

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY
New Brunswick, NJ

Topics in Medical Ethics
10:652:301

Spring 2020

- Instructor:** Dr. Francis Barchi
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- Office hours:** By appointment only
Course Schedule: TBD
Location: Academic Building, Rm. AB1150
Course Credits: Three (3)
- Rutgers Canvas:** Access: <https://tlt.rutgers.edu/canvas>. Log in using Rutgers NetID and password.
[Students who are new to Canvas may wish to refer to the on-line tutorial found at <https://tlt.rutgers.edu/getting-started-canvas-students>]
- Pre-Requisite:** 10:652:201 Introduction to Medical Ethics & Policy

I. Course Overview

It is a truism that contemporary society is undergoing transformation driven by what can seem to be vertiginous changes not only in technology and in the dominant economic models, but in the culture that responds to both. What is less discussed, but no less clear is that these developments present profound challenges for our ability to think critically about fundamental issues involving our changing human enterprises and the ethical choices they lead us to confront. Specifically, the changes in the scientific enterprise can appear to be so rapid that they are bound to outrun our ability to think critically about what is right and what is wrong, and more generally, what outcomes we should value as individuals and as members of a society.

This course provides an opportunity for students with a basic understanding of biomedical and biobehavioral ethics and their role in shaping health policy to explore four key emerging issues – ‘hot topics’- in these fields:

- The quest for health and perfection: Gene editing, gene drives, and the age of personalized medicine
- Moral dimensions of climate change
- ‘What’ or ‘Who’ and ‘Why’ does it matter? Robots, robotics, and the era of artificial intelligence
- ‘None of your business?’: Privacy and the public good in an era of big data

Each of these topics will be explored in a ‘deep dive’ during the semester, drawing on scholarly academic work, mainstream coverage of related current events, reports, records of public hearings, and popular videos. As part of this course, students will prepare an in-depth case analysis for each topic and participate in assigned in-class debates.

II. Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Draw upon philosophical traditions, contemporary writings in bioethics, and coverage of current debates to inform one's understanding of these topics.
2. Illustrate how different values and belief systems may influence attitudes towards these topics.
3. Identify ethical issues that need to be considered as scientific advances in each of these topical areas moves forward.
4. Apply ethical principles and regulatory requirements to case examples situated in clinical and research settings.
5. Apply critical reasoning skills to assess stakeholder interests, risks and benefits, and choose and defend a course of action.
6. Recognize ethical dilemmas and address them using enhanced communication skills and a commitment to ethical health practice and research.

III. Course Structure

This course will meet once each week for three hours. The course will use a combination of lectures, discussions, and analyses of cases studies.

IV. Primary course texts:

Callahan, D. (2016). *The five horsemen of the modern world: Climate, food, water, disease, and obesity*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Doudna, J., & Sternberg, S. H. (2017). *A Crack in creation: Gene editing and the unthinkable power to control evolution*. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin.

Moore, K. D. & Nelson, M. P. (Eds.) (2010). *Moral ground: Ethical action for a planet in peril*. San Antonio: Trinity University Press.

Nilsson, N. (2009). *The quest for artificial intelligence* [E-book]. Cambridge University Press.

Tanner, A. (2017). *Our bodies, our data: How companies make billions selling our medical records*. Boston: Beacon Press.

V. Selected articles:

Balch, O. How much medical information would you share in the name of big data? *The Guardian* [23 October 2015]

Callaway, E. (2014). The power of three. *Nature*, 509, 414-417.

ESHRE Task Force on Ethics and Law (2001) I. The moral status of the pre-implantation embryo. *Human Reproduction*, 16:5, 1046-1048.

Mello, M. M., & Wolf, L. E. (2010). The Havasupai Indian tribe case – Lessons for research involving stored biologic samples. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 363(3), 204-207.

Gilbert, S. F., Tyler, A. L., & Zackin, E. J. (2005). Bioethics and the new embryology: springboards for debate. Gordonsville, VA: WH Freeman & Co. [Selected chapters]

Greely, H. T. (2007). The uneasy ethical and legal underpinnings of large-scale genomic biobanks. *Annual Review of Genomics and Human Genetics*, 8, 343-364.

Caulfield, T., McGuire, A. L., Cho, M., Buchanan, J. A., Burgess, M.... Timmons, M. (2008). Research ethics recommendations for whole-genome research: Consensus statement. *PLoS Biology*, 6:3, e73

Hayden, E. C. (2016). Tomorrow's children: What would genome editing really mean for future generations? *Nature*, 530, 402 – 405

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2017). *Human genome editing: Science, ethics, and governance*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

Roberts, M. (2016). First three-parent baby born using new method. BBC News Online [27 September 2016]

Scheufele, D. A., et al. (2017). U.S. attitudes on human genome editing. *Science* 357:553–554.

Tanner, A. (2017). *Strengthening protection of patient medical data*. The Century Foundation.

Thielman, S. Your private medical data is for sale – and it's driving a business worth billions. *The Guardian* [10 January 2017]

UNESCO (2003). International Declaration on Human Genetic Data, 1-16
http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=17720&URL_DO=DO_PRINTPAGE&URL_SECTION=201.html

Videos: [available through Rutgers Library, Kanopy]

A.I. Artificial Intelligence (2001). Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=19pRsZRiz4>

I, Robot (2004). Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rL6RRIOZyCM>

Eva (2011). [Spanish w/subtitles] Trailer: <https://www.imdb.com/videoplayer/vi4064587289>

Rampage (201) Trailer: <https://youtu.be/coOKvrsmQil>

VI. Journal articles and case analyses: Journal articles and case analyses that are assigned on the syllabus will be uploaded onto the Canvas site.

VII. Information regarding Assignments and Assessments

1. **Case analyses:** Case studies in ethical issues in biomedicine form the backbone of this course. All students will be asked to read and contribute actively to discussions about cases as part of each class. Students will be asked to prepare a written case analysis for each of the four key topic areas; each analysis should be 4-6 pages in length and include references to scholarly literature, historical texts, and mainstream media coverage of related current events. Completed papers are to be uploaded to Canvas in advance of the class session in which they will be discussed. Late posting of assignments will **only** be accepted with PRIOR approval from the instructor.

Grading Rubric:

Participation:	25%
Case analyses (4)	60%
In-class debates	15%

Assessment and Grading: A, B+, B, C+, C, D, and F

[NOTE: While students are encouraged to understand the strengths and weaknesses of their assessments and case analyses, grades are NOT negotiable. Make-up work or extra credit are not available options for improving one's grade, although the instructor is more than happy to work with students to improve their understanding of course concepts and their future performance.]

VII. Course Policies and Expectations

Attendance

Students are expected to attend all class sessions. Please make every effort to arrive on time as class will begin promptly. Arriving late to class is strongly discouraged. Repeat offenders will, at the discretion of the instructor, be marked as 'absent'. Unexcused absences WILL result in a reduction of your grade for class participation. Observance of religious holidays listed in the University calendar is recognized as an excused absence, but please let me know in advance if you will miss class for this reason.

- **Excused absences** include those unavoidable absences due to observance of religious holidays listed in the University Calendar, illness, family emergencies, or academic opportunities, cleared in advance with the instructor, that conflict with class attendance. Please report absences, preferably in advance, through the university's self-reporting absence system, accessed at <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/>. **Please note: Reporting your absence in advance does not "excuse" you, unless you have received permission from the instructor.**
- **Longer periods of absence.** If you anticipate missing more than one week of classes for serious illness, confidential, or sensitive personal reasons, you should also consult with a New Brunswick Dean of Students who will help to verify your extended absences from classes.
- **Absences due to illnesses.** If your absence is due to illness, visit University Health Services for information about campus health services, including information about: how to make an appointment, self-care advice for colds/flu, mental health and counseling options, and how to access the "After Hours Nurse Line" for medical advice. **In order for an absence due to illness to count as an excused absent, you will need to furnish the instructor with a note from the medical center or a health provider.**

In class-conduct:

Please note that due to the discussion format on which much of this course is based, students are expected to attend every class and to be on time. Attendance will be noted and students who are repeat offenders on attendance and/or timeliness will be marked down accordingly on their participation grade.

Computers and IPADs may be used for note-taking, but may not be used for purposes unrelated to this course. Phones may not be used at any time, nor may they be held in student hands, or placed on the table surfaces during class hours.

This course and its classroom are to be treated as safe environments in which students are free to hold and express a wide variety of opinions. All students are asked to be respectful of others' rights to their views and sensitive to their feelings. Ethics discourse is grounded in one's ability to draw on moral theories, principles, and regulatory frameworks, not solely on the strength of one's convictions; students should endeavor to support their views using the course materials provided as well as other references materials found in the scholarly literature.

Academic Integrity Policy

This course adheres to the university's Academic Integrity Policy and infractions are taken seriously. All students are required to review this policy, which has been posted to the Sakai site under 'Resources/Administration'.

Disability Accommodation

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodation, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with me and discuss the accommodations you need as early in the course as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>.

Course Evaluation

This course will be evaluated by online surveys as administered by the Rutgers Center for Teaching Advancement and Assessment Research (10:652:301).

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