

## **PHI 249 BIOETHICS**

DATES: December 21 – January 18

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Jennifer Burgis

EMAIL: jennburgis@gmail.com

### **WHY SHOULD I WANT TO TAKE BIOETHICS?**

This class deals with issues that you will encounter in your own life – either directly or indirectly. You or someone you know will have a serious illness, make a decision about abortion, vaccinate (or not) children, or use a drug tested on animals. You may encounter the issues of gene therapy or euthanasia. This class helps to put these issues in the context of ethical theories and demonstrates ways of reasoning about them that will help you make good decisions.

We'll start out by covering ethical theories and different perspectives, and then we'll go on to discuss a variety of issues involved in health care. Our last two topics will take us out of the textbook and into a critical examination of four widely anthologized articles on abortion and euthanasia.

### **WHAT BOOK DO I NEED?**

*Bioethics: The Basics*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition by Alastair V. Campbell

Other readings will be found on Sakai.

### **HOW DO I KNOW WHAT MY GRADE IS?**

This class will use a points-based scale. The number of points you can earn is 100 – meaning that your total is your grade. Letter grades will be assigned according to the standard Rutgers scale.

### **WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO?**

#### **READINGS**

Doing the readings is essential for success in this class. The question sets will come directly from the readings and your forum posts will be based on them. Notes that accompany the readings will be posted on Sakai. These are not full outlines but they do explain the more difficult concepts or arguments. They merely supplement the readings – they cannot replace them.

## QUESTION SETS/RESPONSES – 35/100 POINTS

There will be seven question sets. Each will contain six questions and you are to answer five of them. If you answer all six, I will grade the first five. Due dates are listed on the schedule. I don't care how late you turn them in – I just want them to be there when I get up the next day. You are free to turn them in early as well. Each set is worth 5 points. One point will be taken off for each day they are late.

I will reply to one of your answers with possible objections to your positions or other points you could consider. Then you write a response. This is necessary to receive the full credit. It also gives us the opportunity to directly interact one on one, which I am looking forward to!

## FORUMS – 40/100 POINTS

The biggest complaint from students about taking philosophy online is that there is not enough interaction with each other. A huge element of philosophy is the exchange of ideas, and I can virtually guarantee that this is the part of the class you will enjoy the most if you take it seriously. I will set up the forum threads and you will need to engage in discussions on all eight threads. Ask questions, state your own views, respond to questions – treat this just like you would a regular classroom discussion. I will also be participating in the forums.

It is difficult to set up a precise rubric for grading forum participation. You should each write your own post and engage meaningfully with three others. This doesn't have to be a lengthy conversation, but it does have to be more than: "Bob, that's a great point and I agree!" I will be grading them the day after the due date, so as with the question sets, the time does not matter. Each forum topic is worth 5 points.

## FINAL EXAM/FINAL PAPER – 25/100 POINTS

There will be an in-person final exam held on Friday, January 18<sup>th</sup> (time to be announced). It will be a combination of factual multiple choice and short-answer questions, as well as long-answer questions regarding your views on particular topics. That last group of questions will not be graded on the answers you give – they will be graded on how well you are able to support your position.

Alternatively, you can choose to write a 4-6 page final paper about one of the topics we have studied and discuss the finished product with me over Skype. If you need help structuring your paper, let me know the topic you have chosen *before Monday the 14<sup>th</sup>* and I will give you some ideas. It will be due at 5:00 p.m. on January 18<sup>th</sup> and Skype sessions will take place the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>. I know those dates are technically after the end of the term, but I want to give you the latest possible due dates. If you want to Skype before then, I will be traveling back from Michigan the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>, but we can work something out.

## CLASS SCHEDULE

READINGS & ASSIGNMENTS	DUE DATES
<u>Introduction</u> Campbell Chapter 1 Forum #1	Sat 12-22
<u>Moral Theories</u> Campbell Chapter 2 Ch. 2 question set Forum #2 Question response	Sun 12-23 Mon 12-24 Tues 12-25
<u>Perspectives</u> Campbell Chapter 3 Ch. 3 question set Forum #3 Question response	Wed 12-26 Thu 12-27 Fri 12-28
<u>Clinical Ethics</u> Campbell Chapter 4 Ch. 4 question set Forum #4 Question response	Sun 12-30 Mon 12-31 Tue 1-1
<u>Research</u> Campbell Chapter 5 Ch. 5 question set Forum #5 Question response	Wed 1-2 Thu 1-3 Fri 1-4
<u>Justice</u> Campbell Chapter 6 Ch. 6 question set Forum #6 Question response	Sun 1-6 Mon 1-7 Tue 1-8
<u>Abortion</u> Thomson (Sakai) Marquis (Sakai) Abortion question set Forum #7 Question response	Wed 1-9 Thu 1-10 Fri 1-11

Euthanasia

Rachels (Sakai)

Gay-Williams (Sakai)

Euthanasia question set                      Mon 1-14

Forum #8    Tue 1-15

Question response                                Wed 1-16

FINAL EXAM/FINAL PAPER DUE ON FRIDAY, JANUARY 18<sup>TH</sup>.