Bioethics: PHIL 309-001 (3 credits)
Fall 2020

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Aug. 31, 2020   Last day to add classes
Sept. 8, 2020   Last day to drop classes without penalty
Sept. 15, 2020   Last day to drop (50% tuition penalty)
Sept 29 - Oct 28   Selective withdrawal period

Course Description

In this course, students will learn about some of the most important bioethical issues faced today and across the human lifespan, from conception to death. How should we approach public health while the United States is in the grips of the COVID-19 pandemic? What are our health care obligations to historically marginalized communities, such as people of color and those with disabilities? How should we deal with racism and sexism in medicine? Is it ethical to make designer babies? How do we know if an adult is capable of making medical decisions on her own? What and when is death? And, do we have an obligation to donate our organs after death?

Diverse approaches to these questions will be considered with an emphasis on moral reasoning. You will learn practical skills for identifying ethical issues in real-world scenarios, and how to grapple with these issues if you pursue a career in health care. The course is recommended for students interested in careers in health care, or those interested in gaining a deeper understanding of ethical issues in health care. No prior background in philosophy is assumed. **This course fulfills the SYNTHESIS category of Mason's CORE requirements for undergraduate training.**

Blackboard Login Instructions

Access to MyMason and GMU email are required to participate successfully in this course. Please make sure to update your computer and prepare yourself to begin using the online format BEFORE the first day of class. Check the IT Support Center website. Navigate to the Student Support page for help and information about Blackboard. In the menu bar to the left you will find all the tools you need to become familiar with for this course. Take time to learn each. Make sure you run a system check a few days before class. Become familiar with the attributes of Blackboard and online learning.

Required Textbooks
There are no textbooks to purchase. All texts and materials for this course are "open access" and are freely available in PDF, video files, or external links on the blackboard website.

Course Learning Outcomes
After taking this course, you will:

1. Be familiar with some of today's the most important ethical issues in medicine.
2. Have improved ability to critically evaluate and synthesize complex information about medical decision making.
3. Have improved written and oral communication skills.
4. Have improved skills in discussing difficult ethical issues with others who may not agree with you.
5. Have improved skills for applying to and interviewing at nursing or medical schools.

Technology Requirements

Hardware: You will need access to a Windows or Macintosh computer with at least 2 GB of RAM and access to a fast and reliable broadband internet connection (e.g., cable, DSL). A larger screen is recommended for better visibility of course material. You will need speakers or headphones to hear recorded content and a headset with a microphone is recommended for the best experience. For the amount of Hard Disk Space required taking a distance education course, consider and allow for:

1. the storage amount needed to install any additional software and
2. space to store work that you will do for the course.

If you consider the purchase of a new computer, please go to Patriot Tech to see recommendations.

Software: Many courses use Blackboard as the learning management system. You will need a browser and operating system that are listed compatible or certified with the Blackboard version available on the myMason Portal. See supported browsers and operating systems. Log in to myMason to access your registered courses. Some courses may use other learning management systems. Check the syllabus or contact the instructor for details. Online courses typically use Acrobat Reader, Flash, Java, and Windows Media Player, QuickTime and/or Real Media Player. Your computer should be capable of running current versions of those applications. Also, make sure your computer is protected from viruses by downloading the latest version of Symantec Endpoint Protection/Anti-Virus software for free here.

Students owning Macs or Linux should be aware that some courses may use software that only runs on Windows. You can set up a Mac computer with Boot Camp or virtualization software so Windows will also run on it. Watch this video about using Windows on a Mac. Computers running Linux can also be configured with virtualization software or configured to dual boot with Windows.

Note: If you are using an employer-provided computer or corporate office for class attendance, please verify with your systems administrators that you will be able to install the necessary applications and that system or corporate firewalls do not block access to any sites or media types.

Course Schedule

Week	Lessons	TOPIC/READINGS/VIDEOS	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
Week 1 (8/24-8/28)	**Let's get to know each other**	• Download and review syllabus. • Login to blackboard and review the course.	• Post to discussion board: Introduce Yourself • Make your first entry in the bioethics journal: what do you expect to get out of the course? • Participate in Zoom meeting with entire class
Week 2 (8/31-9/4)	**What is Bioethics?**	• Watch video lecture • Watch accompanying videos from directors of bioethics units at Baylor College of Medicine, Georgetown, and Columbia.	• Make your second entry in your bioethics journal: describe an ethical issue you've experienced in medicine. • Participate in Zoom tutorial session

Week	Lessons	TOPIC/READINGS/VIDEOS	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
Week 3 (9/7-9/11)	**Confronting COVID-19**	• Watch video lectures • Read Emanuel et al. 2020 *NEJM* • Read Peterson et al. 2020 *BMJ*	• Take the short open-book/open-note quiz. • Post to the discussion board: Triage and Covid-19 • Participate in Zoom tutorial session
Week 4 (9/14-9/18)	**Race and Medicine**	• Watch video lectures • Read Dr. Martin Luther King's Letter from Birmingham Jail • Read Danis et al. 2016 *AJOB* • Read ProPublica article about maternal mortality in Black Americans	• Complete case simulation assignment: The case of Michael Hickson. (Major Assignment) • Participate in Zoom tutorial session
Week 5 (9/21-9/28)	**Disability and Medicine**	• Watch short videos (warning: videos on Willowbrook may be disturbing to some viewers) • Read Reynolds 2018 *AMA J of Ethics* • Read excerpt from *Being Heumann*	• Make your third entry in your bioethics journal: People with disabilities interacting with the medical community • Participate in Zoom tutorial session
Week 6 (10/5-10/9)	**Decision Making for Incapable Adults**	• Watch short videos • Read Appelbaum 2007 *NEJM* • Read Torke et al. 2008 *J Gen Int Med*	• Post to the discussion board: Does Roger have capacity? • Take the short open-book/open-note quiz • Participate in Zoom tutorial session
Week 7 (10/12-10/16)	**Abortion**	• Watch short videos • Read Tohmson 1971 *PPA* • Read Marquis 1989 *J of Phil*	• Complete case simulation assignment: The case of Mary Northern. (Major Assignment) • Participate in Zoom tutorial session

Week	Lessons	TOPIC/READINGS/VIDEOS	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
Week 8 (10/19-10/23)	**Family Planning**	• Watch short videos • Read excerpts from *Choosing Nia* • Read Parker 2006 *JME* • Read Savulescu 2007 *JME* •	• Take the short open-book/open-note quiz • Participate in Zoom tutorial session
Week 9 (10/26-10/30)	**Defining Death**	• Watch short video • Read New Yorker article on Jahi McMath, What does it mean to die? • Read Laureys 2005 *Nature*	• Take the short open-book/open-note quiz • Post to the discussion board: What is death? • Participate in Zoom tutorial session
Week 10 (11/2-11/6)	**Harvesting Organs from the dead**	• Read Journal of Medical Ethics Debate on the ethics of an organ market. • Read Atlantic article on kidney markets.	• Complete case simulation assignment: The case of Terri Schiavo. (Major Assignment) • Participate in Zoom tutorial session
Week 11 (11/9-11/13)	**Discrimination in Medicine**	• Listen to audio interview • Read Mellow and Jagsi 2020 *NEJM* • Read Turban 2019 *NEJM* • Read Paul-Emile et al 2020 *NEJM* • Read STAT article on racist patients	• Make your fourth entry in your bioethics journal: How will you deal with discrimination in medicine? • Participate in Zoom tutorial session
Week 12 (11/16-11/20)	**Preparing for Moral Distress In Medicine**	• Watch TODAY video about Dr. Breen's death during Covid-19 • Read NYT article on Dr. Breen • Read Ulrich and Grady 2010	• Make your final entry in your bioethics journal: What did you learn from this course? • Participate in Zoom tutorial session

Week	Lessons	TOPIC/READINGS/VIDEOS	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
		HCR • Reach Ulrich and Grady 2019 *Nat Academies*	
Week 13 (11/23-11/26)	**N/A**	Thanksgiving (no class)	No assignments
Week 14 (11/30-12/4)	**Last class**	No course material	• Post to discussion board: Farwell and good luck message • Make up work that hasn't been completed

Assignments and grading

1. Four Quizzes (5 points each; 20 points total; 20% of grade): There are 4 open-note/open-book quizzes. You will have three hours to complete each quiz. The quizzes are low-stakes assignments that are designed to prepare you for the case simulations.

2. Four Online Discussion Board Posts (5 points each; 20 points total; 20% of grade): There are 4 discussion board assignments. Your discussion will be graded based upon the rubric, which looks to quality, responsiveness, and moving the discussion forward. Discussions will run from **Monday to Sunday**. You are expected to participate throughout the week in the discussions -not clump them all together on one day. The discussion board posts are designed to prepare you for the case simulations.

3. Three Case Simulations (15 points each; 45 points total; 45% of grade): There are 3 case simulations. The case simulations will require you to apply the knowledge gained in quizzes and discussion board posts to the facts of a specific case. The cases pertain to: 1) Covid-19 and triage; 2) Decision-making capacity; 3) Defining death. Detailed instructions are posted for each case simulation. A rubric is included for each case simulation. You assignment must be submitted through blackboard.

4. Five Bioethics Journal Entries (3 points each; 15 points total; 15% of your grade): There are 5 journal entries. These are credit/no-credit assignments. The journal is designed for you to privately reflect on some of the emotionally difficult content of this course. Only you and the course instructors can view the journal entries.

5. Zoom tutorial sessions (discretionary participation points): Each week we will hold 1-hour tutorial sessions. Students are expected to prepare for and participate in the tutorial sessions. Discretionary participation points will be given to students who consistently engage in the tutorial sessions.

Course Policies

Late Assignments: All assignments must be turned in on the due date given on the assignment sheet.

Instructor-Student Communication: We will respond to your emails within 24-28 hours. If we are away from email for more than one day, we will post an announcement in the Blackboard course folder. Before sending an email, please check the following (available on your Blackboard course menu) unless the email is of a personal nature:

1. Syllabus
2. *Ask Your Instructors* discussion thread
3. On-demand Blackboard videos on how to use Blackboard features, and Technical Requirements.

Feel free to respond to other students in the *Ask Your Instructor* forum if you know the answer.

Technology. You will need a reliable computer and internet access to view course materials in Blackboard. Technical requirements are outlined above

Grading Scale

Cumulatively, the assignments for this course add to 100 points. Each point counts as a percentage in your final grade. The final grade scale is outlined below. In exceptional cases, discretionary participation points may be applied at the end of the semester to push as student to the next grade grange.

A Range	B Range	C Range	D Range	F Range
100-97= A+	89-87=B+	79-77=C+	69-67=D+	59-0=F
96-94= A	86-84=B	76-74=C	66-64=D	
93-90= A-	83-80=B-	73-70=C-	63-60=D-	

University Policies and Resources

a. Academic Honesty: You are expected to be familiar with and abide by the University's Honor Code. The Code can be found here. It is your responsibility to see me if you have questions about these policies. George Mason University has an honor code that states the following:

> *To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the University Community have set forth this:*

b. Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing

c. Student services: The University provides range of services to help you succeed academically and you should make use of these if you think they could benefit you. I also invite you to speak to me (the earlier the better).

d. 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.

e. 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.   Counseling Center: Student Union I, Room 364, 703-993-2380.

f. 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. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office. Please note that accommodations MUST BE MADE BEFORE assignments or exams are due. I cannot adjust your grade after the fact.

g. Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

h. 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. University Writing Center: Robinson Hall Room A114, 703-993-1200. The writing center includes assistance for students for whom English is a second language.

i. Diversity: George Mason University promotes a living and learning environment for outstanding growth and productivity among its students, faculty and staff. Through its curriculum, programs, policies, procedures, services and resources, Mason strives to maintain a quality environment for work, study and personal growth.