

**Course Syllabus
Philosophy A302
Biomedical Ethics
Spring 2015**

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.

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Course Website: <https://www.uaa.alaska.edu/classes/>

Readings: All readings are available in Blackboard.

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. Lectures will be posted each Monday 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 also be four writing assignments.

Grading:	Weekly Quizzes	20%
	Writing Assignment #1	20%
	Writing Assignment #2	20%
	Writing Assignment #3	20%
	Writing Assignment #4	20%

Weekly Quizzes: For each module, a quiz comprising 10 multiple choice questions—randomly selected from a larger question bank—should be completed. These quizzes should be taken without any study materials present, and you will have 15 minutes to complete them. They must be completed by Saturday at 11:59 p.m., after which time they will no longer be available. You should take the quizzes after you have read the assigned readings and lecture for the week.

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; *quizzes will not be reopened for any reason.*

Writing Assignments: The lecture schedule below indicates when the writing assignments are due. Assignments submitted up to 48 hours late will be penalized 10%. Assignments submitted at any later time will be penalized 20%. (The last paper cannot be submitted late.) Extensions will not be offered, nor should they be requested.

Each writing assignment will be approximately 2,000 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 two weeks before they are due; this way, you have extra time to work on them, should you want to.

Course Schedule

MODULE	TOPIC	READING	OPEN	CLOSE
1	Introduction to Biomedical Ethics		8/24	8/29
2	Abortion	Mary Anne Warren, "On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion"	8/31	9/5
3	Abortion (cont.)	Judith Jarvis Thomson, "A Defense of Abortion"	9/7	9/12
4	Abortion (cont.)	Don Marquis, "Why Abortion Is Immoral"	9/14	9/19
5	Stem Cells and Cloning	Leon Kass, "The Wisdom of Repugnance"	9/21	9/26
	Writing Assignment #1 due 9/26 at 11:59 p.m.			
6	Cloning (cont.)	Gregory Pence, "Who's Afraid of Human Cloning?" Fritz Allhoff, "Telomeres and the Ethics of Human Cloning"	9/28	10/3
7	Commercial Surrogacy	Ruth Macklin, "What Is Wrong with Commodification?" Sara Ann Ketchum, "Selling Babies and Selling Bodies"	10/5	10/10
8	(Im)morality of Reproduction	Laura Purdy, "Genetics and Reproductive Risk: Can Having Children Be Immoral?"	10/12	10/17
	Writing Assignment #2 due 10/17 at 11:59 p.m.			
9	Allocation of Scarce Medical Resources	Nicholas Rescher, "The Allocation of Exotic Medical Lifesaving Therapy"	10/19	10/24
10	Physician-Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia	James Rachels, "Active and Passive Euthanasia"	10/26	10/31

11	Euthanasia (cont.)	Dan Brock, "Voluntary Active Euthanasia" Daniel Callahan, "Physician-Assisted Dying: Self-Determination Run Amok"	11/2	11/7
12	Medical Ethics and the Doctor-Patient Relationship Writing Assignment #3 due 11/14 at 11:59 p.m.	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"	11/9	11/14
13	Truth and the Physician	Bernard Meyer, "Truth and the Physician" Sissela Bok, "Lies to the Sick and Dying"	11/16	11/21
14	Competence and Surrogate Decision Making [Extended for Thanksgiving Break]	Allen Buchanan and Dan Brock, "Standards of Competence" Dan Brock, "Surrogate Decision Making for Incompetent Adults: An Ethical Framework"	11/23	12/5
N/A	Writing Assignment #4 due 12/7 at 11:59 p.m.			