**Course Description:** This course is an introduction to contemporary issues in bioethics. Topics include the ethics of abortion, euthanasia, human cloning, genetic issues, as well as a brief tour through normative ethical theory. For most topics, we will consider moral arguments for and against various practices; students will be encouraged to draw their own conclusions regarding the moral permissibility of these practices. No previous experience in moral philosophy is required.

**Course Objectives:** The objectives of the course are to familiarize students with some of the major debates within the bioethics-literature, as well as to develop analytical skills crucial for evaluating moral arguments.

**Instructor:** Derek Boyd  
Office: 457 Robinson B  
Hours: TR 9:20 – 10:20 a.m. (or by appointment)  
dboyd5@gmu.edu

**Texts:** All reading material will be made available on Blackboard (http://mymason.gmu.edu).

**Grading:**  
- Exam 1 (11/29) 20%  
- Paper (12/1) 20%  
- Exam 2 (11/1) 20%  
- Presentation (TBA) 10%  
- Exam 3 (12/8) 20%

**The Percentages:** Why do the percentages add up to only 90%? Because whichever exam you score highest on will count toward 30%--and not 20%--of your overall grade.

**The Assignments:** Students must complete all assignments to avoid a failing grade.

**Papers:** Every student is required to write a 3-5 page essay on a topic provided by me. You will have a choice of several topics. Paper guidelines will be discussed later on in the term.

**Class Presentations:** Every student is required to participate in a group presentation sometime during weeks 11-15. Presentation guidelines will be discussed later on in the term.

**Exams:** Exams will consist of true/false, multiple-choice, and essay questions. Please bring a scantron to each of the exams (the green one). None of the three exams are cumulative.

**Late papers and make-up exams:** Late papers will be penalized one letter grade for each day they are late (weekends excluded). You know the due date (12/1) well ahead of time and should
plan accordingly; please do not ask for an extension. Make-up exams will only be given under special circumstances and verifying documentation may be required.

Class attendance and participation: Students are expected to attend every class and to participate in class discussion. The readings are certainly important (some test questions will come directly from the readings), but there is no substitute for class attendance. Most of the tested material will come straight from lecture, so attending practically ensures good grades. Final grades will be determined in your favor if you have made a positive impression on the instructor through regular attendance and participation. Students who have four or more recorded absences should not expect a passing grade.

Email: I prefer to speak with students in person, so please limit your emails to the setting of appointments to meet with me, if you cannot meet during regular office hours. It is not necessary to email me if you will be absent for a class, or were absent in the past.

Important Dates:

- Last Day to Add (Full-Semester Course): September 6, 2011
- Last Day to Drop (Full-Semester Course): September 30, 2011
- Selective Withdrawal Period (Full-Semester Course): October 3 – October 28, 2011

Office of Disability Services: If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS. http://ods.gmu.edu

Academic Integrity: Mason is an Honor Code university; please see the University Catalog for a full description of the code and the honor committee process. The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously and violations are treated gravely. What does academic integrity mean in this course? Essentially this: when you are responsible for a task, you will perform that task. When you rely on someone else’s work in an aspect of the performance of that task, you will give full credit in the proper, accepted form. Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the firm expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions. When in doubt (of any kind) please ask for guidance and clarification.

Mason Email Accounts: Students must use their MasonLIVE email account to receive important University information, including messages related to this class. See http://masonlive.gmu.edu for more information.

Writing Center: A114 Robinson Hall; (703) 993-1200; http://writingcenter.gmu.edu

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): (703) 993-2380; http://caps.gmu.edu