

PHIL 3220 Biomedical Ethics (Spring 2009)

2:00pm–3:15pm T/TH Baldwin Hall Room 307

Instructor: Dr. Melissa Seymour

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Office Hours: 3:30pm-4:30pm Tuesdays & Thursdays

Course Description:

Biomedical ethics is a broad term given to the collection of ethical issues and problems that have emerged from professional practice in the fields of medicine, biomedical research, and public health. In this course, we will consider how fairly recent advances in medicine and biotechnology invite new reflection on some very old human practices: reproduction, personal enhancement, and dying.

We will begin the course by considering a range of procreative decisions that confront potential parents: *when* to reproduce, *how* to reproduce, *whether or not* to reproduce, and even, *what kind of child to create*. The options presented to us by biotechnology provoke a number of moral questions. What is the moral status of the fetus prior to birth? Are we morally obligated to reproduce the best children possible? Should we use genetic screening to eliminate certain diseases or abnormalities? In the remainder of the course we'll examine the ethics of using performance enhancing drugs in competitive sports, as well as issues concerning the patient-physician relationship including the right to refuse treatment and physician-assisted suicide.

Course Objectives:

1. To introduce students to several complex issues in biomedical ethics and to foster understanding of the different positions authors have taken in response to these issues.
2. To develop students' ability to critically evaluate such positions.
3. To develop students' ability to come to a reasoned position in response to ethical questions and to defend this position both orally and in writing.

Required Texts:

Contemporary Issues in Bioethics 7th eds. Tom L. Beachamp, Le Roy Walters, Jeffrey P. Kahn, & Anna C. Mastroianni (Wadsworth, 2008).

Additional reading material is available on the library's course reserve system. You can access the course reserve system from the University of Georgia Libraries' home page:

<http://www.libs.uga.edu/>. You must enter a password to access electronic copies of the readings. The password for this course is *ethics*. Note that articles are listed alphabetically by *title*, not author.

Course Requirements:

1. Reading Assignments

It is vital to keep pace with the reading assignments. Meaningful participation in classroom discussion depends upon careful and thoughtful reading. Students should aim to read *carefully*, *charitably*, and *critically*. **Students are required to bring reading assignments to class everyday** and are highly encouraged to take notes while reading.

2. Attendance

Attendance is mandatory. You may accumulate 3 unexcused absences without penalty. For every unexcused absence in excess of 3, your final grade will be lowered by 2 percentage points.

An absence is considered excused if and only if a.) the absence results from illness, family emergency, or participation in a university sponsored event and b.) the nature of the absence is confirmed by written documentation from a health care professional or appropriate university employee. It is the responsibility of the student to provide appropriate documentation in a timely manner.

3. Homework & Classroom Participation

This is not a traditional lecture course. Each class meeting will combine lecture and discussion. **All students are expected to participate in classroom discussion.** To this end, students should come to class prepared to discuss the reading assignment. Homework assignments may be given to facilitate student preparation for classroom discussion. To earn full credit for the participation component of the course students should aim to make weekly contributions to classroom discussion.

Students will also be required to complete in-class assignments. These assignments will involve engaging peers in conversation as well as written work. In-class assignments can be made up only in cases of a legitimate and documented absence. It is the student's responsibility to provide appropriate documentation and complete the missed assignment in a timely manner.

4. Quizzes

Quizzes may be given periodically to ensure that students are keeping up with the reading assignments. Quizzes may or may not be announced in advance. Make up quizzes will be given only in cases of a legitimate and documented absence. It is the student's

responsibility to provide appropriate documentation and schedule a make up quiz within one week of the excused absence.

5. Papers

Students will be required to write THREE papers (3-5 pages, double-spaced). All students are required to complete the first paper assignment, but may chose two of the three remaining assignments. In each paper, students will be expected to critically engage with the readings on a particular subject. These papers will not require any research beyond the assigned reading for the course. Paper topics will be distributed in advance, however students may write on a topic of their choice – provided that the topic has been approved by the instructor. More detailed instructions will be distributed with the first paper assignment.

Please note the following dates:

Paper #1 (Abortion): Assigned February 5th, Due February 19th

Paper #2 (Reproduction): Assigned March 3rd, Due March 23rd (@11:00am)

Paper #3 (Enhancement): Assigned April 2nd, Due April 16th

Paper #4 (Patient-Physician Relationship): Assigned April 21st, Due May 5th

Late papers will be penalized 5 percentage points for every day late.

Evaluation:

Your final grade will be calculated according to the following distribution:

Class Participation & Homework.....	20%
Quizzes.....	5%
Papers.....	75% (25% each)

And the following grade scale:

100% - 94% = A	79% - 77% = C+
93% - 90% = A-	76% - 74% = C
89% - 87% = B+	73% - 70% = C-
86% - 84% = B	69% - 60% = D
83% - 80% = B-	59% - 0% = F

Academic Dishonesty:

All work you submit for this course should be exclusively yours. While you are encouraged to discuss course material with classmates, collaborative work on papers, homework, and quizzes is unacceptable. Your work should convey your own ideas, expressed in your own words. Reference to the words and/or ideas of others must be clearly cited. All academic work must meet the standards contained in “A Culture of

Honesty.” All students are responsible to inform themselves about those standards before performing any academic work. Students should familiarize themselves with the University of Georgia’s Academic Honesty Policy located at <http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/honesty/acadhon.htm>. Failure to comply with these standards will result in a failing grade for the course and will be reported to the University.

Classroom Etiquette:

Cell Phones: Ringing cell phones are disruptive. Please turn off your cell phone before class.

Laptops: The only legitimate use of a laptop computer in class is note-taking. The instructor reserves the right to **prohibit all laptop use in the classroom** if laptops are being used for any other purpose.

Late Arrivals: Class begins at 2:00pm. If you arrive after 2:00, please try to minimize your disruption by choosing the nearest and most accessible seat. This may be different than your regular spot.

Reading Schedule (Subject to Change)

CR = Course Reserve

I. Bioethics and Ethical Theory

- Tues. 01/13: Chapter One pp. 1-33
- Thurs. 01/15: In Class Case Study

II. Reproductive Decisions

Week 2: The Ethics of Abortion

- Tues. 01/20: Don Marquis, “Why Abortion Is Immoral,” 345-352
- Thurs. 01/22: Judith Jarvis Thomson, “A Defense of Abortion,” 353-354

Week 3: The Ethics of Abortion

- Tues. 01/27: Judith Jarvis Thomson, “A Defense of Abortion,” 353-362
- Thurs. 01/29: Margaret Olivia Little, “Abortion, Intimacy, and the Duty to Gestate” (*CR*)

Week 4: The Ethics of Abortion

- 02/03: Margaret Olivia Little, “Abortion, Intimacy, and the Duty to Gestate” (*CR*)
- 02/05: George W. Harris, “Fathers and Fetuses” (*CR*)

Week 5: Procreative Liberty and Assisted Reproduction

- 02/10: John A. Robertson, “The Presumptive Primacy of Procreative Liberty,” 309-315
- 02/12: Gregory Pence, “Assisted Reproduction: Louise Brown and Beyond” (*CR*)

Week 6: Procreative Responsibility: Genetic Diseases and Abnormalities

- 02/17: “Reprogenetics,” 303-304
Laura M. Purdy, “Genetics and Reproductive Risk: Can Having Children Be Immoral?” (CR)
- 02/19: Buchanan, et al, “Genetic Intervention and the Morality of Inclusion,” 337-345.

Week 7: Nondirective Genetic Counseling and a Child’s Right to an Open Future

- 02/24: Joel Feinberg, “A Child’s Right to an Open Future” (CR)
Wisconsin v. Yoder (CR)
- 02/26: Dena S. Davis, “Genetic Dilemmas and the Child’s Right to an Open Future” (CR)
Edward Dolnick, “Deafness as Culture” (CR)

Week 8: Selecting for Deafness

- 03/03: Dena S. Davis, “Genetic Dilemmas and the Child’s Right to an Open Future” (CR)
- 03/05: Julian, Savulescu, “Deaf Lesbians, “Designer Disability, and the Future of Medicine” (CR)

March 9 – March 13: SPRING BREAK

III. Better than Well – Eugenics & Enhancement

Week 9: A New Eugenics

- 03/17: Gattaca Screening
- 03/19: Julian Savulescu, “Procreative Beneficence: Why We Should Select the Best Children” (CR)

Week 10: Enhancement in Sports

- 03/24: The President’s Council on Bioethics, “Superior Performance” pp. 101-139 (CR)
- 03/26: Vernon Howard, “Fair Play: Ethical Issues of Doping in Sport” (CR)

Week 11: Enhancement in Sports (continued)

- 03/31: Savulescu et al., “Why We Should Allow Performance Enhancing Drugs in Sport” (CR)
- 04/02: Immanuel Kant, “One’s Own Perfection is...a Duty” (CR)
“Superior Performance” pp. 140-151 (CR)

IV. The Physician-Patient Relationship

Week 12: The Right to Refuse Treatment

- 04/07: Dax's Case (video)
- 04/09: Ezekiel & Linda Emmanuel, "Four Models of the Physician-Patient Relationship" (CR)
Denis Arnold & Paul Menzel, "When Comes the End of the Day?" (CR)

Week 13: Killing and Letting Die

- 04/14: Philippa Foot, "Killing vs. Letting Die" (CR)
- 04/16: Dan Brock, "Voluntary Active Euthanasia," 437-445

Week 14: Physician-Assisted Suicide

- 04/21: Leon R. Kass, "Is There a Right to Die?" (CR)
The Oregon Death with Dignity Act, 404-6
- 04/23: TBA

04/28: Last Day of Class

The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

Class Contact

Name: _____ Email: _____