

**Philosophy 3340**  
**Biomedical Ethics**  
**Fall 2021**

**Course Description:** Biomedical ethics has Ancient roots, dating at least to Hippocrates in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE. Its moral foundations are typically held to rest on four separate—yet sometimes competing—values: autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, and justice. In the first few units of this course, we consider these values and their application to a range of healthcare practitioners. In the next set of units, we consider these values in specific contexts, including clinical medical ethics, informed consent, research ethics, and preventative care and testing. We then turn to more abstract philosophical discussion of abortion and end-of-life care before more broadly considering the structure and distribution of both healthcare and other scarce medical resources. The last few units cover topics that have emerged more recently in biomedical ethics, including diversity and pluralism, race, and globalization. The course concludes with optional modules on both mental illness and the opioid epidemic. No previous coursework in moral philosophy is required for this course; fundamental concepts will be explained as they become relevant.

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**Course Website:** [elearning.wmich.edu](https://elearning.wmich.edu)

**Course Readings:** All course readings are available in e-learning.

**Grading:**

Multiple Choice Quizzes	20 pts/module * 14 modules	280 pts
Short Answer Questions	30 pts/module * 14 modules	420 pts
Discussion Forums	20 pts/module * 14 modules	280 pts
Final Paper		420 pts
	<b>Total:</b>	<b><u>1,400 pts</u></b>

**Grading Scale:** This course uses a standard scale: >92%+ = A; 88%-92% = BA; 82%-88% = B; 78%-82% = CB; 72%-78% = C; 68%-72% = DC; 60%-68% = D; <60% = E. In unusual cases, there will be a (small) curve, but that will not be known until calculation of final grades. There may also be extra credit, which will be announced when available; please do not ask for additional opportunities.

**Course Communications:** In general, please use the *discussion forums* (i.e., as opposed to email), to ask course-related questions, report any technical issues, and so on. This way other students can also benefit from the discussions—we can also help consolidate those discussions into a single public place, rather than through multiple private email threads. However, for any communications that involve personal or confidential material, please message me on Microsoft Teams (i.e., instead of email).

**Readings:** For each module, complete the assigned video and readings (see below). Reading in philosophy is *very* difficult, both because philosophers often write technically and because the questions they seek to answer are not always ones with which we are familiar. It is therefore of critical importance that you invest heavily in the reading, both by going slowly and, sometimes, by going through it more than once. Understanding the reading is the key to success in this course.

**Quizzes:** For each module, you will complete a multiple choice quiz and short essay questions. The multiple choice quiz comprises ten questions—each worth two points—and has an allowance of thirty minutes. There are three short essay questions—each worth ten points—that have a combined allowance of ninety minutes. Short essay questions should be answered in two to three paragraphs each; that said, use your judgment on what sort of detail is required. (Students' answers are often too short; make sure to use the two to three paragraph guidance.). You may use the assigned materials for both the multiple choice quiz and the short essay questions, but, because of the time limits, should prepare before you begin.

Quizzes open at 12:00 a.m. on Monday and close at 11:59 p.m. on Sunday. Note that they must be *completed* (i.e., not just started) by the expiration times. Also note that the correct answers do not display until after the quiz *closes* (i.e., not when you complete it).

**Discussion Forums:** For each module, you should make a post reacting to either the theme of that module or to particular readings within it. These posts should be *no fewer than 100 words* (and no more than 300 words). You should also *respond* to at least two different posts from your classmates; you should generally reply to the original post, but may engage themes emergent in the discussion thread as well. These responses should be *no fewer than 50 words* (and no more than 100 words). Your original post is worth 10 points and your reply posts are worth 5 points each.

The original posts must be submitted no later than Thursday at 11:59 p.m. during the module's release period; the response posts must be submitted by the close of the module on Sunday at 11:59 p.m.

Note: on "short weeks"—like Fall Break, Thanksgiving, or the week preceding Spring Break—you may complete two first posts and skip the reply posts. Or you may treat it like a normal week and do the reply posts; it is your choice. This allowance is meant to allow you to fully complete the modules before breaks. The same structure is available for make-up modules (see below) because fewer students might choose to do them and reply posts might therefore be more difficult.

**Optional Modules:** Quizzes *cannot be re-opened for any reason, nor can be they be made available beyond the release dates provided below*. However, with the understanding that personal exigencies or technical difficulties sometimes arise, any components (e.g., multiple choice quizzes, short essay questions, and discussion forums) can be replaced with components from the optional modules listed below ("Mental Illness" or "The Opioid Epidemic"). Optional modules can also be used to *replace* modules *after* the modules (or some part thereof) are attempted—for example, if you have technical difficulties or simply don't like one of your scores.

Ultimately, your *fourteen highest scores for each graded component* will count toward your final grade. This could be out of as many as sixteen possible scores (i.e., if you do both optional modules), which means that up to two scores can be replaced.

**Final Paper:** By the end of the course, you should write a paper *about the intersection of one of our modules with COVID-19*. It should be *2,500 words ( $\pm 10\%$ )*; deviations from this range will be penalized—word counts should include in-body text only, not headers, footnotes, or bibliographies.

You should spend approximately half of the paper *summarizing* the key ideas from the module, and the other half *evaluating* those ideas. Do not discuss *all* of the ideas in the module, but rather choose *some* ideas and develop a coherent and integrated essay around them.

In addition to the assigned readings, you must have *at least five external sources* that you incorporate into your paper, and *at least ten footnotes*.<sup>1</sup> Try to use authoritative, peer-reviewed sources as opposed to only websites. Wikipedia is not an acceptable source, though you may use it to get suggestions for other sources.

Use whatever *footnote* format (i.e., not endnotes, not parentheticals) you prefer and include a bibliography at the end of the paper. For example, say you wanted to cite to the first reading, which comes from a book.<sup>2</sup> Or say you wanted to cite to a paper from an academic journal.<sup>3</sup> Say you wanted to cite to the book again, after citing it the first time.<sup>4</sup> Or the paper.<sup>5</sup>

Papers should be double-spaced and margins should be justified (e.g., like this document). Include page numbers, and use a standard seriffed font (e.g., Cambria, New Roman)—please do not use sans-serifed fonts (e.g., Arial, Calibri). There are no other formatting requirements; beyond the above guidelines, use whatever style you are most comfortable with.<sup>6</sup> Because final grades are due immediately following the end of the course, *late papers will not be accepted*.

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<sup>1</sup> If you don't know what a footnote is, this is a footnote! Footnotes can be "explanatory"—like this one—or "references" to sources. You may use both kinds in your papers if you like, but the requirement mentioned above is for referential footnotes. See below for examples.

<sup>2</sup> James Beachamp and James Childress, *Principles of Biomedical Ethics*, 8<sup>th</sup> ed. (Oxford University Press, 2019), p. 123.

<sup>3</sup> Gerald Dworkin, "Paternalism", *Monist* 56.1 (1972), p. 64.

<sup>4</sup> Beachamp and Childress (2019), p. 345.

<sup>5</sup> Dworkin (1972), p. 67.

<sup>6</sup> If you want an example of how to format a paper, here's a link to one you may use as a guide. You don't have to follow it and yours won't be as long, but it might be a useful example for students who are newer to academic writing: [http://files.allhoff.org/research/Blackstone's\\_Ratio.pdf](http://files.allhoff.org/research/Blackstone's_Ratio.pdf).

MODULE	TOPIC	READING	OPEN	CLOSE
1	Principles of Biomedical Ethics	<p>“Four Ethical Principles: Should We Prioritize Autonomy” (<a href="#">video</a>)</p> <p>Beauchamp and Childress, <i>Principles of Biomedical Ethics</i> (excerpted)</p> <p>American Medical Association, “Principles of Medical Ethics”</p> <p>Case Study: “When Patients Refuse Treatment” (<a href="#">link</a>)</p>	9/1	9/12
2	Physicians and the Foundations of Medicine	<p>Reassessing the Value of Care for Chronic Health Conditions (<a href="#">video</a>)</p> <p>Tyson, “The Hippocratic Oath Today” (<a href="#">link</a>)</p> <p>Cullen and Klein, “Respect for Patients, Physicians, and the Truth”</p> <p>Dworkin, “Paternalism”</p> <p>Siegler, “Confidentiality in Medicine—A Decrepit Concept”</p> <p>U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, “Your Rights under HIPAA”</p> <p>Case Study: “Intra-Operative Exposure to Sporadic Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease” (Potash)</p>	9/13	9/19

3	Nurses, Therapists, and Other Healthcare Providers	<p>“Nursing Ethics” (<a href="#">video</a>)</p> <p>Grace, <i>Nursing Ethics and Professional Responsibility</i> (excerpts)</p> <p>Atwal and Caldwell, “Ethics, Occupational Therapy, and Discharge Planning”</p> <p>Kuhse, “Advocacy or Subsistence for the Sake of Patients?”</p> <p>American Nurses Association, “Code of Ethics for Nurses”</p> <p>American Occupational Therapy Association, “Occupational Therapy Code of Ethics”</p> <p>Case Study: “Florence Nightingale” (<a href="#">link</a>)</p>	9/20	9/26
4	Clinical Medical Ethics	<p>“Clinical Ethics” (<a href="#">video</a>)</p> <p>Jonsen et al., “Case Analysis in Clinical Ethics”</p> <p>Fosarelli, “Medicine, Spirituality, and Patient Care”</p> <p>Hassoun, “Making Free Trade Fair”</p> <p>ProPublica, “Docs Who Get Compant Cash Tend to Provide More Brand-Name Meds” (<a href="#">link</a>)</p> <p>Case Study: “Medical ID Cards and Privacy” (Munson)</p>	9/27	10/3

5	Informed Consent	<p>“Legal and Ethical Aspects of Medicine—Consent” (<a href="#">video</a>)</p> <p>Munson, <i>Outcome Uncertain</i> (excerpts)</p> <p>Beauchamp and Faden, <i>A History and Theory of Informed Consent</i> (excerpts)</p> <p>Katz, “Informed Consent—Must It Remain a Fairy Tale?”</p> <p>Case Study: <i>Canterbury v. Spence</i></p>	10/4	10/10
6	Biomedical Research Ethics	<p>“The Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment and Medical Ethics” (<a href="#">video</a>)</p> <p>Hellman, “Of Mice but Not Men”</p> <p>Marquis, “How to Resolve an Ethical Dilemma Concerning Randomized Clinical Trials”</p> <p>“Declaration of Helsinki”</p> <p>“Belmont Report”</p> <p>Case Study: “The Ethics of Clinical Research in the Third World” (Angell)</p>	10/11	10/17
7	Preventative Care and Testing	<p>“Angelina Jolie Effect” (<a href="#">video</a>)</p> <p>Purdy, “Genetics and Reproductive Risk”</p> <p>Davis, “Genetic Dilemmas and the Child’s Right to an Open Future”</p> <p>McMahan, “The Morality of Screening for Disability”</p> <p>Case Study: “Your Doctor Likely Orders More Tests than You Actually Need” (<a href="#">link</a>)</p>	10/18	10/24

8	Abortion	<p>“Abortion and Personhood” (<a href="#">video</a>)</p> <p>Warren, “The Moral and Legal Status of Abortion”</p> <p>Thomson, “In Defense of Abortion”</p> <p>Marquis, “Why Abortion Is Immoral”</p> <p>Case Study: “But How Can We Choose” (Zaner)</p>	10/25	10/31
9	End-of-Life Care	<p>“Assisted Death and the Value of Life” (<a href="#">video</a>)</p> <p>Rachels, “Active and Passive Euthanasia”</p> <p>Brock, “Voluntary Active Euthanasia”</p> <p>Munson, “Advance Directives”</p> <p>Case Study, “My Right to Die with Dignity at 29” (Maynard)</p>	11/1	11/7
10	Distributing Healthcare	<p>“The Economics of Healthcare” (<a href="#">video</a>)</p> <p>Munson, “The Canadian System as a Model for the United States?”</p> <p>Nielsen, “Autonomy, Equality, and a Just Health Care System”</p> <p>Daniels, “Equal Opportunity and Health Care”</p> <p>Case Study: “A Brief History on the Road to Healthcare Reform” (Taylor; <a href="#">link</a>)</p> <p>Case Study: “Trump’s Health Care Bills” (Smith; <a href="#">link</a>)</p>	11/8	11/14

11	Scarce Resources	<p>“Ethical Reasoning in Health Priority-Setting” (<a href="#">video</a>)</p> <p>Rescher, “The Allocation of Exotic Medical Lifesaving Therapy”</p> <p>Zwolinski, “The Ethics of Price Gouging”</p> <p>Radcliffe-Richards, “The Case for Allowing Kidney Sales”</p> <p>Case Study: “Should Alcoholics Be Deprioritized for Liver Transplantation?” (Allhoff)</p>	11/15	11/21
12	Diversity & Pluralism	<p>“Culture and Healthcare: When Medicine and Culture Intersect” (<a href="#">video</a>)</p> <p>Hoop et al., “Ethics and Culture in Mental Health Care”</p> <p>Powell and Stein, “Legal and Ethical Concerns about Sexual Orientation Change Efforts”</p> <p>Lindemann, “The Woman Question in Medicine”</p> <p>Wendell, “Who Is Disabled?”</p> <p>Case Study: “Ethics and Culture in Mental Health Care” (Hoop et al., cont.)</p>	11/22	11/28
13	Race & Medicine	<p>Flint Michigan Water Crisis (<a href="#">video</a>)</p> <p>Byrd and Clayton, “Race, Medicine, and Health Care in the United States”</p> <p>Hoberman, “Black Patients and White Doctors”</p> <p>Hardeman et al., “Structural Racism and Supporting Black Lives”</p> <p>Krakauer and Troug, “Mistrust, Racism, and End-of-Life Treatment”</p>	11/29	12/5

14	Global Bioethics	<p>“How Pandemics Spread” (<a href="#">video</a>)</p> <p>Pogge, “Human Rights and Global Health”</p> <p>Fidler, “Negotiating Equitable Access to Influenza Vaccines”</p> <p>Singer et al., “Ethics and SARS”</p> <p>Thompson, “The Greatest Good”</p>	12/6	12/12
15	Mental Illness (Extra Credit)	<p>“Psychological Disorders” (<a href="#">video</a>)</p> <p>Melrose, “An Overview of Mental Illness”</p> <p>Levenson, “Psychiatric Commitment and Involuntary Hospitalization”</p> <p>Elliott, “Amputees by Choice”</p> <p>Case Study: “When the Patient Refuses to Eat” (Craig and Winslow)</p>	N/A	12/17
16	The Opioid Epidemic (Extra Credit)	<p>“Opioid Addiction Is the Biggest Drug Epidemic in U.S. History” (<a href="#">video</a>)</p> <p>de Kenessey, “People Are Dying because We Misunderstand How Those with Addiction Think” (<a href="#">link</a>)</p> <p>Leshnar, “Addiction Is a Brain Disease, and It Matters”</p> <p>Levy, “Addiction Is Not a Brain Disease (and It Matters)”</p> <p>Baker, “History of the Joint Commission’s Pain Standards”</p> <p>Case Study: “Pharmaceutical Payments to Physicians Associated with Greater Opioid Prescriptions” (<a href="#">link</a>)</p>	N/A	12/17
N/A		<b>Final Paper Due 12/17 at 11:59 p.m.</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.

**COVID-19 Syllabus Statement:** Safety requirements are in place to minimize exposure to the Western Michigan University community. These guidelines apply to all in-person and hybrid classes held inside a WMU building to ensure the safety of all students, faculty, and staff during the pandemic. Noncompliance is a violation of the class requirements and the Student Code. <https://wmich.edu/conduct/code>

Facial coverings (masks), over both the nose and mouth, are required for all students while in-class, no matter the size of the space. Following this recommendation can minimize the transmission of the virus, which is spread between people interacting in close proximity through speaking, coughing, or sneezing. During specified classes in which facial coverings (masks) would prevent required class elements, students may remove facial coverings (masks) with instructor permission, in accordance with the exceptions in the Facial Covering (mask) Policy ("such as playing an instrument, acting, singing, etc."). <https://wmich.edu/policies/facial-covering-mask>

Facial coverings (masks) must remain in place throughout the class. Any student who removes the mandatory facial covering (mask) during class will be required to leave the classroom immediately. Students who are unable to wear a facial covering (mask) for medical/disability reasons must contact Disability Services for Students before they attend class. <https://wmich.edu/disabilityservices>