

BIOETHICS | PHILOSOPHY 309
Fall 2014
1:30-2:45 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays
Robinson A 101

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Objectives

We will:

1. consider ethical questions and concerns that arise in science, medicine, public and global health, and health policy;
2. study and employ the rich resources of moral philosophy—ethical theories, concepts, and principles—for guidance in (1) identifying, (2) analyzing, and (3) deciding how best to respond to these and related concerns;
3. enhance our capacities to explore and address ethical issues in other domains.

Course process

Class will involve a combination of lecture and discussion. Success is a shared responsibility!

Course materials

There are two books for the course:

1. Rebecca Skloot, *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*. New York: Broadway Paperbacks, 2010.
2. Lewis Vaughn, *Bioethics: Principles, Issues, and Cases*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.

A few additional required readings will be available on e-reserve through the GMU library.

Course requirements

1. Write an ethical analysis paper on the Henrietta Lacks case

Due on September 22. Worth 15 points. Please see Appendix 1.

2. Write an ethical analysis of one of the assigned readings (+).

Due on date assigned for the reading you've chosen. Worth 20 points. Please see Appendix 2.

3. Write a research paper in 3 stages. Please see Appendices 3-6.

Proposals due on October 20. Worth 5 points.

Outlines with reference lists due on November 12. Worth 10 points.

Papers due on December 10. Worth 30 points

3. Present your paper, in brief. Please see Appendix 7 for details. *Worth 20 points.*

Course policies

1. Everyone should utilize their GMU email accounts.
2. Assignments are subject to change.
3. Everyone should arrive for class on time and stay until the end. Persistent lateness, coming and going during class, and/or leaving early will lead to a difficult conversation and possible disciplinary action.
4. Everyone is responsible for coming to class having carefully read the readings assigned for that day. You should bring the day's readings to class.
5. Everyone is responsible for finding out from at least two classmates what you missed if you must miss class.
6. All submitted work must be typed and double-spaced unless otherwise announced.
7. Writing assignments must be submitted in hard copy either in class or to my office. Assignments not submitted directly to me must be signed by another faculty member or Ms. Cho, the Philosophy Department's Office Manager, noting the date and time of submission.
8. Late assignments will lose points equivalent to a full letter grade for each full day late except in cases officially approved in advance by the instructor or in the event of a documented emergency.
9. Plagiarized work will receive a failing grade on the assignment and will result in a referral to the Honor Council. Students are expected to know how to properly document sources and avoid plagiarism.
10. Everyone is encouraged to read the Philosophy Department's guidance on writing. Available at: <http://philosophy.gmu.edu/forundergraduates>. See the links for Standards of Good Writing for Philosophy and Writing Guide for Philosophy.
11. You might want to meet with, and may be referred to, staff at the GMU Writing Center. More information is available at: <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>.
12. Eating, and the use of mobile phones and laptop computers are not permitted in class.
13. Students in need should work with the Office of Disability Services and see me. More information is available at: <http://ods.gmu.edu>.
14. Information on counseling services is available at <http://caps.gmu.edu>.
15. All students should adhere to the university's honor code: <http://www.gmu.edu/academics/catalog/9798/honorcod.html>.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES, TOPICS, AND READINGS

August 25

Introductions to the Course and Key Themes

August 27

Introductions to Each Other

The History of Bioethics

Reading:

1. Vaughn, Chapter 1, Ethics and Bioethics; Ethics and the Moral Life
2. Begin Skloot, *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*

September 3

Reading:

1. Skloot, *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*, at least halfway

September 8

Reading:

1. Complete Skloot, *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*

September 10

The Birth of Bioethics: Nazi Medicine and Research

Film: *In the Shadow of the Reich: Nazi Medicine*

Reading:

1. Vaughn, Chapter 6, The Science of Clinical Trials

September 15

The Birth of Bioethics: Nazi Medicine and Research: The Ethical Response

Reading:

1. Vaughn, Chapter 6: *The Nuremberg Code*
2. Vaughn, Chapter 6: World Medical Association, Declaration of Helsinki

September 17

The Birth of Bioethics: U.S. Eugenics and Research Scandals

Readings:

1. U.S. Supreme Court, *Buck v. Bell* (e-reserve)
2. Vaughn, Chapter 6: Brandt, Racism and Research: The Case of the Tuskegee Syphilis Study

September 22 (*HENRIETTA LACKS PAPER DUE)

The Birth of Bioethics: U.S. Eugenics and Research Scandals: The Ethical Response

Readings:

1. Vaughn, Chapter 6: National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, *The Belmont Report: Ethical Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research*
2. Vaughn, Chapter 1, Moral Principles in Bioethics: Autonomy, Beneficence, Utility, Justice

September 24

Ethical Theory and Bioethics: Utilitarianism

Readings:

1. Vaughn, Chapter 2, The Nature of Moral Theories; Influential Moral Theories: Utilitarianism
2. Vaughn, Chapter 2: Mill, Utilitarianism

September 29

Ethical Theory and Bioethics: Kantian Deontology

Readings:

1. Vaughn, Chapter 2, Influential Moral Theories: Kantian Ethics
2. Vaughn, Chapter 2: Kant, The Moral Law

October 1

Core Principles and Concepts: Respect for Persons, Autonomy, and Informed Consent

Readings:

1. Vaughn, Chapter 5, Autonomy and Consent; Conditions of Informed Consent
2. Gauthier, Philosophical Foundations of Respect for Autonomy (e-reserve)
3. Vaughn, Chapter 5: Faden and Beauchamp, The Concept of Informed Consent

October 6

Core Principles and Concepts: Paternalism

Readings:

1. Mappes and De Grazia, Liberty Limiting Principles (e-reserve)
2. Vaughn, Chapter 3, Shades of Autonomy and Paternalism
3. Vaughn, Chapter 3: Dworkin, Paternalism

October 8

Reproductive Autonomy or Paternalism? Mandating Transvaginal Ultrasounds

Readings:

1. Minkoff and Ecker, When Legislators Play Doctor (e-reserve)+
2. TBD

October 14 (Tuesday)**Core Principles and Concepts: Truth-telling, Privacy, and Confidentiality**

Readings:

1. Vaughn, Chapter 4, Paternalism and Deception
2. Vaughn, Chapter 4: TBA on truth
3. Vaughn, Chapter 4: Rachels: Why Privacy Is Important+

October 15**Ethical Theory and Bioethics: Virtue Ethics**

Reading:

1. Vaughn, Chapter 2, Influential Moral Theories: Virtue Ethics
2. Vaughn, Chapter 2: Mayo, Virtue and the Moral Life+

October 20 (*RESEARCH PAPER PROPOSALS DUE)**Reproductive Genetics: Pre-natal Genetic Diagnosis***Film: The Burden of Knowledge*

Readings:

1. Vaughn, Chapter 9, Genes and Genomes
2. TBA+

October 22**Reproductive Genetics: Pre-natal Genetic Diagnosis**

Readings:

1. Vaughn, Chapter 9: Purdy, Can Having Children Be Immoral?+
2. Vaughn, Chapter 9: McMahan, The Morality of Screening for Disability+

October 27**Aging and Responsibilities for Care: Health and Long-term Care and the Family**

Readings:

1. Levine, The Loneliness of the Long-term Caregiver (e-reserve)
2. Gillick, The Critical Role of Caregivers in Achieving Patient-Centered Care (e-reserve)+
3. Nelson, Just Expectations: Family Caregivers, Practical Identities, and Social Justice in the Provision of Health Care (e-reserve)+

October 29**Ethical Theory and Bioethics: Care Ethics and Feminist Ethics**

Readings:

1. Vaughn, Chapter 2, The Ethics of Care; Feminist Ethics
2. Vaughn, Chapter 2: Held, The Ethics of Care
3. Sherwin, A Relational Approach to Autonomy in Health Care+

November 3
Health Worker Migration and Global Shortages

Reading:

1. Eckenwiler, Care Worker Migration and Transnational Justice+

November 5
Introduction to Library Databases and Searching
Meet in Johnson Center Library

November 10
Global Health Emergencies: Ebola Outbreak: Research Ethics in Low-Resource Settings

Reading:

1. Vaughn, Chapter 6: Brody, Ethical Issues in Clinical Trials in Developing Countries
2. WHO and MSF REC decision justifications, TBD

November 12 (*OUTLINES WITH SELECTED REFERENCES DUE)
Global Health Emergencies: Ebola Outbreak: Emergencies in Low-Resource Settings

November 17
Global Health Emergencies: Ebola Outbreak: Ethical Issues in Framing Ethical Issues

Reading:

1. Thomson, The Ebola Outbreak: Emergency within an Emergency (e-reserve)

November 19
Global Health Inequities and Responsibilities

Reading:

1. Hunter and Dawson, Is There a Need for Global Health Ethics? For and Against (e-reserve)+

November 24
Global Health Inequities and Responsibilities (cont'd) and Wrap Up

December 1
Presentations

December 3
Presentations

December 10 1:30-4:15 (*RESEARCH PAPERS DUE)
Presentations

APPENDIX 1: *ETHICAL ANALYSIS PAPER ON HENRIETTA LACKS CASE*

In this short paper, your work is to identify and describe elements of the story (for example, policies or the absence of policies, the practices, actions, or behaviors of individuals and groups, unquestioned assumptions and expectations) that raise ethical questions in your mind and to explain as best you can what it is that seems from your standpoint to be ethically significant. Recommended length: 2-4 pages (12-inch font, Times New Roman, 1.25" margins max.). References: The only required reference is the book. Please include page numbers for quotations.

EVALUATION

1. Thoroughness of the exploration (provided in a concise format)
2. Clarity of the description of concerns
3. Clarity of the explanation of their ethical significance
4. Syntax and diction, spelling and punctuation, paragraphing
5. Referencing

APPENDIX 2: *ETHICAL ANALYSIS OF AN ASSIGNED READING*

This writing assignment calls for your engagement with the ideas and arguments presented in a selected assigned reading. Eligible readings are indicated by a + sign on the syllabus. Think of them as your contribution to a particular conversation. Essays are due on the day for which the reading is assigned. Recommended length: 1.5-2 pages. References: The only required reference is for the article you have chosen. Please include page numbers for quotations.

STRUCTURE:

1. Concisely state the author's thesis. From there, very briefly explain how the author develops this thesis. Please do not summarize the entire content of the article.
2. Identify a point made, not made, or not adequately developed by the author. In other words, identify something very specific that the author has said that strikes you as especially significant OR something he or she has not discussed that in your view is an important consideration OR something he or she has discussed, yet not quite adequately or correctly. Please explain your concern.
3. Please explain why this strikes you as morally pressing.
4. Develop your own argument about this point or concern. That is, what is the particular point you want to make? What specific reasons support your view?
5. Remind the reader what is at stake ethically. Explain how your view enriches our understanding of the issue and advances ethical ideals and/or virtues.
6. Conclude. What have you contributed to this conversation?

EVALUATION

1. Clarity and accuracy of author's thesis and its development
2. Presentation of your specific concern(s)
3. Explanation of their moral significance
4. Presentation of your argument(s) on the matter
5. Presentation of how your view enriches understanding and advances ethical ideals/virtues
6. Conclusion

7. Referencing, syntax, diction, spelling, punctuation, and paragraphing

APPENDIX 3: RESEARCH PAPER

Your paper will explore and critically analyze an ethical issue or philosophical problem related to one or more of the class discussions or a topic of your choice. A helpful way to think of this process is to consider it as participating in a conversation, with other interested, interesting, and informed people who come from different perspectives. The issues you are considering here have been or are matters of great debate among citizens, philosophers, policy makers and other professionals. Your role is to consider yourself as someone contributing to these moral conversations in accordance with the rules of good writing and scholarship. Consultations to help formulate and develop your ideas are encouraged.

STRUCTURE:

- 1a. Identify & “motivate” the problem: what issue do you intend to discuss & why is it morally or otherwise philosophically pressing? 1b. Tell your readers your thesis – what position do you intend to argue for and how will you do this? Give them a concise summary of how the paper will be organized to get to your conclusion.
2. Present any relevant background information (case law, statistics, existing or developing law, policy) to help orient the reader to the issue, its scope and significance.
3. Present what others have said about the issue in the literature you have reviewed. What are their arguments and what reasons do they give for them? Capture the richness of the debate and include a range of relevant perspectives and specific lines of argument. Be sure to give different views equal presentation. (We’ll talk a lot about this.)
4. Present your original idea or position and defend it with strong reasons. You should clearly and overtly explain why the evidence you are presenting seems to you to justify the argument you are making. Do not assume that your readers see the connections that you see.
Be explicit in your use of appropriate ethical concepts and theories.
5. What are the implications of your view for our understanding of and approach to the issue?
6. Identify at least one and ideally, two or three possible objections to your view. Respond to these, explaining why the position you defend is the better one.
8. Conclude. What have you shown?

Recommended length: 10 pages (12-inch font, Times New Roman, 1.25” margins max).

References: Your final paper **must** contain a minimum of **four** references to articles from the scholarly ethics literature. We will discuss what this means. It should also contain references from relevant academic and professional journals (including global health, public health, medical, nursing, health policy journals as appropriate, and philosophy journals), along with philosophy and bioethics books related to your topic. See Appendix C5.

APPENDIX 4: OUTLINE WITH SELECTED REFERENCES

Your outline should roughly follow the organizational structure set out above, unless we have agreed to an alternate plan. You should identify at least four references from the scholarly ethics

literature, providing complete citations. Also see References under C1 and C5.

APPENDIX 5: RESOURCES FOR RESEARCH PAPER

You should use a research a database, PubMed for example, to find articles on your chosen topic.

Some major bioethics and public health ethics journals that may contain relevant articles:

Bioethics

Cambridge Quarterly of Health Care Ethics

Developing World Bioethics

Hastings Center Report

International Journal of Feminist Approaches to Bioethics

Journal of Bioethical Inquiry

Journal of Clinical Ethics

Journal of Health Policy, Politics and Law

Journal of Law, Medicine, and Ethics

Journal of Medical Ethics

Journal of Medicine and Philosophy

Journal of Public Health Ethics

Kennedy Institute of Ethics Journal

Other good journals to consider:

American Journal of Public Health

British Medical Journal

Bulletin of the World Health Organization

Ethics

Globalization and Health

Health Affairs

Journal of the American Medical Association

The Lancet

New England Journal of Medicine

Nursing Ethics

Philosophy and Public Affairs

Science

Social Science and Medicine

Other excellent resources:

**Encyclopedia of Bioethics* (available online through the GMU library)

**Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (available online)

*Publications and reports of governmental or non-governmental organizations and agencies carrying out scholarly research and policy work in global health and/or ethics (for ex., Centers for Disease Control, World Health Organization, Nuffield Council on Bioethics)

APPENDIX 6: RESEARCH PAPER EVALUATION

1. Introduction: statement of issue, why it's morally pressing, thesis
2. Presentation of a range of ethical perspectives on issue
3. Presentation of your position and support with strong moral reasons
4. Integration of ethical theories and concepts
5. Clarification of why the moral reasons you offer are more persuasive than those given by others
6. Discussion of implications for policy & practice
7. Organization of the argument
8. Referencing
9. Syntax, diction, paragraphing

APPENDIX 7: PRESENTATION EVALUATION

1. Introduction: statement of issue, why it's morally pressing, thesis
2. Presentation of any existing arguments/perspectives on the issue
3. Presentation of your position and support with strong moral reasons
4. Integration of ethical theories and concepts
5. Clarification of why the moral reasons you give are more persuasive than those given by others
6. Discussion of implications for policy & practice
7. Use of time

NOTA BENE ON WRITING

Good writing involves an interesting issue or question, an intelligent, persuasive argument, and clarity.

Essential elements:

1. *Identification* of an interesting and important question or concern
2. *Understanding* of others' arguments and the broader context in which it fits
3. *A thesis* – the argument, or basic claim you want to make
4. *Supporting reasons* for the thesis – evidence offered in support of your claim
5. *Organization of the argument* – dividing the argument (thesis and reasons) into smaller topics/reasons which, when considered altogether, support the whole. These topics/reasons should be linked in such a way as to make a clear progression to a particular conclusion.
6. *Paragraphing* – making clear the central point in each paragraph, and explicitly showing how it relates to the overall argument. Your reader should be able to make sense of the relationship between the paragraphs, i.e., to easily follow the connections of each paragraph to those that precede & follow it.
7. *Syntax* – structuring sentences in a grammatically correct fashion
8. *Diction* – choosing words carefully to capture your precise meaning
9. *Spelling and punctuation*
10. *Referencing/Documentation* – giving credit to those whose work and ideas you're drawing from in developing your argument. Writers must distinguish the words, phrases, and ideas of others from their own words, phrases and ideas. When you are using complete phrases or sentences written by others, you must use quotation marks and give a complete reference. When you are not directly quoting someone, but still referring to their particular ideas, you must give a complete reference. Consider using a reference style used by people working in your areas of interest.