

BIOL5813 Biomedical Ethics

Fall 2024 | Mondays 6:00 – 8:50pm, Bolin 209

Instructor Information

Instructor: Elizabeth Machunis-Masuoka, PhD, MA

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Office Location: Pierce Hall 213

Office Hours: M 1:00 – 3:00pm; T 12:00 – 2:00pm; W 8:00 – 10:00am

Course Overview

The purpose of this course is to provide students with knowledge that is essential to answering complex moral questions affecting both every day and research-based decision-making processes. It is imperative for students to maintain the highest ethical principles while students and then as members of the broader community. No course on ethics can address all issues; rather, the intent is to provide you with a basis upon which to at least begin to frame answers to problems you may encounter in the future.

Required Materials

There is no required text for this course. However, the following book is highly recommended: Tom L. Beauchamp and James F. Childress, *Principles of Biomedical Ethics*, 7th edition, Oxford University Press, 2013.

You will need a copy of *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, by H.G. Wells. You need to **READ** it. Any version is fine. If you absolutely do not want to buy a book, then you can find a free version of the book at Project Gutenberg (<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/159/159-h/195-h.htm>).

You will also need access to D2L. You do not need to print the papers uploaded to D2L, but you must at least read them, make notes about them, and think about them.

Supplemental Websites

1. The Bioethics Research Library at Georgetown University (Kennedy Institute of Ethics): <https://bioethicsarchive.georgetown.edu>
2. The Hastings Center: <http://www.thehastingscenter.org/>
3. The Department of Bioethics at the National Institutes of Health: <http://www.bioethics.nih.gov/home/index.shtml>
4. The Berman Institute of Bioethics at Johns Hopkins: <http://www.bioethicsinstitute.org/>
5. There are other programs and archives associated with bioethics that are freely accessible on the web, many of which are associated with specific religious traditions. In this class we will, of necessity, focus on Western ethics, but we will not bias our discussions for or against any specific religious tradition.

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory. This class only meets once per week and you are expected to be here and to stay for the entire class period. If you miss class, you must provide an explanation for your absence and it must have been for an exceptionally good reason.

Participation

You are expected to have read all assigned materials prior to class and to come ready to discuss them. You may not simply sit on the side and listen; all must participate because all of you have different backgrounds and thus different senses as to how hard questions should or could be answered. **Everyone's opinion/position is welcome in this class.** You may be asked to provide evidence to support your position, but **no one** should be afraid to state their position. We will discuss all possibilities that arise as they arise. You will not be marked down because your position is different from mine, so **do not** attempt to figure out what I think and give me only my opinion back at me. I want to know what **you** think.

Policy on Late Work

Graduate students are expected to perform at a level higher than that of undergraduates. Thus, no late work of any kind will be accepted for any reason. This is a non-negotiable policy. Failure to prepare your work by the given deadline and/or failure to give a good faith effort will result in a zero for the assignment.

Problems with the Mechanics of Writing

You will be asked to write several papers in this course. If you require help with the basic mechanics of writing, you will need to work with the Writing Center. I will help you some (mainly by pointing out that your grammar is poor), but I will not typically edit student work at the sentence level. You may work with other students in the class on issues of grammar, etc., or with anyone else willing to work with you (please do not bug other faculty members), but ultimately you should have learned basic writing skills long before now. Final copies of assignments that are turned in with basic writing problems will be graded harshly and will result in poor grades in the class.

General Formatting Requirements

All assignments must be typed using the following formatting: 12pt Times New Roman font, double-spaced, 1-inch margins all the way around, page numbers on all pages. All assignments are to include a suitably descriptive title, your name, the date, and the assignment title/category. **Your thesis statement (the argument that you are going to attempt to convince me of in your writing) should always be made bold-faced and underlined so that I can find it.**

Plagiarism

All forms of plagiarism are to be consciously and methodically avoided at all costs (this is, after all, a class on ETHICS). **Plagiarism is NEVER acceptable and there is no such thing as 'accidental' plagiarism.** Any assignment submitted in this class that is found to contain any form of plagiarism, no matter how minor an infraction, will receive a zero for a grade and you will receive no participation credit for that assignment. A second infraction will earn you an "F" in the course.

Course Grades

Case Studies (multiple; of my choosing)	30%
Class Presentation of your Major Paper	10%
Formal Term Paper	50%
Attendance	5%
Participation	5%

Overall grades will be determined using straight percentages: A = 90-100%; B = 80-89%; C = 70-79%; D = 60-69%; F is anything below 60. Attendance and participation are demerit modifiers (you lose points when you miss class and/or fail to participate). Most of your grade will be assessed using written responses to case studies.

How to Present a Case Study

Over the course of the semester, you will be asked to analyze several case studies. A sample of how to analyze a case study has been provided to you (“Artificial Nutrition and Hydration”). Below are the general parts that must be included for each case study presented in this class.

1. Summarize the case: provide a short summary of the case that is NOT simply you re-typing the case as it is actually given to you.
2. Define and identify the ethical dilemma: what is the core issue?
3. Clarify the case:
 - a. Who are the stakeholders (all sides) and is the core ethical dilemma the same or different for each stakeholder?
 - b. What are the medical issues in general (diagnosis, prognosis, treatment options – these are the three big questions that will need to be answered)?
 - c. What are the patient and family preferences? If these are not indicated (advanced directive, for example), then state this.
 - d. Quality of life: is there any indication of how the patient feels about their quality of life or other indications as to what this is?
 - e. Note: In some cases, you will not know a lot of this (i.e., fetus), so you will need to tailor your case study to the case at hand.
4. Context: social context, family dynamics, cultural context, religious background, financial situation, etc. – anything that could influence the resolution of the case.
5. Analyze and balance the values involved using the 4 principles of bioethics as presented by Beauchamp and Childress. Which of the 4 are the most important? Do they conflict? Do the important principles differ based on stakeholder? What should be the priorities? What choices are there to resolving the case?
6. Make a recommendation:
 - a. You must clearly state what you would do if you had to decide; what you would recommend if you had to make a recommendation.
 - b. Link your choices to each stakeholder.
 - c. If a decision was already rendered for this case, analyze it – do you agree or disagree? Should the resolution have included ideas that it did not?
 - d. This is an important element in your case study so don't be vague – you do not need a medical degree to know what you think is right or wrong in these cases, but you do need to be able to explain to me why you think something is right or wrong. Remember, this is not about you, this is about doing what is best for the patient.
7. Draw final conclusions
 - a. Is there meaning for similar cases or is your recommendation really only applicable here?
 - b. How good a solution was reached (either by you or in reality)? Is there any hope of improving such decisions?
 - c. Should the law be changed to reflect your recommendations?
 - d. Draw any other conclusions you can.

There is no set length requirement for your analyses so long as you address all the points above and bolster your work with outside references (i.e., do not simply give me an opinion paper, but begin to use the papers I have given you, other resources, etc. to formulate your responses).

Formal Term Paper

The formal term paper is essentially a large case study of your choosing. You will pick a topic, research it, write about, and present it to the class. Your topic will need to be somewhat specific. For example, do not just pick “abortion”; rather, choose something specific, such as “the permissibility of abortion in cases of severe fetal anomaly”. A topic that is too broad will be overwhelming. The following are the requirements for the paper:

1. You must pick your topic and get it approved by me no later than Monday, September 30, 2024.
2. Your paper must contain between 5000 and 6000 words (roughly 25 pages) excluding footnotes and references.
3. Your paper must contain a minimum of 15 references from the literature. These 15 references may NOT include textbooks, online ebooks, or newspapers. These sources may be used, but they are to be in addition to the 15 references from the literature. A book may be included in the 15 references only if it is book that is dedicated solely to your topic directly. References may be MLA, APA, or AMA. Just be consistent. All references must be cited in the text where they are used.
4. Formatting: 12-point Times New Roman, double spaced, 1-inch margins, page numbers. You should roughly have the same parts to the formal term paper as you have for your small case studies.
5. Grading of the final paper will be as follows:
 - a. Quality of your research: How complete is your examination of the relevant ethical/medical/legal sources? How well have you found information necessary to support your thesis?
 - b. Quality of your analysis: How well have you structured your argument to support your thesis? Is your evidence adequate to support your argument?
 - c. Quality of your writing: Is your thesis statement clear? Is your paper organized to support your thesis? Is your paper coherent/well written? Is it free of errors? Are the citations appropriate and correct? Is it clear you put in effort?
6. Due Dates:
 - a. Preferred Due Date: when you present your paper to the class.
 - b. Hard Due Date: Monday, December 9, 2024, by 5:00pm.

Presentation of Term Paper

You will present your research to the class. Each student will have a maximum of 30 minutes total. This total time includes both your talk and answering questions, so you cannot take all 30 minutes to talk. Plan for a 20 minute talk to allow for 10 minutes of questions. You need to present your topic, your thesis statement, your argument and evidence, and give a clear indication of why your topic matters to everyone in the room. You are not REQUIRED to do a PowerPoint, but if you do not do a PowerPoint, then you will need to prepare a single sheet handout for the class with an outline of your topic, thesis, argument, evidence.

Schedule

Date	Topic	Readings (see appropriate folder on D2L)
Aug 26	Course Introduction	How to Write a Case Study: Coyle N, Todaro-Franceschi V. (2012) "Chapter 6: Artificial Nutrition and Hydration." <i>Hospice Foundation of America</i> 85-97. (in Folder 1, Introduction to Bioethics; 1 How to Write a Case Study) Opening Discussion: Do you have the right to health care?
Sept 2	HOLIDAY – NO CLASS	
Sept 9	Introduction to Bioethics	Beauchamp TL. "Ethical Theory and Bioethics" from Beauchamp and Walters, <i>Contemporary Issues In Bioethics</i> , 6 th Edition (New York: Wadsworth, 2003). Farmer P. (1999) "Pathologies of Power: Rethinking Health and Human Rights." <i>American Journal of Public Health</i> 89(10): 1486-1496. Farmer P. (1997) "Listening for Prophetic Voices in Medicine." <i>America</i> 177(1): 8-13.
ETHICS AT THE BEGINNING OF LIFE		
Sept 16	Personhood	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Gaddie G. (2018) "The Personhood Movement's Effect on Assisted Reproductive Technology: Balancing Interests Under a Presumption of Embryonic Personhood." <i>Texas Law Review</i> 96: 1293-1326. Samar VJ. (2017) "Personhood Under the Fourteenth Amendment." <i>Marquette Law Review</i> 101(2): 287-331. Supreme Court of Alabama decision on Rights of Embryos Letterie G. and Fox D. (2023) "Legal personhood and frozen embryos: implications for fertility patients and providers in post-Roe America." <i>Journal of Law and the Biosciences</i>. DOI.org/10.1093/jlb/Isad006.
Sept 23	Genetic Technologies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Laabs CA (2020) "Prenatal Genetic Screening and Potential Complicity in Abortion: Considerations for Catholic Health Care." <i>The Linacre Quarterly</i> 87(2): 206 – 217. Wallis JM. (2020) "Is it ever morally permissible to select for deafness in one's child?" <i>Medicine, Health Care and Philosophy</i> 23: 3-15.
Sept 30	Abortion	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Cohen DS, Donley G, Rebouche R. (2023) "The New Abortion Battleground." <i>Columbia Law Review</i>. 123(1): 1 – 100. Giubilini A, Schuklenk U, Minerva F, Savulescu J. (2023) "Conscientious commitment, professional obligations and abortion provision after the reversal of <i>Roe v. Wade</i>." <i>Journal of Medical Ethics</i> 50: 351 – 358. Chervenak FA, Moreno JD, McLeod-Sordjan R., et al. (2024) "Addressing challenges related to the professional practice of abortion post-Roe." <i>American Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology</i>. DOI.org/10.1016/j.ajog.2023.10.026.
ETHICS IN THE MIDDLE OF LIFE		
Oct 7	Healthcare Inequalities – Refusal of Care	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Wilkinson D. (2017) "Conscientious Non-objection in Intensive Care." <i>Cambridge Quarterly of Healthcare Ethics</i>. 26: 132 – 142. Gamble NK, Pruski M. (2019) "Medical Acts and Conscientious Objection: What Can a Physician be Compelled to Do?" <i>The New Bioethics</i>. 25(3): 262 – 282. Nelson JL. (2012) "Still Quiet After All These Years." <i>Bioethical Inquiry</i>. 9: 249 – 259.
Oct 14	Rationing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Scheunemann LP, White DB. (2011) "The Ethics and Reality of Rationing in Medicine." <i>Chest</i>. 140(6): 1625 – 1632. Persad G, Wertheimer A, Emanuel EJ. (2009) "Principles for allocation of scarce medical interventions." <i>The Lancet</i>. 373: 423 – 431.
Oct 21	Stem Cell Research	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> King NMP, Perrin J. (2014) "Ethical issues in stem cell research and therapy." <i>Stem Cell Research & Therapy</i>. 5:85. Knoepffler N. (2004) "Stem Cell Research: An Ethical Evaluation of Policy Options." <i>Kennedy Institute of Ethics Journal</i>. 14(1): 55 – 74.
Oct 28	Human Trials	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Bambery B, Selgelid M, Weijer C, Savulescu J, Pollard AJ. (2016) "Ethical Criteria for Human Challenge Studies in Infectious Diseases." <i>Public Health Ethics</i> 9(1): 92 – 103. Miller JE, Mello MM, Wallach JD, et al. (2021) "Evaluation of Drug Trials in High-, Middle-, and Low-Income Countries and Local Commercial Availability of Newly Approved Drugs." <i>JAMA Network Open</i>. 4(5): e217075.

Date	Topic	Readings (see appropriate folder on D2L)
Nov 4	Vaccines	10. Eyal N. (2020) “Why Challenge Trials of SARS-CoV-2 Vaccines Could Be Ethical Despite Risk of Severe Adverse Events.” <i>Ethics & Human Research</i> . 42(4): 24 – 34. 11. Reiss DR, Diamond J. (2019) “Measles and Misrepresentation in Minnesota: Can There Be Liability for Anti-Vaccine Misinformation that Causes Bodily Harm?” <i>San Diego Law Review</i> 56: 531-580.
ETHICS AT THE END OF LIFE		
Nov 11	Right to Die	1. Dowbiggin, Ian (2013) “From Sander to Schiavo: Morality, Partisan Politics, and America’s Culture War over Euthanasia, 1950 – 2010” <i>The Journal of Policy History</i> 25(1): 12 – 41. 2. Gorsuch NM (2004) “The Right to Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia.” <i>Harvard Journal of Law & Public Policy</i> 23(3): 599 – 710.
BOOK DISCUSSION & PRESENTATIONS		
Nov 18	Book Discussion	Wells, HG. <i>The Island of Dr. Moreau</i> . (1896)
Nov 25	Student Presentations	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
Dec 2	Student Presentations	6. 7. 8. 9. 10.
Dec 9	Finals	All Outstanding Work is DUE by 5:00pm

Presentations: Each student gets a MAX of 30 minutes; 20 minutes for a presentation, 10 minutes for discussion (or, you can simply lead a discussion for 30 minutes).