to the course (including course readings), contact Online Education by phone at (269) 387-4200 or by email at [atis-support@wmich.edu](mailto:atis-support@wmich.edu). Neither the professor nor graduate assistant is able to provide technical support.

**Email:** All correspondence regarding this course will either be sent to WMU email accounts (from GoWMU) or else posted to the e-learning environment. Students are required to regularly check their WMU accounts, and all correspondence from them should be sent from those accounts (per university policy). Emails to the instructor or GA should be sent to them directly and not posted as mail through e-learning; this will ensure a faster response since e-learning mail has to be checked separately from university email.

**Overview:** This course will be conducted online and has various components; those components will be described in the rest of the syllabus. Each week, students will complete the below-listed reading assignments and then read lectures that have posted about them. A lecture will be posted on Monday at 900a of each week and will remain visible for the rest of the course. (Students should do the readings first as the lectures will analyze and evaluate them.) Following the assimilation of the readings and lectures, students will take an online quiz. There will be four writing assignments, spread out throughout the semester. Office hours will be held both physically and online.

<b>Grading:</b>	Weekly Quizzes	20%	
	Writing Assignment #1	20%	(due Week 5)
	Writing Assignment #2	20%	(due Week 8)
	Writing Assignment #3	20%	(due Week 12)
	Writing Assignment #4	20%	(due Finals Week)

All writing assignments receive letter grades which are converted to a 4.0 scale: A = 4.0, BA = 3.5, B = 3.0, CB = 2.5, C = 2.0, DC = 1.5, D = 1.0, E = 0.0. Final quiz averages are also converted to a 4.0 scale:  $\geq 93\%$  = 4.0, 90-92% = 3.7, 88-89% = 3.3, 83-87% = 3.0, 80-82% = 2.7, 78-79% = 2.3, 73-77% = 2.0, 70-72% = 2.3, 68-69% = 1.3, 63-67% = 1.0, 60-62% = 0.7, 58-59% = 0.3,  $\leq 58\%$  = 0.0. Numerical final grades are then converted to letter grades:  $\geq 3.75$  = A, 3.25-3.74 = BA, 2.75-3.24 = B, 2.25-2.74 = CB, 1.75-2.24 = C, 1.25-1.74 = DC, 0.75-1.24 = D,  $\leq 0.74$  = E.

**Weekly Quizzes:** Every Wednesday at 900a, a quiz will be posted to the course website. For each of you, 10 multiple choice questions will be randomly selected from a bank of questions that have been submitted. These quizzes should be taken without any study materials present, and you will have 15 minutes to complete the quiz. The quiz must be completed by Thursday at 500p, by which time it will no longer be available. You should take the quiz after you have read the assigned readings and lecture for the week, as well as studied them.

Your lowest two quiz grades, including those for missed quizzes, will be dropped. For this reason, no further allowances will be made for personal reasons or computer issues that should arise.

**Writing Assignments:** On Thursday at 500p of weeks 4, 7, 11, and 14—as soon as the quizzes for those weeks close—writing assignments will be accessible from the course website. The first assignment will cover material from weeks 1-4; the second assignment will cover material from weeks 5-7; the third assignment will cover materials from weeks 8-11; and the fourth assignment will cover material from weeks 12-14 (i.e., none of the assignments is cumulative).

You then have one week to complete the writing assignment, which is due by 500p on the Friday after which it is posted. Assignments submitted by 500p the following Monday will be penalized one letter grade (e.g., A to BA). Assignments submitted at any later time will be penalized two letter grades (e.g., A to B). Extensions will not be offered, nor should they be requested.

Each writing assignment will be approximately 2,500 words, and the prompts will likely have several components. You are allowed to use your course notes as well as your course readings in the development of your answers. No other sources—including collaboration with others—should be incorporated into this assignment; the incorporation of any uncited sources will be considered plagiarism. Citations should be made to course readings as appropriate, with citations given to the author and original page of publication.

Note that you also have quizzes (on new material) the same weeks that you will be principally writing these assignments. This is one reason that they have been made available on the Friday before the week they are due; this way, you have a weekend to work on them, should you want to.

## TOPICS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

<b>1</b>	Introduction to Biomedical Ethics	
<b>2</b>	Abortion	Mary Anne Warren, "On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion"
<b>3</b>	Abortion (cont.)	Judith Jarvis Thomson, "A Defense of Abortion"
<b>4</b>	Abortion (cont.)	Don Marquis, "Why Abortion Is Immoral"
<b>5</b>	Stem Cells and Cloning  <b>Writing Assignment #1 by Friday at 500p</b>	Leon Kass, "The Wisdom of Repugnance"
<b>6</b>	Cloning (cont.)	Gregory Pence, "Who's Afraid of Human Cloning?"  Fritz Allhoff, "Telomeres and the Ethics of Human Cloning"
<b>7</b>	Commercial Surrogacy	Ruth Macklin, "What Is Wrong with Commodification?"  Sara Ann Ketchum, "Selling Babies and Selling Bodies"
<b>8</b>	(Im)morality of Reproduction  <b>Writing Assignment #2 by Friday at 500p</b>	Laura Purdy, "Genetics and Reproductive Risk: Can Having Children Be Immoral?"
<b>9</b>	Allocation of Scarce Medical Resources	Nicholas Rescher, "The Allocation of Exotic Medical Lifesaving Therapy"
<b>10</b>	Physician-Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia	James Rachels, "Active and Passive Euthanasia"
<b>11</b>	Euthanasia (cont.)	Dan Brock, "Voluntary Active Euthanasia"  Daniel Callahan, "Physician-Assisted Dying: Self-Determination Run Amok"

12	Medical Ethics and the Doctor-Patient Relationship  <b>Writing Assignment #3 by Friday at 500p</b>	The Hippocratic Oath  Council on Ethical and Judicial Affairs, American Medical Association, "Fundamental Elements of the Patient-Physician Relationship"  James Childress and Mark Siegler, "Metaphors and Models of the Doctor-Patient Relationship: Their Implications for Autonomy"
13	Truth and the Physician	Bernard Meyer, "Truth and the Physician"  Sissela Bok, "Lies to the Sick and Dying"
14	Competence and Surrogate Decision Making	Allen Buchanan and Dan Brock, "Standards of Competence"  Dan Brock, "Surrogate Decision Making for Incompetent Adults: An Ethical Framework"
15	<b>Writing Assignment #4 by Friday at 500p</b>	

**Statement on Academic Honesty:** You are responsible for making yourself aware of and understanding the policies and procedures in the Undergraduate Catalog that pertain to Academic Honesty (pp. 274-276). These policies include cheating, fabrication, falsification and forgery, multiple submission, plagiarism, complicity and computer misuse. If there is reason to believe you have been involved in academic dishonesty, you will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. You will be given the opportunity to review the charge(s). If you believe you are not responsible, you will have the opportunity for a hearing. You should consult with me if you are uncertain about an issue of academic honesty prior to the submission of an assignment or test.

**Accommodation for Disabilities:** Any student with a documented disability (e.g., physical, learning, psychiatric, vision, hearing, etc.) who needs to arrange reasonable accommodations must contact Ms. Beth Denhartigh at 387-2116 or at [beth.denhartigh@wmich.edu](mailto:beth.denhartigh@wmich.edu) at the beginning of the semester. A disability determination must be made by this office before any accommodations are provided by the instructor.