BIOETHICS | PHILOSOPHY 309
Fall 2015
Mondays and Wednesdays 12:00-1:15 p.m.
Engineering 1110

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Objectives
In this class 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 materials
3. Required readings available on Blackboard (B)

Course requirements
1. Come to class for the full session with the assigned readings, having carefully read them.
2. Scan a major national or international newspaper or news service, selectively read articles concerning the biological sciences, medicine, public health and global health, and take some time to think about ethical questions. Let us know of your findings and thoughts in class.
4. Complete a research project in five parts:
   Part 3: Presentation. Due November 2, 4, or 9. Worth 10 points.
   Part 5: Presentation. Due December 9 or 14. Worth 10 points. Please see Appendices 2-3.
5. Participation in class. Due every session. Worth 10 points.
Course policies

1. All students should adhere to the university’s honor code:
2. Everyone should utilize GMU email accounts.
3. Assignments are subject to change.
4. Everyone should arrive for class on time and stay until the end.
5. Everyone is responsible for coming to class having carefully read the readings assigned for that day, with the readings in hand.
6. Eating, and the use of mobile phones and laptop computers are not permitted in class.
7. If you miss class please consult classmates for announcements and other information.
8. All submitted work must be typed and double-spaced unless otherwise announced.
9. Writing assignments must be submitted in hard copy either in class or my office mailbox.
   Email submissions must be approved in advance of the due date except in cases of documented emergency.
10. 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.
11. Late assignments will lose points equivalent to a full letter grade for each full day late except in cases approved in advance or in the event of a documented emergency.
12. 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.
13. 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.
14. You might want to work with, and may be referred to, the GMU Writing Center staff.
15. 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.

SCHEDULE

August 31
Introduction to the Course

September 2
Introductions continued

September 9
The History of Bioethics
Readings:
1. Vaughn, Chapter 1, Ethics and Bioethics; Ethics and the Moral Life
2. Begin Skloot, The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks
September 14
The Case of Henrietta Lacks
Reading:
1. Skloot, *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*

September 16
The Case of Henrietta Lacks
Reading:
1. Skloot, *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*

September 21 *HENRIETTA LACKS COMMENTARY DUE*
The Case of Henrietta Lacks
Reading:
1. Complete Skloot, *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*

September 23 *RESEARCH PAPER PROPOSALS DUE*
Henrietta Lacks wrap up

September 28
The Birth of Bioethics: Scandals in Medicine and Research
Film: *In the Shadow of the Reich: Nazi Medicine*
Reading:
1. Vaughn, Chapter 6, The Science of Clinical Trials

September 30
The Birth of Bioethics: The Ethical Response
Readings:
1. Vaughn, Chapter 6: *The Nuremberg Code*
2. Vaughn, Chapter 6: World Medical Association, Declaration of Helsinki

October 5
The Birth of Bioethics: Selected U.S. Scandals
Readings:
1. U.S. Supreme Court, Buck v. Bell (B)
2. Vaughn, Chapter 6: Brandt, Racism and Research: The Case of the Tuskegee Syphilis Study

October 7
The Birth of Bioethics: The Ethical Response
Readings:
2. Vaughn, Chapter 1, Moral Principles in Bioethics: Autonomy, Beneficence, Utility, Justice
October 13
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

October 14 OUTLINES WITH SELECTED REFERENCES DUE
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 19
Core Principles and Concepts: Respect for Persons, Autonomy, Informed Consent
Readings:
1. Vaughn, Chapter 5, Autonomy and Consent; Conditions of Informed Consent
2. Gauthier, Philosophical Foundations of Respect for Autonomy (B)
3. Vaughn, Chapter 5: Faden and Beauchamp, The Concept of Informed Consent

October 21
Research resources at Mason, Andrew Lee, Gateway Library

October 26
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 28
Ethical Theory and Bioethics: Care Ethics and Feminist Ethics
Readings:
1. Vaughn, Chapter 2: The Ethics of Care; Feminist Ethics
2. Sherwin, A Relational Approach to Autonomy in Health Care (B)

November 2 PRESENTATIONS, round 1
Core Principles and Concepts: Truth telling
Readings:
1. Vaughn, Chapter 4, Paternalism and Deception
2. Vaughn, Chapter 4: Lipkin: On Telling Patients the Truth
3. Vaughn, Chapter 4: Cullen and Klein: Respect for Patients, Physicians, and the Truth

November 4 PRESENTATIONS, round 1
Core Principles and Concepts: Privacy and Confidentiality
Readings:
1. Vaughn, Chapter 4: Rachels: Why Privacy Is Important
2. Vaughn, Chapter 4: Siegler: Confidentiality in Medicine: A Decrepit Concept
November 9 PRESENTATIONS, round 1
Core Principles and Concepts: Paternalism
Readings:
1. Vaughn, Chapter 3, Shades of Autonomy and Paternalism
2. Vaughn, Chapter 3: Dworkin, Paternalism

November 11
Mandating Ultrasounds? Vaccines? Justified Paternalism in Patient Care & Public Health
Readings:
1. Verweij and Dawson, Ethical Principles for Collective Vaccination Programs (B)
2. TBA
3. Minkoff and Ecker, When Legislators Play Doctor (B)

November 16
Care, Health Care, and Families
Readings:
1. Levine, The Loneliness of the Long-term Caregiver (B)
2. Gillick, The Critical Role of Caregivers in Achieving Patient-Centered Care (B)

November 18
Care, Health Care, and Families
Reading:
1. Nelson, Just Expectations: Family Caregivers, Practical Identities, and Social Justice in the Provision of Health Care (B)

November 23 RESEARCH PAPERS DUE
Health Inequities in the US: Access to Health Care and Social Determinants of Health
Readings:
1. Vaughn, Chapter 11, In Depth: Unequal Health Care for Minorities
2. TBA

November 30- December 2
Global Health Inequities and Responsibilities
Reading:
1. Hunter and Dawson, Is There a Need for Global Health Ethics? For and Against (B)

December 7
No class meeting

December 9
Presentations, round 2

December 14 , 10:30 a.m.-1:15 p.m.
FINAL PRESENTATIONS
APPENDIX 1: ETHICAL COMMENTARIES ON HENRIETTA LACKS CASE
(Worth 5 points and 10 points. Written commentaries are due September 21)

Here your work is to identify and describe a key element of the story that raises ethical questions, and explain why it seems to be ethically troubling. You will write a short commentary and also present your comments in class.

For commentaries in class:
Please note that these presentations will be very brief and informal. You won’t read what you are submitting in written form. You will plan what you want to say, and in a few sentences, explain your concerns to us. Having some notes is recommended.

For written commentaries, please follow this basic structure:
1. Briefly introduce the book and the overall story (just for the written commentary). From there, identify one or two elements of the story you find compelling because they raise questions or concerns about how scientists, doctors, and others involved in health and health care should treat people as they do their work as professionals. This might involve specific policies or the absence of specific policies, the practices, actions; behaviors of individuals and groups; social, cultural, or institutional assumptions and expectations that affected the way research was done and/or the patient care provided. You might connect elements that seem to have the same source or that raise similar kinds of ethical concerns.
2. Explain as best you can what seems troubling ethically.
3. Conclude.

Please include quotations to illustrate your points. Please be sure to include page numbers. Recommended length: 3 paragraphs (12-inch font, Times New Roman, 1.25” margins max.).

References: The only required reference is the book.

EVALUATION FOR WRITTEN COMMENTARY
1. Introduction of the concern(s) and their ethical importance (2)
2. Clarity and thoroughness of the description of the concern(s) (2)
3. Discussion of their ethical significance (2)
4. Conclusion (1)
4. Syntax and diction, spelling and punctuation, paragraphing (2)
6. Referencing (1)

EVALUATION FOR CLASS COMMENTARY
1. Clarity and thoroughness of the description of the concern(s) (2.5)
3. Discussion of their ethical significance (2.5)
APPENDIX 2
RESEARCH PROJECT

Your project will explore and critically analyze an ethical issue or philosophical problem related to one or more of the class topics 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 work is to do research and contribute to these moral conversations.

Please feel encouraged to set up an appointment to help formulate and develop your ideas. In some cases I will give extra encouragement.

PROPOSAL: ABSTRACT
(Worth 10 points. Due September 23)

Your proposal consists of an abstract wherein you describe your project. There are many ways to go about this. You may focus on an ethical concept or principle, for example, how it should be understood and how it might guide future health care or health policy or practice. For example, how might the principle of solidarity guide public health policy? How might it guide thinking about ethical vaccination policies? Or, what do different understandings of justice have to say about obligations to address global health inequities? You may also examine a particular policy or practice in the life sciences, patient care, health care policy, public health practice or policy, or global health practice or policy, and identifying and analyze specific ethical concerns. For example, what are the ethical considerations surrounding pre-natal genetic diagnosis? Or, what are the ethical implications of restrictions on abortion, specifically for fetuses diagnosed with Downs Syndrome? Or, what obligations do nurses and/or doctors have in a public health emergency? What obligations do public health officials and health care institutions have to first responders? Do policy makers, health care institutions and professionals have obligations to patients' family members? What kinds and why? Do well-off countries have obligations to provide health services for migrants and/or refugees? Why or why not?

Your abstract should explain:
1) whether your topic falls within research ethics, patient care ethics, public or global health ethics, or perhaps some combination;
2) why there has been (if there has been) and should be ethical attention given to these questions or concerns;
3) your specific questions or concerns.

Recommended length: a paragraph, single spaced.

ABSTRACT EVALUATION

1. topic area (3)
2. why ethically significant according to others (3)
3. your ethical questions or concerns (3)
4. syntax, diction, spelling, punctuation (1)
OUTLINE WITH SELECTED REFERENCES  
(Worth 20 points. Due October 14)

Your OUTLINE should present the basic structure for your research paper and presentations. Not all the elements required for the paper are included in your outline. This is just the initial presentation of your topic. In most cases it should follow this basic structure:

Introduction  
1a. Identify & “motivate” the problem:  
What issue do you intend to discuss? Why is it morally pressing?

Ethical concerns and arguments identified in the literature  
1. Present what others have said about the issue in the literature you have reviewed:  
What are their positions? What reasons do they give for them?  
Capture the richness of the debate and specific lines of ethical argument you find in the literature. This will include the philosophy and bioethics literature, and depending on your topic, also literature in medicine, nursing, public health, etc. Do not to focus on just one line of argument. Instead, give ethical positions that differ equal presentation.

Your ethical concern(s) and tentative argument  
1. Present your view and defend it with strong reasons.  
What are your pressing ethical concerns?  
2. What, in your view, should be done to address them, or at least begin to address them?

Objections  
1. Identify at least one possible objection to your view.  
2. Respond to these tentatively, explaining why the position you defend is the better one.

Implications  
1. What do you think are the possible implications of your view? How should policy, practice, or research be different in light of your argument? This is not a policy class, so we are not looking for major detail here. Offer some general recommendations given what you know about the status quo and the possibilities for reform.

Be explicit in your use of appropriate ethical concepts and theories throughout!!!!

Recommended length: 2 pages, with subheadings and brief sentences for each element.

References: at least four references from the scholarly ethics literature when possible, annotated, with complete citations. You should also include 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.
OUTLINE EVALUATION

1. Introduction (2)
2. Presentation of a range of ethical perspectives on issue (4)
3. Presentation of your tentative position and moral reasons (4)
4. Objections and clarification of why the moral reasons you offer are more persuasive (2)
5. Discussion of implications for policy & practice (1)
6. Integration of ethical theories and concepts (2)
7. Organization of the argument (2)
8. Syntax, diction, punctuation, paragraphing (1)
9. References (2)

RESEARCH PAPER
(Worth 25 points. Due November 18)
Your RESEARCH PAPER is the full presentation of your research and ethical argument. It should follow the structure above, but expanded, and with additional elements:

Introduction
1. Identify & “motivate” the problem:
   What issue do you intend to discuss & why is it morally pressing?
2. Tell your readers your thesis:
   What position do you intend to argue for and how will you do this?
3. Give a concise summary of how the paper will be organized to get to your conclusion.

Background information
1. 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.

Ethical concerns and arguments identified in the literature
1. 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?

Your ethical concerns and argument
1. Present your view in as much detail as possible.
2. Defend it with as many strong moral reasons as you can.

Objections
1. Identify at least one and ideally, two or three possible objections to your view.
2. Respond to these, explaining why the position you defend is the better one.

Implications
1. Explain the implications of your view for our understanding of and approach to the issue. How should policy, practice, or research be different in light of your argument?

Conclusion
1. Describe what you have done in this paper.
   Continued on page 11…..
Be explicit in your use of appropriate ethical concepts and theories!!!!!!!!!

Recommended length: 5-7 pages (12-inch font, Times New Roman, 1.25” margins max).

References: Your final paper must contain a minimum of four references from the scholarly ethics literature. 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.

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

**PRESENTATION 1 EVALUATION**
1. Introduction: statement of issue, why it's morally pressing (1)
2. Presentation of others' arguments (2)
3. Presentation of your tentative position and moral reasons (2)
4. Objections and response (1)
5. Discussion of possible implications for policy & practice (2)
6. Integration of ethical theories and concepts (2)

**PRESENTATION 2 EVALUATION**
1. Introduction: statement of issue, why it's morally pressing, thesis (1)
2. Presentation of others' arguments (2)
3. Presentation of your position and moral reasons (2)
4. Objections and response (1)
5. Discussion of likely implications for policy & practice (2)
6. Integration of ethical theories and concepts (2)
APPENDIX 3: RESOURCES FOR RESEARCH PROJECT

The library has collected resources for bioethics students here:
http://infoguides.gmu.edu/c.php?g=257290&p=1718620

The following bioethics and public health ethics journals include articles that count as scholarly ethics literature:

- Bioethics
- 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

These journals - some philosophy and some health sciences - also contain useful scholarly articles. Articles that focus explicitly on ethics count as scholarly ethics literature:

- 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 that can count as scholarly ethics literature:

* Encyclopedia of Bioethics, 4th edition (available online through the GMU library)
* Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (available online)
* Publications and reports of governmental or non-governmental organizations and agencies engaged in research and policy work in global health and/or ethics. For example: Centers for Disease Control, World Health Organization, Nuffield Council on Bioethics.