

## **BIOETHICS | PHILOSOPHY 309**

**Fall 2016**

Mondays and Wednesdays

10:30-11:45 section 001 Robinson A 101

1:30-2:45 section 003 Engineering 1110

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Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 12-1 p.m. and by appointment

### **What will I learn in this class?**

In this class we will examine some major ethical issues related to medicine and health care. We will focus on three major themes---medical treatment, medical research and medical policy---along with a few other issues. While many students in this class will face one of these themes from the perspective of the practitioner, all will face encounter issues that come up in the different themes in one way or another from the perspective of the subject.

### **By the end of this class you will be able to:**

- Define key concepts in bioethics (e.g. informed consent or therapeutic misconception).
- Compare and evaluate views about ethical issues in medical science and healthcare.
- Be comfortable using the philosophical method to approach ethical questions that arise when thinking about medical treatment, research and policy.

### **By the end of this class you will improve your skills in:**

- Reading and analyzing complex philosophical texts.
- Constructing coherent philosophical arguments.
- Writing papers defending a philosophical thesis.
- Conversing and reflecting on questions in bioethics.

### **What do I need to have?**

Bioethics: An Anthology, 3rd Edition (2016) Kuhse, H., U. Schuklenk, P. Singer (Eds.)  
Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell

### **What do I need to do to get a grade?**

1. *Class participation* (10%): Your participation grade will be determined based on your attendance and the quantity and quality of your contributions to class discussions.
2. *Midterm exam* (20%): Ahead of time, you will be given six questions to think about, of which four will be chosen for the exam. You will write essays on two.
3. *Paper* (30%): You will be asked to write a paper which should be between 1,500 and 2,000 words long. In class we will discuss the sort of thing I am looking for in your term paper. But in grading your essay I will be looking for three things, weighted roughly equally:
  - Comprehension: understanding of the concepts and ideas discussed in the essay.
  - Clarity: presentation of the ideas and concepts in a clear and concise manner.

- Engagement: serious, sincere and independent thinking about the items under discussion.

**Note** that a helpful resource to assist you in the writing of your term paper is the University Writing Center's guide for writing philosophy papers, available at:

<http://classweb.gmu.edu/WAC/philosophy/>.

There is also the Philosophy Department's guidance on writing. Available at:

<http://philosophy.gmu.edu/forundergraduates>.

4. *Final exam* (40%): Ahead of time, you will be given six questions to think about, of which three will be chosen for the exam. You will write essays on two.

### **What are the course policies?**

- *Academic integrity*: I take academic integrity very seriously, and I expect you to take it equally seriously. Academic stealing, cheating and fraud are strictly prohibited, as is plagiarism. You can review the university's honor code here: <http://www.gmu.edu/academics/catalog/9798/honorcod.html>. If you have any concerns about academic integrity, whether questions about the importance of academic integrity or about what is or is not permitted on specific assignments, please talk with me.
- *Attendance and classroom behavior*: You are expected to attend every class **on time** and to have read the assigned material ahead of time. Unexcused absences or disruptive classroom behavior will have a negative effect on your participation grade.
- *Laptops and electronics* Use of computers, tablets, smartphones, and other electronic devices is not allowed in class, except with written permission from, for example, the Office for Students with Disabilities.
- *Late papers*: For every day a paper is late one full letter grade will be taken off, beginning right after the time the paper is due. Exceptions to this policy will only be made in the case of a serious extenuating circumstance (e.g. emergency medical or family problem) supported by appropriate evidence.
- *Turnitin*: Students agree that by taking this course, their papers will be subject to submission for textual similarity review to turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism (via the Ted interface). All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the turnitin.com service is subject to the terms of use agreement posted on the turnitin.com site.
- *Students with disabilities*: Please be aware that George Mason offers resources for counseling, disabilities, and sexual assault and harassment. Contact the Office of Disability Services, Counseling and Psychological Services, or Student Health Services for information.

	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Sub topic</b>	<b>Readings</b>	
1	8/29	Introduction		NONE	
2	8/31	Analytic reasoning		NONE	
	9/5	NO CLASS–Labor day			
3	9/7	Ethical theories	Consequentialism	Online	
4	9/12		Deontology	Online	
5	9/14		Virtue ethics	Online	
6	9/19	Abortion		3,4	
	9/21	NO CLASS–Conference			
7	9/26	Treatment	Informed consent and autonomy	75	
8	9/28		Informed consent and autonomy	79	
9	10/3		Truth telling	71,72	
10	10/5		Confidentiality	68,69	
	10/10	NO CLASS–Columbus day			
11	10/11	Research	Humans (make up class)	50	PAPER
12	10/12		Humans	51	
13	10/17		Duty to participate	53,54	
14	10/19		Embryos and stem cells	58,59	
15	10/24		Animals	60,6162	
16	10/26		Animals	63	
17	10/31	MIDTERM			EXAM
18	11/2	Policy	Public health	64	
19	11/7		Public health	66	
20	11/9		Resource allocation	42,43	
21	11/14		Resource allocation	44,45	
22	11/16		Organ transfers	46,47,48	
23	11/21	Beginning and ending life	Reproduction	12,13	
	11/23	NO CLASS–Thanksgiving			
24	11/28	Beginning and ending life	Reproduction	16	
25	11/30		Reproduction	9	
26	12/5		Medically assisted suicide	38,39	
27	12/7		Medically assisted suicide	27	
	12/14	FINAL			EXAM