

Philosophy 3340
Biomedical Ethics
Spring 2017

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-thirds 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: <http://elearning.wmich.edu>

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

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 been posted about 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%

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.

Weekly Quizzes: For each module, a quiz comprising 10 multiple choice questions should be completed; you should take the quizzes *after* you have read the assigned readings and lecture for the week. These quizzes should be taken without any study materials present, and you will have 15 minutes to complete them.

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).

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 technical issues that should arise; *quizzes will not be reopened for any reason.*

Writing Assignments: The course schedule below indicates when the writing assignments are due. Each writing assignment will be approximately 2,000 words; submissions should be within 10% of the posted length in order to be eligible for full credit.

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. You may use any citation format you prefer.

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.

Technical Support: For any technical support pertaining to the course, contact the Help Desk at (269) 387-HELP. Neither the professor nor graduate assistant is able to provide technical support.

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.

Lecture and Reading Schedule

MODULE	TOPIC	READING	OPEN	CLOSE
1	Introduction to Biomedical Ethics		1/9	1/15
2	Abortion	Mary Anne Warren, "On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion"	1/16	1/22
3	Abortion (cont.)	Judith Jarvis Thomson, "A Defense of Abortion"	1/23	1/29
4	Abortion (cont.) Writing Assignment #1 due 2/5 at 11:59 p.m.	Don Marquis, "Why Abortion Is Immoral"	1/30	2/5
5	Stem Cells and Cloning	Leon Kass, "The Wisdom of Repugnance"	2/6	2/12
6	Cloning (cont.)	Gregory Pence, "Who's Afraid of Human Cloning?" Fritz Allhoff, "Telomeres and the Ethics of Human Cloning"	2/13	2/19
7	Commercial Surrogacy	Ruth Macklin, "What Is Wrong with Commodification?" Sara Ann Ketchum, "Selling Babies and Selling Bodies"	2/20	2/26
8	(Im)morality of Reproduction Writing Assignment #2 due 3/5 at 11:59 p.m.	Laura Purdy, "Genetics and Reproductive Risk: Can Having Children Be Immoral?"	2/27	3/5
9	Allocation of Scarce Medical Resources	Nicholas Rescher, "The Allocation of Exotic Medical Lifesaving Therapy"	3/13	3/19
10	Physician-Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia	James Rachels, "Active and Passive Euthanasia"	3/20	3/26

11	Euthanasia (cont.)	Dan Brock, "Voluntary Active Euthanasia" Daniel Callahan, "Physician-Assisted Dying: Self-Determination Run Amok"	3/27	4/2
12	Medical Ethics and the Doctor-Patient Relationship Writing Assignment #3 due 4/9 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"	4/3	4/9
13	Truth and the Physician	Bernard Meyer, "Truth and the Physician" Sissela Bok, "Lies to the Sick and Dying"	4/10	4/16
14	Competence and Surrogate Decision Making Writing Assignment #4 due 4/23 at 11:59 p.m.	Allen Buchanan and Dan Brock, "Standards of Competence" Dan Brock, "Surrogate Decision Making for Incompetent Adults: An Ethical Framework"	4/17	4/23