

Version 2
Updated 1/13/22

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Phil 3520-002: Bioethics
Syllabus
Spring 2022 (3 credit hours)

Instructor: Christen Paradissis
Email: christen.paradissis@utah.edu
Course Type: Online, Synchronous Tuesday & Thursday 12:25-1:45

Updated Zoom Meeting Info:

Thursday Lecture Zoom Meeting Link

Meeting ID:

Passcode:

Office Hours: Zoom, By appointment.

Course Description

Bioethics is the study of the ethical issues that arise in the practice of medicine, the study of human biology, and other biological research. Drawing on a variety of ethical cases drawn from the biomedical literature, we will cover both the conceptual foundations of moral theory and the application of conceptual tools developed from those principles. The course has two units:

Unit 1: Moral Theories and the Ethical Treatment of Patients. Here, we will first investigate the nature of morality in general, and ask: Are there such things as good, bad, right, and wrong? If so, do we decide them for ourselves, or are they already decided for us? Is moral obligation simply about producing the best consequences, or can an action be wrong even if it has a good outcome? Am I obligated simply to not hurt others, or do I have a duty to help others as well? This unit will also cover the four principles of bioethics: autonomy, non-maleficence, beneficence, and justice in the context of patients' rights and informed consent.

Unit 2: Bioethical Issues. In this unit, we will examine several applied ethical issues in bioethics. We will cover pandemic care, euthanasia, animal experimentation, abortion, disability, and eugenics.

Course Objectives: Upon completion of this course, the students will be able to:

- Engage with the basics of prevalent moral theories
- Evaluate philosophical arguments
- Recognize the pervasiveness of ethics and philosophy in biomedical issues

- Advance their critical thinking/writing/argumentative skills by engaging with philosophical texts on bioethics
- Develop a bioethics case study

Required Materials:

Materials required for this course are:

- Functioning computer and internet connection
- Ensure you have these ahead of time as they will be required to complete assignments and activities throughout the course.

All readings are available on Canvas as PDFs

Prerequisites:

No Prerequisites for the course.

Course Materials:

All readings and material will be available on Canvas.

Course Structure & Tentative Course Topics:

The first 7 weeks of the semester will be devoted to covering moral theories. After Spring Break, we will transition to exploring different applied topics in bioethics and start building skills of ethical analysis. A guided midterm case study will provide the opportunity to start discovering how these moral theories might be applied in practical settings. A final case study will allow students to more fully demonstrate these skills by allowing them to pick their own applied ethical problem from the applied topics covered in class and analyze it.

This schedule is meant to serve as a general guide for our class and is subject to change at any time. If changes are made, the most up-to-date version of the syllabus and class schedule will be posted on Canvas with an announcement. Any materials, including book chapters, articles, videos, podcasts, etc., will be assigned according to the needs, interests, and progression of the class.

I will announce all required material, including any changes or additions, each week on Canvas. It is your responsibility to stay on top of any assigned material.

Formal Lectures will be held once a week via Zoom on Thursdays. Students will have weekly lecture prep work that will include completing the week's readings, watching short videos, and completing discussions posts assignments before Thursday lecture.

Unit 1: Moral Theories & Ethical Treatment of Patients

Week 1 (January 11th & 13th): Syllabus & Introductions
Week 2 (January 18th & 20th): Moral Philosophy & Bioethics
Week 3 (January 25th & 27th): Utilitarianism & Kantian Theory
Week 4 (February 1st & 3rd): Virtue Theory & Rights Theory
Week 5 (February 8th & 10th): The Four Principles of Biomedical Ethics
Week 6 (February 15th & 17th): Paternalism & Informed Consent
Week 7 (February 22nd & 24th): Ethical Treatment of Patients

Week 8 (March 1st & 3rd): No Class- Midterm Case Study due 3/4/22 by 11:59 pm

Week 9 (March 6th-13th): Spring Break

Unit 2: Bioethical Issues

Week 10 (March 15th & 17th): Disability & Normal Function
Week 11 (March 22nd & 24th): Abortion
Week 12 (March 29th & 31st): Euthanasia & Physician Assisted Suicide
Week 13 (April 5th & 7th): Pandemic Critical Care
Week 14 (April 12th & 14th): Nursing Ethics

Week 15 (April 19th/21st): No class- Final Case Study Consultation Week

Week 16 (April 28th-May 4th): Finals Week

Assignments:

In this course there will be five main assignment types:

Weekly Discussion Posts (20% of final grade)

For each week of content you will be asked to reflect on the readings and discuss your thoughts with your peers. Each week I will start off with a prompt to get the discussion going. While these posts are somewhat informal, you should still remember to use proper grammar/sentence structure, and to engage respectfully and critically with your peers.

Doing this in advance of our Thursday lecture and discussion meetings is important as it will give you time to sit and engage with the material in one modality before coming together to engage it in a discussion format.

Every week you are required to write a thoughtful response to the readings (200-300 words) by Wednesday (11:59 pm). Your replies should be thoughtful, substantial, and constructive. **It is very important that you complete the discussion posts in advance of our Thursday lectures.**

There are several ways to construct a strong discussion post. The following are recommended approaches for enhancing the discussion:

- *Excavator/Prospector*: Your job is to identify consequences, entailments, obligations, premises, and unstated assumptions in either the assigned reading, keyword proposals, or other parts of the discussion. You might evaluate whether these are plausible, desirable, or consistent (with other views we have considered), or consider how they might be applied in contexts or examples not yet explicitly discussed.
- *Contrarian*: Your job is to test the arguments, assertions, and premises of the keyword proposals, assigned reading, or other parts of the discussion. Consider whether you might defend an opposing thesis, or a third position not yet considered. The spirit of this should be constructive, seeking to advance the discussion.
- *Eagle Eye*: Your job is to step back and help people keep an eye on the big picture, and prevent us from getting lost in the weeds. Provide the 30,000 foot view, remind us of the context in which these debates are occurring, and help the discussion stay on track and moving forward. Help ensure we are advancing discussion fruitfully.
- *Open*: You may offer general comments, specific answers to other students' questions, or otherwise advance the discussion. A few possible ways to constructively contribute are to try and step back 4 and identify the larger issues at stake, provide context for the discussion, or summarize the arguments on offer.

Grading

These discussion posts will be graded as credit/non-credit. To receive credit, you must do three things:

- 1.) Answer the prompt provided with thoughtful and good faith engagement.
- 2.) Utilize the week's assigned reading material to successfully answer the prompt
- 3.) Write 200-300 words. Please take seriously that I'm giving this word limit to help you learn the skill of being concise.

Any additional grading requirements per each week's prompt will be shared in the discussion board.

Unit 1 Quizzes (20% of final grade)

Each quiz consists of 25 multiple choice questions (worth 4 points each), based on the content covered from the readings, class notes, and lecture videos.

- Quiz 1 will cover content from weeks 2, 3, and 4. **Due Sunday, February 6th (11:59 pm)**
- Quiz 2 will cover content from weeks 5, 6, and 7. **Due Sunday, February 27th (11:59 pm)**

Unit 2 Moral Reasoning & the News (20% of final grade)

Students will pick one of the topics covered in Unit 2, find a current news article/opinion piece on the topic, and identify any moral reasoning or moral claims made throughout the news piece. Students will critique those claims and make connections to the course material covered in class. Students must do this for two of the applied topics covered in Unit 2.

Due April 15th by 11:59pm

Midterm Case Study (20% of final grade)

A Case Study Scenario will be provided for students, including suggestions of relevant ethical details and tensions they could consider. Students will be expected to apply the moral theories covered in prior weeks to the elements of the case study in their analysis and make a suggestion on a resolution. An assignment file will be provided in the coming weeks.

Due Friday March 4th by 11:59 pm

Final Case Study (20% of final grade)

For the final case study students will be expected to pick their own applied ethics topic from those covered in Unit 2, write a concise explanation of the problem at hand, apply an ethical analysis using ethical theories, and explain what pragmatic resolution they would suggest. An assignment file will be provided

Due Friday April 29th by 11:59 pm

Extra Credit (An additional 5% of final grade):

Two Extra Credit assignments will be available to students. This extra credit assignment is intended to help counter-balance mistakes and/or forgotten assignments over the course of the semester. Students can complete two more of the Moral Reasoning & the News assignments on two of the applied topics that they did not already cover from Unit 2.

Due Wednesday May 4th at 12:00 pm (noon)

Grading for this Course:

The course is reading and writing heavy, so it is important that you plan out your week and stick to the deadlines. Do not expect to do well in this course if you try to read all the material and answer questions about it 30 minutes before an assignment is due. Philosophy is not something that can be rushed. With that said, it is easy to do well in this course if you allocate enough time to do the readings and to thoughtfully answer the assignments.

Since this is an online IVC class, please familiarize yourself with Canvas (if you are new to it), as it will play an important role in the course.

A letter grade will be determined at the end of the semester according to the following scale:

A 94 - 100%
A- 90 - 93.9%
B+ 87 - 89.9%
B 84 - 86.9%
B- 80 - 83.9%
C+ 77 - 79.9%
C 74 - 76.9%
C- 70 - 73.9%
D+ 67 - 69.9%
D 64 - 66.9%
D- 60 - 63.9%
E (F) 0 - 59.9%

Class Policies

Contacting the Instructor:

The best way to reach me is by email (christen.paradissis@utah.edu). I will usually respond within 1-2 business days.

When writing an email, please aim to follow these guidelines:

1. Include the topic you are writing about in the subject line as well as the class (E.g. "Bioethics: Reading Response Help").
2. Please use an appropriate greeting (e.g. "Hello Christen" or "Dear Christen"). If you are unsure what is appropriate, "Dear Professor Paradissis" is a safe option.
3. Sign the email with your name.

These guidelines are not needed in some obvious cases (e.g. in a string of e-mail replies). I am happy to answer student e-mails, and will usually respond quickly. However, I reserve the right to not respond to emails that fail to meet these guidelines.

Late Assignment Policy:

In general, discussion posts and quizzes will not be accepted after the due date. However, in extreme circumstances, late work for these assignments may be accepted at the discretion of the instructor.

For the midterm and final case study, each day late past the deadline will result in a dropped letter grade of the assignment. Again, in extreme circumstances the late penalty may be waived at the discretion of the instructor.

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism or other forms of academic misconduct may result in a failing grade for the individual assignment and/or the entire course, and the case will be reported to the University's Academic Misconduct Committee for further judgment. According to the Student code, "'Plagiarism' means the intentional unacknowledged use or incorporation of any other person's work in, or as a basis for, one's own work offered for academic consideration or credit for public presentation. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, representing as one's own, without attribution, any individual's words, phrasing, sequence of ideas, information or any other mode or content of expression" (Student Code, p. 3). Citing "poorly recorded bibliographic information" as a reason for plagiarism is unacceptable.

Furthermore, assignments used for other courses at the University of Utah or any other college/university cannot be submitted as whole (or part of) assignments for this course, even if you are the author of the work.

The class policy on plagiarism is that on the first offense the individual assignment will receive a zero. Second offense will result in failing grade for the entire course, regardless of your points in the course. If you have further questions about what constitutes plagiarism or academic misconduct, ask your instructor and/or consult the University Code. For cases of suspected or confirmed plagiarism, the university's policy on plagiarism will be followed and will take priority over our policy

This class uses turnitin.com software to evaluate every writing assignment for the amount of copied content. This software automatically compares your submission with a global database compiled from both online resources and other student submissions. However, turnitin.com is not perfect, and I have found plagiarized material that the software missed.

University Policies

Canvas Issues:

Sometimes Canvas gets a glitch and won't cooperate. If this happens to you, promptly contact the Teaching & Learning and Technology (TLT) Support Information:

- Helpdesk Phone: 801-581-6112.
- Helpdesk Email: classhelp@utah.edu

If an issue with canvas prevents you from submitting an assignment, you will need to email me ASAP explaining the issue and forward me the Helpdesk email with ticket number as confirmation of the problem

Accommodation Policy:

"Students are expected to take courses that will challenge them intellectually and personally. Students must understand and be able to articulate the ideas and theories that are important to the discourse within and among academic disciplines. Personal disagreement with these ideas and theories or their implications is not sufficient grounds for requesting an accommodation. Accommodations requested on such grounds will not be granted. It is the student's obligation to

determine, before the last day to drop courses without penalty, when course requirements conflict with the student's sincerely-held [sic] core beliefs. If there is such a conflict, the student should consider dropping the class.” (Taken from the student handbook).

ADA:

The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in this class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations.

Addressing Sexual Misconduct & Title IX:

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a civil rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran’s status or genetic information. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 135 Park Building, 801- 581-8365, or the Office of the Dean of Students, 270 Union Building, 801-581-7066. For support and confidential consultation, contact the Center for Student Wellness, 426 SSB, 801-581-7776. To report to the police, contact the Department of Public Safety, 801-585- 2677(COPS).

Wellness:

Personal concerns such as stress, anxiety, relationship difficulties, depression, cross-cultural differences, etc., can interfere with a student’s ability to succeed and thrive at the University of Utah. For helpful resources contact the Center for Student Wellness at www.wellness.utah.edu or 801-581- 7776.