

**CLASS: 249 BIOETHICS**

DAYS & TIMES: Mon/Wed 1:00 – 5:00

ROOM: Scott Hall 105

INSTRUCTOR: Jennifer Burgis

EMAIL: jennburgis@gmail.com

OFFICE HOURS: Tuesday 1:00 – 3:00 in the Barnes & Noble Starbucks

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The study of Bioethics, by the very nature of its subject, concepts, and issues, promotes open inquiry from a variety of perspectives. In the contemporary context, emerging biomedical technologies, policies, and practices raise some of the most pressing and significant philosophical challenges that we face as a society. In analyzing the legal, moral, and philosophical debates that shape current public discourse on a series of controversial topics, this course trains students to approach complex moral issues with analytical precision, moral concern, and reflective judgment. This involves carefully attending to a range of theoretical positions in dialogue with concrete situations and particular contexts.

We will begin this course by looking at some philosophical basics – arguments, fallacies, cultural relativism, and ethical theories. We will then move on to questions of how medical professionals should behave and what their relationship to their patients should look like. We will talk about various ethical dilemmas relating to specific medical issues and finish up with how medical resources should be allocated. While we may not determine what the right answer is, we will evaluate the arguments presented on both sides – are they *good* arguments, and do they prove what their authors say they do?

The readings must be done before coming to class and you need to ensure that you have adequate time to do your reading. Philosophy is not easy. Contrary to what you may have heard, it is not simply a forum for airing opinions. It is *not* the case that “there are no right or wrong answers.” We are going to critically analyze what we are reading. You will not be expected to agree with any particular author’s viewpoint (or mine), but you will be expected to give thoughtful and reasoned responses to those viewpoints. Make sure that you are prepared to do this when you come to class.

**REQUIRED TEXT**

*Bioethics: Principles, Issues, and Cases*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition by Lewis Vaughn  
A few readings will be found on Sakai.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

### **QUIZZES 33%**

Every class day (excepting the first day and exam days), there will be two quizzes. Each will consist of one question. The first quiz will take place at the beginning of class and cover the reading for that day. The second quiz will take place at the end of class and cover the lecture. This will be a total of 16 quizzes of which four will be dropped. The questions will be easy as long as you do the reading and pay attention in class.

### **FIRST EXAM 33%**

This exam will cover everything up to and including the class meeting of June 12<sup>th</sup>. It will contain a combination of multiple choice questions, short-answer questions (one to three sentences), and long-answer questions (five or fewer sentences).

### **SECOND EXAM 33%**

This exam will cover all class material following the first exam, up to and including the class meeting of July 3<sup>rd</sup>. The format will be the same as the first exam.

## **OTHER POINTS**

### **ATTENDANCE/TARDINESS**

Considering that there will be in-class quizzes, it is in your best interest to attend class. I will not monitor your attendance, but it will affect your grade. Please do not come to class late. I understand that there are sometimes circumstances outside of our control, but consistently coming to class late is an indication that you do not respect this class, your classmates, or me. You can decide whether it is wise to give me that impression.

### **CLASS PARTICIPATION**

Participating in class discussion is not required; however, it is *highly* encouraged. You will gain more from the class and it will be more enjoyable for you to engage with each other than to listen to me lecture for four hours. If you do not want me to call on you, please tell me. I know that talking in class makes some people uncomfortable and that is not the experience I want anyone to have.

### **CELL PHONES/LAPTOPS**

I am not going to make the futile attempt to institute a device-free classroom policy. Please ensure that all sounds are off on phones and laptops. It is inevitable that students will check their phones once or twice during class. If you do, attempts to be surreptitious about it are actually more time-consuming and distracting than just picking up your phone, looking at it, and putting it back down. You are not a phone ninja – I will see you regardless. However, if you are spending an extended amount of time on your phone, I will ask you to put it away.

If you are taking notes on your laptop, I obviously cannot see what else you are doing. However, keep two things in mind. First, watching videos, baseball games, etc. is distracting to people around you – even those who are attempting to focus on the class. Please be respectful of others. Second, you may not be as capable of multitasking as you think you are, but this is up to you to decide.

**IF YOU ARE HAVING TROUBLE:**

You are encouraged to email me or come to office hours with any questions you may have about the material. The best time to do so is as close to the class discussion as possible while the material/lecture is still fresh in your mind. The longer you wait to ask the questions, the more difficult it will be to fully understand the answers. Waiting to ask until you are studying for the exams means you have waited too long. I will be happy to set up a meeting time with you if you prefer that to email and cannot come to office hours. Please do not wait until the night before the exam to attempt to learn all of the material. You will not be successful.

**CLASS SCHEDULE**

**I. MORAL REASONING IN BIOETHICS  
BIOETHICS AND MORAL THEORIES**

WED 5-30    Chapter One – Moral Reasoning in Bioethics  
Pages 3 – 30  
The Challenge of Cultural Relativism - Sakai

Chapter Two – Bioethics and Moral Theories  
Pages 34 – 52  
(Skip the following sections on pp. 44-47: The Ethics of Care, Feminist Ethics, and Casuistry.)

**II. MEDICAL PROFESSIONAL AND PATIENT**

MON 6-5    Chapter Three – Paternalism and Patient Autonomy  
Pages 81 – 93  
Pages 104 – 122

Chapter Four – Truth Telling and Confidentiality  
Pages 144 – 161  
Pages 165 – 177

WED 6-7    Chapter Five – Informed Consent  
Pages 196 – 207  
Pages 213 – 234

MON 6-12    Chapter Six – Human Research  
Pages 239 – 260  
Pages 272 – 284  
Pages 297 – 305

**WED 6-14    FIRST EXAM**

**III.    LIFE AND DEATH**

MON 6-19    Chapter Seven – Abortion  
Pages 307 – 348  
Pages 445 – 473

WED 6-21    Chapter Eight – Reproductive Technology  
Pages 409 – 427  
Pages 520 – 530

MON 6-26    Chapter Nine – Genetic Choices  
Pages 539 – 569  
Pages 585 – 603  
Pages 620 – 624

WED 6-28    Chapter Ten – Euthanasia and Physician-Assisted Suicide  
Pages 625 – 640  
Pages 646 – 662  
Pages 678 – 681  
Sanctity of Life or Quality of Life? – Sakai

**IV.    JUSTICE AND HEALTH CARE**

MON 7-3    Chapter Eleven – Dividing Up Health Care Resources  
Pages 719 – 742  
Pages 749 – 757  
Pages 765 – 781  
Why We Must Ration Health Care – Sakai

**WED 7-5    SECOND EXAM**