

Philosophy 0360: Biomedical Ethics [Revised Syllabus]

Fall 2018 / Thursdays 6:00–8:30 / 142 CL

Instructor: Chuck Goldhaber

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Office Hours: Thurs 2:30–4:30, or by appointment, in 1009B CL

Course Description

Medical practice and research often leads to challenging ethical questions: When, if ever, can medical professionals make decisions for a patient? Can they assist in abortion or suicide? If so, under what conditions and why? Are experiments on human beings morally wrong, even if they may bring benefits to future generations? Should genetic researchers avoid collecting or sorting data by race? Is there a most just way to allocate scarce life-saving resources? Can we modify our children's genes?

In this course, we seek to answer these hard questions, and others. To do so, we will invoke general ethical theories of the kind studied in moral philosophy. The course then has a two-fold approach: We will use bioethical questions to introduce various ethical theories and methods; and we will use those ethical theories and methods to answer bioethical questions. Students in the course will develop the resources to think, reason and communicate clearly about bioethical issues.

Required Texts

- Steinbock, London, and Arras (eds), *Ethical Issues in Modern Medicine: Contemporary Readings in Bioethics*. 8th edition. McGraw-Hill. (2013) [Marked 'EIMM' below.]
- Course Reader, available at the Pitt bookstore [Marked 'CR' below.]

Course Requirements

% of course grade

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|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| – Up to 80 pages per week of dense philosophical reading | |
| – Regular participation in class discussions | 5% |
| – Six in-class reading quizzes (pop) | 10% |
| – One short paper (800–1000 words) on a provided topic | 15% |
| – One long final paper (1400–1600 words) on a chosen topic | 15% |
| ...including a written (250–300 words) proposal | 5% |
| – One case study, written analysis (400–600 words) and 4-min presentation | 10% |
| – One midterm exam | 20% |
| – One final exam | 20% |

Readings

In the schedule below, readings are listed underneath the dates by which they must be read. The readings are dense and tough, and may take more than twice as long to read as typical readings. Make sure you budget enough time to read them carefully, and several times, if necessary. I suggest doing a week's readings in 3–4 separate sittings.

Bring copies of the week's reading to class. This means you should always bring the textbook and/or the course reader, whichever contains the week's readings.

Participation

Regular verbal participation in group discussions is not only required for receiving a good participation grade. It is also crucial for developing philosophical reasoning skills, which are very closely related to conversational and debate skills. If you are feeling shy in class, come to office hours, and let's start talking there.

Attendance is mandatory. Each unexcused absence after the first will result in a 1% deduction from your course grade. Lateness may be treated as an absence, so please arrive on time.

Quizzes

Six pop quizzes will be given during the semester at unannounced times. Each quiz will test reading comprehension, will be open-note/text, and in short answer format.

Quizzes will often be at the beginning of class. Missed quizzes cannot be made up. But the lowest grade of the six will be dropped. The remaining quizzes will be scored out of 5, and will each account for 2% of your course grade.

Papers

The short paper (800–1000 words) is due Tuesday, 10/9 at noon. It must address one of several provided topics concerning the morality of abortion, handed out on 9/27.

The long paper (1400–1600 words) is due Monday, 12/10 at noon. Students will be asked to write on any bioethical topic of their choosing, excluding abortion. Students must submit a written proposal (250–300 words) about their topic on Tuesday, 11/20 at noon. More details later.

Papers must be clear, concise, rigorous and well argued. They must clearly frame a bioethical issue and address it using one or more ethical theories. They must use quotes and citations when introducing others' views. Arguments must be original and consider/reply to possible objections.

I encourage everyone to take advantage of the Writing Center, located at 317B O'Hara Student Center. For information about the center, visit: www.writingcenter.pitt.edu. You can easily make an appointment with a writing consultant online.

Case studies

On 10/4, 10/18, and the last five weeks of the term, an hour of class meeting will be devoted to discussing a case study related to the week's readings.

Each student must sign up to analyze and present on one of the seven weeks, using a Google document sign-up sheet. There are limited slots for each week, and will be filled first come first served.

Students must prepare a written analysis (400–600 words) on their chosen case study. These analyses should present the case in 150–200 words, and then argue persuasively for a decision in the remaining 200–450 words. These should be treated as serious, albeit short, essays. Each student must then give a four-minute presentation to the class. These will lead into an open discussion of the case for the remainder of the class meeting.

Exams

The midterm (10/25, in class) and final (12/11, 7:30pm) exams will be a combination of true/false and essay questions. Possible essay questions will be provided in advance (10/18 and 12/6, respectively). Exams will be open note/text.

Late Policy

No late work will be accepted. No exams or quizzes can be made up. Plan ahead.

Accommodations

If you need special accommodations regarding the assignments, classroom, or other aspects of the course, please do not hesitate to notify me and, if appropriate, Disability Resources and Services. You must do so as early as possible, so that I can make the needed accommodations in time. To notify Disability Resources and Services, call (412) 648-7890 to schedule an appointment. The office is located at 140 William Pitt Union.

Prohibitions

Cell phones must be silenced during class. Absolutely no laptops, tablets or cell phones may be used in the classroom, even during breaks. (You may use cell phones outside the classroom during breaks.) No eating is allowed in the classroom. Drinks are ok.

Academic Integrity

Any form of cheating, including plagiarism, will result in a failing grade for the course. You are responsible for knowing what counts as plagiarism or cheating. Please consult the University's webpage: <http://www.as.pitt.edu/fac/policies/academic-integrity>.

To ensure a safe and constructive learning environment for all, please join me in the commitment to respect everyone's identities and rights, regardless of differences.

Grading Scale

100–97% A+	89–87% B+	79–77% C+	69–67% D+
96–93% A	86–83% B	76–73% C	66–63% D
92–90% A–	82–80% B–	72–70% C–	62–60% D–
			<60% F

Schedule

8/30 – Introduction

- Hippocrates, “Hippocratic Oath” [EIMM, p. 59, in class]
- Robert Truog, “The United Kingdom Sets Limits on Experimental Treatments: The Case of Charlie Gard” *Journal of the American Medical Association*, Vol. 318, No. 11, (2017), pp. 1001–1002. [CR, in class]

9/6 – Abortion I: Religious and rights-based approaches

- *Background*: Steinback, Arras and London, “Introduction: Moral Reasoning in the Medical Context”: First three subsections, Religious Ethics, “Rights-Based” Approaches [EIMM, pp. 1–8, 20–26]
- *Background*: Pope John Paul II, “The Unspeakable Crime of Abortion,” [EIMM, pp. 543–545]
- Peter Singer, *Practical Ethics*, (1980), pp. 125–129; 134–138. [CR, optional: pp. 70–93]
- Michael Tooley, “Abortion and Infanticide,” *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (1972), pp. 37–65. [CR]

9/13 – Abortion II: Consequentialist and Kantian approaches

- *Background*: Steinback, Arras and London, “Introduction: Moral Reasoning in the Medical Context”: Moral Theories and Perspectives. [EIMM, pp. 8–20]
- *Background*: Jeremy Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (1789 [1907]), Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, pp. 1–7. [CR]
- Don Marquis, “Why Abortion is Immoral” [EIMM, pp. 556–563]
- *Background*: Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, ed. Mary Gregor and Jens Timmerman, Cambridge University Press, (1785 [2012]), pp. 33–36 [CR]
- Harry Gensler, “A Kantian Argument Against Abortion,” *Philosophical Studies*, Vol. 48, No. 1, (1985), pp. 83–98. [CR]

9/15 (Saturday) – Link to case study sign up emailed out at noon

9/20 – Abortion III: Virtue ethics and Kantian approaches

- *Background*: Steinback, Arras and London, “Introduction: Moral Reasoning in the Medical Context”: *Virtue Ethics*. [EIMM, pp. 31–35].
- *Background*: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. C.C.W. Taylor, Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press (2006), Book II, Chs. 2, 6–7, pp. 3–4, 8–13. [CR]
- Rosalind Hursthouse, “Virtue Theory and Abortion,” *Philosophy and Public Affairs* Vol. 20 No. 3 (1991), pp. 223–246. [CR]
- ~~*Background*: Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork* (again), 39–43. [CR]~~
- ~~Lara Denis, “Animality and Agency: A Kantian Approach to Abortion,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. 76, No. 1 (2008), pp. 117–137. [CR]~~
- + Niko Kolodny’s Tips on Writing a Philosophy Paper [CourseWeb only]

9/27 – Abortion IV: Feminist approaches Short paper topics handed out

- *Background*: Steinback, Arras and London, “Introduction: Moral Reasoning in the Medical Context”: *Feminist Ethics*. [EIMM, pp. 29–31]
- Judith Jarvis Thomson, “A Defense of Abortion.” [EIMM, pp. 564–573]
- + Three Sample Papers Assignment [CourseWeb only]

10/4 – Assisted Reproduction Case study group 1

- Bonnie Steinbock, “Disability, Prenatal Testing, and Selective Abortion.” [EIMM, pp. 619–627]
- ~~Thomas H. Murray, “What Are Families For?” [EIMM, pp. 650–655]~~
- *Case Study*: Kalfoglou et al, “Ethical arguments for and against sperm sorting for non-medical sex selection.” *BioMedicine Online*, Vol. 26 (2013), pp. 231–239. [CR]
- *Case Study*: Sital Kalantry, “How to Solve India’s Sex-Selection Problem.” *The New York Times*, July 28, 2017. [CR]

10/9 (Tuesday) – Short paper due at noon

10/11 – Assisted Suicide I

- Peter Singer, “Voluntary Euthanasia: A Utilitarian Perspective,” *Bioethics*, Vol. 17, No. 5–6 (2003), pp. 526–541. [CR]
- Ronald Dworkin, Thomas Nagel, Robert Nozick, John Rawls, T.M. Scanlon, Judith Jarvis Thomson, “Assisted Suicide: The Philosophers’ Brief,” *New York Review of Books*, Vol. 44, No. 5 (1997). [CR]
- + *Background*: Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork* (again), 39–43. [CR]
- J. David Velleman, “A Right of Self-Termination?” *Ethics*, Vol. 109, No. 3 (1999), pp. 606–628. [CR]

10/18 – Assisted Suicide II Case study group 2; midterm review questions

- F. M. Kamm, “Physician-Assisted Suicide, the Doctrine of Double Effect, and the Ground of Value,” *Ethics*, Vol. 109, No. 3 (1999), only sections V and VI required, pp. 595–601. [CR]
- Philippa Foot, “Euthanasia,” *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (1977), pp. 85–112. [CR]
- *Case Study*: Timothy Quill, “Death and Dignity: A Case of Individualized Decision Making.” [EIMM, pp. 437–440]

10/25 – Midterm exam

11/1 – Incompetent Patients Case study group 3

- Allen Buchanan and Dan Brock, “Deciding for Others: Competency.” [EIMM, pp. 332–342]
- Rebecca Dresser and John Robertson, “Quality of Life and Non-Treatment Decisions for Incompetent Patients.” [EIMM, pp. 398–409]
- *Case Study*: Jay Wolfson, “Erring on the side of Theresa Schiavo” [EIMM, pp. 369–373]

11/8 – Human Test Subjects Case study group 4

- *Background*: The National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, “The Belmont Report.” [EIMM, pp. 734–740]
- Samuel Hellman and Deborah Hellman, “Of Mice But Not Men: Problems of the Randomized Clinical Trial” [EIMM, pp. 744–749]
- Benjamin Freedman, “A Response to a Purported Ethical Difficulty with Randomized Clinical Trials Involving Cancer Patients.” [EIMM, pp. 749–752]
- *Case Study*: James Jones, “Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment” [EIMM, pp. 721–733]

11/15 – Race and Medicine

Case study group 5

- Michael Root, “The use of race as proxy in medicine for genetic differences.” *Philosophy of Science*, Vol. 70, No. 5 (2003), pp. 1173–1183. [CR]
- Moises Velasquez-Manoff, “What doctors should ignore,” *The New York Times* (2017) [CR]
- *Case Study*: Pamela Sankar and Jonathan Kahn, “BiDil: Race Medicine Or Race Marketing?” *Health Affairs*, Vol. 24, (2005), pp. W5-455–463. [CR]
- *Case Study, continued*: Gary Puckrein, “BiDil: From Another Vantage Point” *Health Affairs*, Vol. 24, (2005), pp. W368–W374. [CR]

11/20 (Tuesday) – Long paper proposals due at noon

11/22 – Thanksgiving break [no class]

11/29 – Opportunity and Allocation

Case study group 6

- Norman Daniels, “Equal Opportunity and Healthcare.” [EIMM, pp. 182–185]
- Robert Sade, “Foundational Ethics of the Health Care System.” [EIMM, pp. 193–209]
- Andrew Jameton, “Medicine’s Role in Mitigating the Effects of Climate Change,” *American Medical Association Journal of Ethics* Vol. 11, No. 6 (2009), pp. 465–469. [CR]
- Kristina Marusic, “Pittsburgh scores all F’s on the American Lung Association’s air quality report card,” *Environmental Health News*, Apr 19, 2018. [CR]
- Reid Frazier, “Allegheny County fines US Steel \$1M for Clairton Coke Works air pollution,” *State Impact Pennsylvania*, June 29, 2018. [CR]
- *Case Study*: David Amsden, “The Young Invincibles” [EIMM, pp. 167–173]

12/6 – Genetic Modification

Case study group 7; final review questions

- Julian Savulescu, “Genetic Interventions and the Ethics of Enhancement of Human Beings,” [EIMM, pp. 818–828]
- Ron Amundson and Shari Tresky, “Bioethics and Disability Rights: Conflicting Values and Perspectives.” *Bioethical Inquiry*, Vol. 5, (2008), pp. 111–123. [CR]
- *Case Study*: Erika Check Hayden, “Should you edit your children’s genes?” *Nature* Vol. 530, No. 7591 (2016), 402–405. [CR, Alternative Title: “Tomorrow’s Children.”]

12/10 (Monday) – Long paper due at noon

12/11 (Tuesday) – Final exam at 7:30pm