

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
BIOETHICS - PHIL 309 DL
FALL 2019
Boyd

Course Description: This course is an introduction to contemporary issues in bioethics. For most topics, we will consider moral arguments for and against different laws and practices, and assess those arguments along the lines of cogency and soundness. Students will be encouraged to draw their own conclusions and opinions on these practices. The course will also touch upon Utilitarian and Kantian Ethics—two of the top contenders among moral theories—with the aim of seeing how they might offer guidance on how best to frame novel issues in bioethics (Credits: 3).

Instructor: Derek Boyd
Office: 462 Robinson B
Hours: MW 11:00 – 1:00 PM & 3:00 – 5:00 PM.
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Office Hours: I welcome you to visit me in my office during hours or by appointment as often as you like. Even though this course is taught entirely online, that absolutely! doesn't mean that you're not welcome to drop by my office whenever you have questions or just to say hello. I've scheduled four hours of office hours on Mondays and Wednesdays with the hope that anyone can find a time within this window if need be.

Texts: All texts and other content will be made available on Blackboard.

Grades:	Discussions (10%)	Out of 50 points
	Quizzes (4 x 15% = 60%)	Out of 4 x 75 = 300 points
	Paper(s) (15%)	Out of 75 points
	Projects (15%)	Out of 75 points
	Total (100%)	Out of 500 points

Course-grades will be determined according the formula below, if no curve is deemed necessary. The numbers reflect the percentage of total points a student may earn by the end of the semester. There are a total of 500 possible points.

100 =A+>97, 97>A>93, 93>A->90, 90>B+>87, 87>B>83, 83>B>80, 80>C+>77, 77>C>73,
73>C->70, 70>D+>67, 67>D>63, 63>D->60, 60>F.

Discussions: Discussions grades are the sum of your ten best weekly discussion scores out of fifteen possibilities. On weeks that don't follow a quiz, first posts are due by the end of Thursday (11:59 PM) and second posts by the end of Sunday (11:59 PM). The discussion questions should be seen as preparation for the next quiz.

You should aim at keeping your posts to between 100 and 200 words. If you have more to say, you can always post again (and again...). The exercise is to post a complete but concise answer to the prompt. For most weeks, discussions will be done in groups of five students and for most of these weeks you won't have access to other students' replies in advance of posting your own response. You will be randomly assigned to a group and groups may have the same or different questions. On Mondays I will post a review of the week's discussions by highlighting and underscoring those parts that need emphasis.

Quizzes: Quizzes will open on Tuesdays at 6 AM and close the following day, Wednesday, at 11:59 PM. You may begin a quiz anytime with that window (so, you may begin a quiz at 11:59 PM on Wednesday) and you'll have an hour to complete it. You don't need to come to campus or to another testing facility to take the quizzes, although I strongly recommend that you find someplace with a reliable internet connections. ***You won't have an opportunity to retake a quiz if your internet connection goes out during a quiz.*** Quizzes will consist of a combination of multiple-choice, multiple-answer, True-False, and short essay questions. The questions on the quizzes will be drawn from a pool of questions, which makes it unlikely that any two quizzes will be all that similar. You must answer the questions in the order in which you receive them and there is no backtracking.

Quizzes are out of 75 points, your lowest quiz score is dropped. ***There are no makeup quizzes.***

Paper(s): You have the option of writing either: A) Two 2-3 page essays due at different points in the semester OR B) One 4-5 page essay. Essays are in response to a choice of prompts given on 'Paper Guidelines'. Papers should be submitted to SafeAssign (75 points possible).

Project: Project guidelines will be posted to Blackboard (75 points possible).

Late papers: Late papers will be graded down by a third of a grade for each day they are late.

Missed quizzes: There are no makeup quizzes (but keep in mind that your lowest quiz score is dropped).

Study guides: Study guides will be made available for each of the quizzes several weeks before an exam. The study-guide questions are intended to help you focus on the most important parts of the readings and lectures, and should be a reliable guide to how well prepared you are for an exam.

Collaborate review sessions: A collaborate review session will be held prior to each exam. During the sessions we will review the study guide in preparation for the coming exam. The dates and times of the review sessions will be announced at the beginning of the week before an exam. One of the review sessions will be recorded.

Learning Outcomes:

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Analyze and critique moral arguments by assessing their formal structure and evaluating the strength of their premises.
2. Compare and contrast opposing moral positions, and the arguments given in support of them, on a number of issues in the bioethics-literature.
3. Construct moral arguments of one's own by offering deontological and/or consequentialist reasons in defense of a moral issue.
4. Theorize and apply deontological and consequentialist reasoning to new moral topics, as they may arise.

Course Expectations:

1. Working online requires dedication and organization. Proper preparation is expected every week. You are expected to log in to the course each week and complete the assignments and activities on or before the due dates.
2. Students must check their GMU email messages on a **daily** basis for course announcements, which may include reminders, revisions, and updates.
3. It is expected that you will familiarize yourself with and adhere to the [Honor Code](#). Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, and/or lie in matters related to academic work.
4. It is essential to communicate any questions or problems to me promptly.

Course Prerequisites: There are no formal prerequisites. No previous experience in philosophy or the life-sciences is required.

Online Learning Community: This online course is taught via Blackboard Courses (Log into <http://mymason.gmu.edu>, select the Courses Tab, and the course can be found in the Course List).

This course is offered completely online. Each week begins on **Tuesday** and ends on the following **Monday**.

In our online learning community, we must be respectful of one another. Please be aware that innocent remarks can be easily misconstrued. Sarcasm and humor can be easily taken out of context. When communicating, please be positive and diplomatic. I encourage you to learn more about [Netiquette](#).

Technology Requirements:

Hardware: You will need access to a Windows or Macintosh computer with at least 2 GB of RAM and to a fast, reliable broadband Internet connection (e.g., cable, DSL). For optimum visibility of

course material, the recommended computer monitor and laptop screen size is 13-inches or larger. You will need computer speakers or headphones to listen to recorded content and a microphone for live audio sessions using course tools like Blackboard Collaborate.

For the amount of computer hard disk space required to take an online course, consider and allow for the space needed to: 1) install the required and recommended software and, 2) save your course assignments.

Important Dates:

Last Day to Add (Full-Semester Course): Sept. 3.

Last Day to Drop (Full-Semester Course): Sept. 17.

Selective Withdrawal Period (Full-Semester Course): Oct. 3 – Oct. 29.

Students Expectations:

Academic Integrity

Students must be responsible for their own work, and students and faculty must take on the responsibility of dealing explicitly with violations. The tenet must be a foundation of our university culture. [See <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/distance>].

Honor Code

Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://oai.gmu.edu/honor-code/masons-honor-code/>].

MasonLive/Email (GMU Email)

Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account. [See <https://thanatos.gmu.edu/masonlive/login>].

Patriot Pass

Once you sign up for your Patriot Pass, your passwords will be synchronized, and you will use your Patriot Pass username and password to log in to the following systems: Blackboard, University Libraries, MasonLive, myMason, Patriot Web, Virtual Computing Lab, and WEMS. [See <https://thanatos.gmu.edu/passwordchange/index.jsp>].

University Policies

Students must follow the university policies. [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu>].

Responsible Use of Computing

Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/1301gen.html>].

University Calendar

Students must follow the university policies. [See <http://catalog.gmu.edu>].

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester [See <http://ods.gmu.edu>]

Religious Holidays

A list of religious holidays is available on the University Life Calendar page (<http://ulife.gmu.edu/calendar/religious-holiday-calendar/>). Any student whose religious observance conflicts with a scheduled course activity must contact the Instructor at least 2 weeks in advance of the conflict date in order to make alternative arrangements.

Sexual Misconduct and Interpersonal Violence

George Mason University is committed to providing a learning, living and working environment that is free from discrimination, and we are committed to a campus that is free of sexual misconduct and other acts of interpersonal violence in order to promote community well-being and student success. We encourage students who believe that they have been sexually harassed, assaulted or subjected to sexual misconduct to seek assistance and support. [University Policy 1202 Sexual Harassment and Misconduct](http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/sexual-harassment-policy/)(<http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/sexual-harassment-policy/>) speaks to the specifics of our process, our resources, and the options available to you.

Confidential student resources are available on campus at the Student Support and Advocacy Center (<http://ssac.gmu.edu/>), Counseling and Psychological Services (<http://caps.gmu.edu/>), and Student Health Services (<http://shs.gmu.edu/>).

All other members of the University community (including faculty, except those noted above) are **not** considered confidential resources and are **required** to report incidents of sexual misconduct to the University Title IX Coordinator. For a full list of resources, support opportunities, and reporting options, contact Dr. Jennifer Hammat, Title IX Coordinator, at <http://diversity.gmu.edu/title-ix>, at 703-993-8730, or in the Compliance, Diversity, and Ethics office in the Aquia Building, Suite 373.

Student Services:

University Libraries

University Libraries provides resources for distance students. [See <http://library.gmu.edu/distance>].

Writing Center

The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing. [See <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>]. You can now sign up for an Online Writing Lab (OWL) session just like you sign up for a face-to-face session in the Writing Center, which means YOU set the date and time of the appointment! Learn more about the [Online Writing Lab \(OWL\)](#) (found under Online Tutoring).

Counseling and Psychological Services

The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance [See <http://caps.gmu.edu>].

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), also known as the "Buckley Amendment," is a federal law that gives protection to student educational records and provides students with certain rights. [See <http://registrar.gmu.edu/privacy>].

Discussion Board protocols:

(1) Instructions:

Discussions for weeks that don't follow a quiz will open on Blackboard on Tuesday at 6 AM. Submit your initial post by the end of Thursday (11:59 PM), and your second post by the end of Sunday. Discussions for weeks that follow a quiz will be due on **Friday** and Sunday. Discussion questions will be similar to the questions on the quizzes.

(2) Discussion protocols:

You should try your best to get your postings in before the due dates. Postings that come after the due dates are of less value to the class, as late postings may not catch the attention of students before they post their second response.

Discussion postings should be a minimum of 100 words and a maximum of 200

words. I encourage you to:

- Address the questions as much as possible (don't let the discussion stray).
- Describe the relevant argument or position in your own words, limiting quotations, unless context makes it necessary.
- Build on others' responses to create threads.

Avoid discussion postings that are limited to 'I agree' or 'great idea', etc. If you agree (or disagree) with a posting then say why you agree by supporting your statement with concepts from the readings or by bringing in a related example or experience.

Feel free to include related prior knowledge (e.g., work experience, prior coursework, readings), but be mindful of the 200 word cap.

Use proper netiquette (i.e., the culture of communicating digitally). Learn more about [Netiquette](#).

(3) Grading rubric for evaluating discussions:

Discussion Board Rubric				
Criteria	Expected	Sufficient	Insufficient	Not Evident or Not Completed
Timely discussion contributions	Both postings were adequate and meeting the due dates.	First posting was adequate, second posting sub-adequate but meeting the due dates.	Both postings sub-adequate or missing the due dates.	No postings.

Responsiveness to the question, thoughtfulness of answer demonstration of an understanding of the assigned readings	Thoughtful replies demonstrating that the basic ideas in the readings were understood and incorporated into your responses and meeting the due dates.	First posting thoughtful and demonstrating that the basic ideas in the readings, but second posting sub-adequate or not meeting the due dates.	Both postings have questionable relationship to the group question or reading material.	No evidence of effort or understanding.
Points	5	3-4	1-2	0

Schedule:

Learning Module Topics	Readings and Video	Assignments
<p>WEEK 1 (8/27)</p> <p>Introduction to Bioethics & Logic</p>	<p>Course Welcome to Blackboard</p> <p>-Chapter 1.1 – 1.5 of <i>A Concise Introduction to Logic</i> (7th or 13th ed., Cengage: 2003, 2018).</p> <p>-(Optional) Chapter 1 of James Rachels, <i>The Elements of Moral Philosophy</i>, 4th ed. (McGraw Hill: 2003).</p>	<p>Introduce yourself and upload a photo to ‘Student Introductions’ in Week 1 for 5 points extra-credit.</p> <p>Discussions (initial post by Thursday at 11:59 PM, second post by Sunday at 11:59 PM).</p> <p>Logic Problem Set.</p> <p>*NOTE: Everything is due by 11:59 PM.</p> <p>E.g., X is due on Friday → X is due by 11:59 PM on Friday.</p>
<p>WEEK 2 (9/3)</p> <p>Abortion</p>	<p>-Judith Thomson, “A Defense of Abortion,” <i>Philosophy and Public Affairs</i> (Vol. 1, No. 1, 1971).</p> <p>-Don Marquis, “Why Abortion is Immoral,” <i>Journal of Philosophy</i> (Vol. 86, No. 4, 1989).</p>	<p>Discussions (initial post by Thursday at 11:59 PM, second post by Sunday at 11:59 PM).</p> <p>Logic Problem Set (continued).</p>
<p>WEEK 3 (9/10)</p> <p>Killing and Letting Die</p>	<p>-Chapter 7 of James Rachels, <i>The End of Life</i> (Oxford University Press: 1986).</p>	<p>Discussions (initial post by Thursday at 11:59 PM, second post by Sunday at 11:59 PM).</p> <p>Logic Problem Set (continued).</p>
<p>WEEK 4 (9/17)</p> <p>Utilitarianism</p>	<p>-Chapters 2, 7 & 8 of James Rachels, <i>The Elements of Moral Philosophy</i>, 4th ed. (McGraw Hill: 2003). [Same author, different text]</p>	<p>QUIZ 1 (opens on Tuesday (9/17) at 6 AM and is due by Wednesday (9/18) at 11:59 PM).</p> <p>Discussions (initial post by Friday at 11:59 PM, second post by Sunday at 11:59 PM).</p>
<p>WEEK 5 (9/24)</p> <p>Animal Welfare</p>	<p>-Peter Singer, “Utilitarianism and Vegetarianism,” <i>Philosophy and Public Affairs</i> (Vol. 9, No. 4, 1980).</p>	<p>Discussions (initial post by Thursday at 11:59 PM, second post by Sunday at 11:59 PM).</p>

<p>WEEK 6 (10/1)</p> <p>Deontological Ethics</p>	<p>-Chapter 9 of James Rachels, <i>The Elements of Moral Philosophy</i>, 4th ed. (McGraw Hill: 2003).</p>	<p>Discussions (initial post by Thursday at 11:59 PM, second post by Sunday at 11:59 PM).</p> <p>PROJECT I DUE on Sunday (Oct. 6) by 11:59 PM.</p>
<p>WEEK 7 (10/8)</p> <p>Deontological Ethics (continued)</p>	<p>-Chapter 10 of James Rachels, <i>The Elements of Moral Philosophy</i>, 4th ed. (McGraw Hill: 2003).</p>	<p>QUIZ 2 opens on Tuesday (10/8) at 6 AM and is due by Wednesday (10/9) at 11:59 PM.</p> <p>Discussions (initial post by Friday at 11:59 PM, second post by Sunday at 11:59 PM).</p>
<p>WEEK 8 (10/15)</p> <p>Kidney Sales</p>	<p>Janet Radcliffe-Richards et. al., “The Case for Allowing Kidney Sales,” from <i>Intervention and Reflection</i> edited by Ronald Munson (Boston, MA: Wadsworth, 2012).</p> <p>-Kishore D. Phadke and Urmila Anandh, “Refuse to Support the Illegal Organ Trade,” from <i>Intervention and Reflection</i> edited by Ronald Munson (Boston, MA: Wadsworth, 2012).</p>	<p>Discussions (initial post by Thursday at 11:59 PM, second post by Sunday at 11:59 PM).</p> <p>SHORTER PAPER 1 DUE on Tuesday (10/15) .</p> <p><i>*Note:</i> You have the option of writing two shorter papers OR one longer paper. You are not required to do both assignments, but you may do both and if so only your highest grade of the two will count.</p>
<p>WEEK 9 (10/22)</p> <p>Biomedical Enhancement</p>	<p>Chapters 1 & 2 of Allen Buchanan, <i>Better Than Human</i> (Oxford University Press: 2011).</p>	<p>Discussions (initial post by Thursday at 11:59 PM, second post by Sunday at 11:59 PM).</p>
<p>WEEK 10 (10/29)</p> <p>Biomedical Enhancement</p>	<p>-Chapters 3 & 4 of Allen Buchanan, <i>Better Than Human</i> (Oxford University Press: 2011).</p>	<p>QUIZ 3 opens on Tuesday (10/29) at 6 AM and is due by Wednesday (10/30) at 11:59 PM.</p> <p>Discussions (initial post by Friday at 11:59 PM, second post by Sunday at 11:59 PM).</p>

<p>WEEK 11 (11/5)</p> <p>Biomedical Enhancement</p>	<p>-Chapters 5 & 6 of Allen Buchanan, <i>Better Than Human</i> (Oxford University Press: 2011).</p>	<p>Discussions (initial post by Thursday at 11:59 PM, second post by Sunday at 11:59 PM).</p> <p>PROJECT II DUE on Sunday (Nov. 3).</p>
<p>WEEK 12 (11/12)</p> <p>Human Cloning</p>	<p>-Michael Tooley, "Moral Status of Cloning Humans" from <i>Human Cloning</i> edited by James M. Huber & Robert F. Almeder (Totowa, NJ: Humanities Press, 1998), pp. 77-100.</p>	<p>Discussions (initial post by Thursday at 11:59 PM, second post by Sunday at 11:59 PM).</p>
<p>WEEK 13 (11/19)</p> <p>Partial Autonomy and Informed Consent</p>	<p>-Onora O'Neill, "Partial Autonomy and Informed Consent" in <i>Journal of Medical Ethics</i>, Vol. 10, no. 4, 1996 (173-178).</p>	<p>QUIZ 4 opens on Tuesday (11/19) at 6 AM and is due by Wednesday (11/20) at 11:59 PM.</p> <p>Discussions (initial post by Friday at 11:59 PM, second post by Sunday at 11:59 PM).</p> <p>SHORTER PAPER II DUE on Sunday (11/24).</p> <p>LONGER PAPER DUE on Sunday (11/24).</p>
<p>WEEK 14 (11/26)</p> <p>Thanksgiving Recess</p>	<p>-No new reading for the week.</p>	
<p>WEEK 15 (12/3)</p> <p>Feeding People and Saving Nature</p>	<p>-Holmes Rolston, "Feeding People versus Saving Nature" in <i>World Hunger and Morality</i>, 2nd (Prentice Hall 1996).</p>	<p>Discussions (initial post by Thursday at 11:59 PM, second post by Sunday at 11:59 PM).</p> <p>QUIZ 5 opens on Tuesday (12/10) at 6 AM and is due by Wednesday (12/11) at 11:59 PM.</p>