

BIOETHICS | PHILOSOPHY 309

Spring 2017

Mondays and Wednesdays

10:30-11:45 Section 001 Engineering 11103

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 9:15-10:15 a.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 dealing with philosophical topics.
- 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. *Attendance (10 points)*: You can have up to 2 absences without any penalty. Each absence beyond that deducts a point from your attendance grade. 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.
2. *Weekly papers (36 points)*: each week, beginning with the 3rd week of class, you will be asked to submit a 300-600 word paper by Thursday at 2pm. There will be 11 such papers, of which I will take into account only the best 9. Each of these will receive 0-4 points (4=great, 3= good, 2=acceptable, 1=poor, 0=unacceptable). You may submit only 9 if you like. 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>.

3. *Midterm exam (6 points)*: Short answers exam (3-4 sentences per answer). Ahead of time I will give you a list of 12 concepts from the class. 6 concepts will be chosen for the exam of which you will need to discuss 3.
4. *Final exam (8 points)*: Short answers exam (3-4 sentences per answer). Ahead of time I will give you a list of 16 concepts from the class. 8 concepts will be chosen for the exam of which you will need to discuss 4.
5. *Participation extra credit (5 points)*: You can receive up to 5 extra credit points to your grade if you actively participate in class, based on the quantity and quality of your contributions to class discussions (5=participates regularly, 3=often participates, 1=participates sporadically). Unfortunately what counts as participating can only be assessed subjectively, but I will try my best to be fair.

Grade calculation

60 points do not correspond to 100%. Grades are calculated as follows:

60	A+	46-50	B+	31-35	C+	6-20	D
56-59	A	41-45	B	26-30	C	0-5	F
51-55	A-	36-40	B-	21-25	C-		

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. Attendance will be taken some time in the first five minutes of class. It will not be possible to sign in late. Disruptive classroom behavior will not be tolerated.
- *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*: No papers will be accepted late. If you are late for any reason, simply avoid submitting that paper. 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 Blackboard 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.

	Date	Topic	Sub topic	Readings
1	1/23	Introduction		NONE
2	1/25	Analytic reasoning		NONE
3	1/30			NONE
4	2/1	Ethical theories	Consequentialism	Online
5	2/6		Deontology	Online
6	2/8		Virtue ethics	Online
7	2/13	Abortion	Abortion	3
8	2/15		Abortion	4
9	2/20	Treatment	Informed consent	75
10	2/22		Informed consent	76
11	2/27		Truth telling	71
12	3/1		Truth telling	72
13	3/7		Nursing	(80),81
14	3/9		Nursing	82
15	3/14		Confidentiality	69
16	3/16	MIDTERM		EXAM
17	3/20	Research	Humans	50
18	3/22		Humans	52
19	3/27		Duty to participate	53
20	3/29		Duty to participate	54
21	4/3		Animals	(60,61),62
22	4/5		Animals	63
23	4/10	Policy	Mandatory testing	65
24	4/12		Mandatory testing	66
25	4/17		Resource allocation	43
26	4/19		Resource allocation	44
27	4/24		Obtaining organs	47
28	4/26		Obtaining organs	48
29	5/1	Make-up / Review		
30	5/3			
	5/10	FINAL		EXAM