

Philosophy 3633: Bioethics Syllabus

PHI 3633; Section 1E71
Spring 2020
M/W/F 12:50pm - 1:40pm
Matherly Hall 0116

Instructor Information

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Office Hours: T 12:00pm - 2:00pm, or by appointment
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Course Description

This course aims to familiarize students with some of the central issues, positions, and arguments in biomedical ethics. The course begins with an exploration of general moral theories and principles, and then proceeds to apply these theories and principles to a host of issues such as paternalism and autonomy, truth-telling and confidentiality, research on humans, abortion, and euthanasia. Throughout the course, our primary aim will not be to figure out “The Correct Answer,” but rather to appreciate the diversity of positions on these issues, and to understand the reasons and arguments that can be used to support those positions.

Learning Objectives

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

- Identify when biomedical issues are distinctively philosophical
- Address such issues using a variety of philosophical approaches
- Explain prominent arguments for and against various positions
- Understand, evaluate, and craft philosophical arguments
- Write persuasively in support of their positions

Academic Honesty

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge, which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: ‘On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.’”

The Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor.

Plagiarism on any assignment will automatically result in a grade of "E" for the course. Plagiarism is defined in the University of Florida's Student Honor Code as follows: "A student

shall not represent as the student's own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes (but is not limited to): a. Quoting oral or written materials, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution. b. Submitting a document or assignment which in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authored by the student." Students found guilty of academic misconduct will be prosecuted in accordance with the procedures specified in the UF honesty policy.

Attendance and Classroom Policies

Students are expected to attend class and to have done all assigned reading in advance. Failure to do so will adversely affect students' ability to perform well in this course. The use of smart phones during class is not permitted. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

Canvas e-Learning Environment

This course is supplemented by online content in the e-Learning environment known as "Canvas." To login to the e-Learning site for this course, go to <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/>, click the **e-Learning in Canvas** button, and on the next page enter your Gatorlink username and password. You can then access the course e-Learning environment by selecting PHI 2010 from the **Courses** pull-down menu at the top of the page. If you encounter any difficulties logging in or accessing any of the course content, contact the UF Computing Help Desk at (352) 392-4537. Please do not contact the course instructor regarding computer issues.

Online Course Evaluation

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Counseling and Wellness Center:

<http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, 392-1575

University Police Department:

392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

Course Text

Vaughn, Lewis. (2017) *Bioethics: Principles, Issues, and Cases. 3rd Edition*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Course Requirements

Reading Quizzes: 15%

Paper 1: 15%

Paper 2: 20%

Midterm Exam: 25%

Final Exam: 25%

Participation

Respectful participation is expected of everyone. It can take a variety of forms: contributing to class discussions, coming to office hours, emailing me with questions, etc. Each class has assigned readings, which will require critical engagement and reflection. You should come to class prepared to discuss these readings and demonstrate that you have thought critically about them beforehand.

Reading Quizzes

To prepare for our discussions, we need to study the readings carefully. Try to outline what the author's main claim is, what their principal reasons for that claim are, what alternative position(s) they consider, and the reason(s) why they do not adopt those alternatives. To reward you for doing this work, there will be daily quizzes during the course of the semester. Each quiz will contain two or three true-false, multiple-choice, or short answer questions about the required reading for that day's class. At the end of the semester, I will drop your three lowest reading quiz grades. If you miss a reading quiz, you will not be able to retake it. The drop policy is meant to accommodate unforeseen illnesses, emergencies, and the like. If you will miss a reading quiz for a religious holiday or another official university activity, you must notify me ahead of time; quizzes missed for these reasons will not count toward your three dropped quizzes for the semester.

Papers

You will write two papers for this course. For each paper, you will be given the choice of several prompts, of which you must choose one and write a 4 page paper in response. The prompts will concern topics we have read about and discussed in class. The papers give you the opportunity to illustrate your understanding of the material, as well as to develop your own views. (For a basic overview of how to write a philosophy paper, the following website is worth exploring: <http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>.) Late papers will be deducted 1/3 of a letter grade (i.e. a +/- increment) for each day past the due date.

Midterm Exam

The midterm exam is a take-home exam due on Friday, March 13 at 5pm (to be submitted on Canvas). The exam prompts will be provided one week before the due date. You will have to choose a subset of them to answer with a short essay. The questions will concern the readings and topics we have discussed over the first half of the semester. The combined length of your answers should be at least 1000 words. While you may discuss the question prompts with other students, *you may not work with anyone else on the preparation of your answers.*

Final Exam

The Final Exam is a take-home exam, due on Saturday, April 25 at 5pm (to be submitted on Canvas). The exam will be similar in format to the midterm: it will consist of around five questions, and you will have to choose a subset of them to answer with a short essay. The questions will concern the readings and topics we have discussed over the course of the entire semester. The combined length of your answers should be at least 1000 words. While you may discuss the question prompts with other students, *you may not work with anyone else on the preparation of your answers.*

Course Schedule and Readings

The following is a tentative schedule for the course. Any official changes to the schedule will be announced in class and over email. The syllabus is divided into weeks; the items listed for a given week are to be read before classes that week. The readings listed on a given date are to be done before class on that date.

Unit 1: Moral Theories and Principles

Week 1: January 6, 8, 10

- John Stuart Mill, "Utilitarianism" (Vaughn pp. 53-56)
- Immanuel Kant, "The Moral Law" (Vaughn pp. 56-61)

Week 2: January 13, 15, 17

- Bernard Mayo, "Virtue and the Moral Life" (Vaughn, pp. 62-64)
- Susan Wolf, "Moral Saints" (Vaughn, pp. 70-78)

Unit 2: Paternalism and Patient Autonomy

Week 3: January 22, 24

- Gerald Dworkin, "Paternalism" (Vaughn pp. 94-103)

Week 4: January 27, 29, 31

- Alan Goldman, "The Refutation of Medical Paternalism" (Vaughn pp. 104-109)
- Terrance Ackerman, "Why Doctors Should Intervene" (Vaughn pp. 110-115)
- *Bouvia v. Superior Court* (Vaughn pp. 123-127)

Week 5: February 3, 5, 7

- Susan Cullen and Margaret Klein, "Respect for Patients, Physicians, and the Truth" (Vaughn, pp. 164-171)
- Mark Siegler, "Confidentiality in Medicine – A Decrepit Concept" (Vaughn, pp. 177-180)

Paper 1 Due by February 7 at 5pm (submit on Canvas)

Unit 3: Human Research

Week 6: February 10, 12, 14

- Samuel Hellman and Deborah Hellman, "Of Mice but not Men: Problems of the Randomized Clinical Trial"
- Benjamin Freedman, "A Response to a Purported Ethical Difficulty with Randomized Clinical Trials Involving Cancer Patients"

Week 7: February 17, 19, 21

- Marcia Angell, "The Ethics of Clinical Research in the Third World"
- Baruch Brody, "Ethical Issues in Clinical Trials in Developing Countries"

Unit 4: Abortion

Week 8: February 24, 26, 28

- Judith Jarvis Thomson, "A Defense of Abortion" (Vaughn, pp. 326-335)
- Don Marquis, "Why Abortion is Immoral" (Vaughn, pp. 336-347)

—Spring Break—

Week 9: March 9, 11, 13

- John Noonan, "An Almost Absolute Value in History" (Vaughn, pp. 348-352)
- Mary Anne Warren, "On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion" (Vaughn, pp. 352-363)

Midterm Exam due by March 13 at 5pm (submit on Canvas)

Week 10: March 16, 18, 20

- Jane English, "Abortion and the Concept of a Person" (Vaughn, pp. 377-383)
- *Roe v. Wade* (Vaughn, pp. 397-402)

Unit 5: Reproductive Technology and Genetic Choices

Week 11: March 23, 25, 27

- Peter Singer, "IVF: The Simple Case" (Vaughn, pp. 429-432)
- Cynthia Cohen, "Give me Children or I Shall Die!" (Vaughn, pp. 445-456)

Week 12: March 30; April 1, 3

- Leon Kass, "The Wisdom of Repugnance" (Vaughn, pp. 504-519)
- Dan Brock, "Cloning Human Beings: An Assessment of the Ethical Issues Pro and Con" (Vaughn, pp. 520-530)
- Laura Purdy, "Genetics and Reproductive Risk: Can Having Children Be Immoral?" (Vaughn, pp. 564-570)

Week 13: April 6, 8, 10

- Dena Davids, "Genetic Dilemmas and the Child's Right to an Open Future" (Vaughn, pp. 575-585)
- Dan Brock, "The Non-Identity Problem and Genetic Harms – The Case of Wrongful Handicaps" (Vaughn, pp. 589-593)

Paper 2 Due by April 10 at 5pm (Submit on Canvas)

Unit 6: Euthanasia and Physician-Assisted Suicide

Week 14: April 13, 15, 17

- Thomas Nagel, "Death" (reading provided on Canvas)
- James Rachels, "Active and Passive Euthanasia" (Vaughn, pp. 678-681)

Week 15: April 20, 22

- Velleman, "Against the Right to Die" (reading provided on Canvas)

Final Exam Due by April 25 at 5pm (Submit on Canvas)