
BIOETHICS

PHIL105

Course Description

Should we protect patient confidentiality even if it may harm others? Is it morally permissible to allow parents to deliberately select for the presence of a particular disease or disability in their child? Is it ever okay for a doctor to lie to a patient even if it's "for the patient's own good"? In this course we will discuss these and many other contemporary issues in bioethics.

Ethics systematically examines and defends concepts and theories of right and wrong behavior generally. Bioethics is a sub-discipline of ethics that focuses on ethical issues in health care, biotechnology, and medical research. In this course, we will engage with both abstract ethical theories and actual case studies as we grapple with issues surrounding medical paternalism, human research, genetic enhancement, and euthanasia. Our aim will be to understand the complex ethical implications of these cases and develop philosophically sophisticated responses regarding right action in the face of this complexity.

Learning Goals

- Develop a familiarity with important case studies and contemporary approaches to Bioethics.
- Increase proficiency in reading, interpreting, and assessing philosophical arguments through clear analytical writing.
- Acquire strategies for sustaining meaningful and productive philosophical discussions.

Assessment

Assessment will consist of **two in-class tests** and **two papers**. The regularity and quality of in-class **participation** will also be taken into account.

Attendance & Tardiness

Attendance is required. You are, however, allowed to miss **once** without excuse. If you have good reason to miss class beyond this, you will need to have your dean contact me. **For every unexcused absence you accrue, your grade will be lowered by 1/3 of a letter grade** (so if you have an A, with one unexcused absence, you will receive an A-; if you have two unexcused absences, your grade will be a B+; if you have 3 unexcused absences, it will be a B; etc.). **Missing more than 25% of the classes will result in automatic failure of the course.** Unexcused late arrival or early departure of more than 15 minutes will count as 1/2 an absence.

Policy Regarding Late Work

I do not accept late assignments. Exams may be rescheduled for 1) medical reasons, 2) religious holidays, or 3) school-sanctioned extracurricular activities. I will consider other circumstances on a case-by-case basis. Except in the case of illness, you will need to let me know of your excuse a week in advance of the exam date. In the case of illness, you must have your dean contact me as soon as possible.

Classroom Technology

The use of laptops for note taking and research is allowed in class. However, I have a zero tolerance policy towards misuse of this technology. If I suspect or catch a student using their laptop for non-class related purposes, the student will be asked to leave and this will be considered an unexcused absence.

SUMMER 2017
[MTWR] 10:45 - 12:45
Maguire 103

Instructor: Katherine Ward
Email: kw555@georgetown.edu
Office: New North 212
Office Hours: W 1-2

REQUIRED TEXTS



Lewis Vaughn, ed.,
Bioethics: Principles, Issues, and Cases
(Oxford)

IMPORTANT DATES

6/05	First Day of Class
6/16	Paper 1 Due <i>(Friday 11:59pm)</i>
6/22	Test 1
6/30	Paper 2 Due <i>(Friday 11:59pm)</i>
7/06	Test 2

Assessment		Grade	Point Scale
		A	≥93
Paper 1	20%	A-	≥90
Test 1	20%	B+	≥87
Paper 2	25%	B	≥83
Test 2	25%	B-	≥80
Participation	10%	C+	≥77
		C	≥73
		C-	≥70
		D+	≥67
		D	≥60
		F	<60

SCHEDULE

DAY	DATE	READING DUE	ASSIGNMENT DUE	TEST
INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE / PATERNALISM & CONFIDENTIALITY				
M	6/05	—		
T	6/06	Ch 1 “Moral Reasoning” p. 1-33 Ch 2 “Bioethics and Moral Theories” p. 34-53 Note: Do not do the “Readings” in Ch. 2		
W	6/07	Ch 3 “Paternalism and Patient Autonomy” p. 81-93 Readings: “Paternalism” p. 94-103 “The Refutation of Medical Paternalism” p. 104-109 “Why Doctors Should Intervene” p. 110-115		
R	6/08	Ch 4 “Truth-Telling and Confidentiality” p. 144-154 Readings: “Telling the Truth to Patients” p. 155-159 “On Telling Patients the Truth” p. 159-161		
CONT'D CONFIDENTIALITY / HUMAN RESEARCH				
M	6/12	Readings: “Is It Ever Okay to Lie to Patients?” p.161-164 “Why Privacy Is Important” p. 172-177 “Ethical Relativism in a Multicultural Society” p. 180-190		
T	6/13	Ch 6 “Human Research” p. 239-258		
W	6/14	Readings: “Of Mice But Not Men” p. 272-277 “Racism and Research” p. 285-297		
R	6/15	Readings: “The Ethics of Clinical Research in the Third World” p. 297-301 “Ethical Issues in Clinical Trials” p. 301-305	Paper 1 Due: Friday at 11:59pm	
GENETIC CHOICES				
M	6/19	Ch 9 “Genetic Choices” p. 539-560		
T	6/20	Readings: “Genetics and Reproductive Risk” p. 564-570 “The Morality of Screening for Disability” p. 571-574 “Genetic Dilemmas” p. 575 -585		
W	6/21	Readings: “Is Gene Therapy a Form of Eugenics” p. 593-599 “Genetic Enhancement” p. 599-604 “Genetic Interventions” p. 604-613		
R	6/22	—		TEST 1

EUTHANASIA

M 6/26 **Ch 10 “Euthanasia and Physician Assisted Suicide”**
p. 625-641

T 6/27 **Readings:** “Death and Dignity” p. 642-645
“Voluntary Active Euthanasia” p. 646-657
“When Self-Determination Runs Amok”
p. 658-662

W 6/28 **Readings:** “Physician-Assisted Suicide” p. 663-678
“Active and Passive Euthanasia” p. 678-681
“Dying at the Right Time” p. 682-692

R 6/29 **Readings:** “The Philosophers’ Brief” p. 693-701
“An Alternative to Brain Death” p. 701-706

Paper 2
Due: Friday at 11:59pm

JUSTICE AND HEALTHCARE

M 7/03 **Ch 11 “Dividing Up Health Care Resources”**
p. 719-735

T 7/04 **Readings:** “Is There a Right to Health Care?”
p. 736-743
“The Right to a Decent Minimum of Health Care”
p. 743-749

W 7/05 **Readings:** “Rights to Health Care, Social Justice,
and Fairness” p. 749-757
“Health Care Reform” p. 757-764

R 7/06 —

TEST 2

ACCOMMODATIONS & DIFFERING ABILITIES

I am happy to accommodate a multitude of different learning styles. Please come speak to me early in the term about any disability-related accommodations you may need. Also, if you find over the course of the term that additional accommodations are necessary, let me know so we can work together to make this course a beneficial experience. Below are a few resources that you may find helpful.

Academic

Academic Support

<http://academicsupport.georgetown.edu/>

"Offers an array of academic support services, including study skills workshops, individual consultations, and tutoring in introductory courses." Links to Disability Support, Student-Athlete Support, Academic Support, and the Writing Center.

Scholarly Research and Academic Integrity

<http://www.library.georgetown.edu/tutorials/academic-integrity/refresher-tipsheet>

Honor Council

<http://honorcouncil.georgetown.edu/>

Personal

Student Health Services

<http://studenthealth.georgetown.edu/>

Links to Student Health Center, Counseling and Mental Health, Crisis Counseling.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The Georgetown University Honor System defines cheating as:

“the use or attempted use of unauthorized materials, information, study aids, or unauthorized collaboration on in-class examinations, take-home examinations, or other academic exercises. It is the responsibility of the student to consult with the professor concerning what constitutes permissible collaboration. Cheating or assisting another student to cheat in connection with an examination or assignment is academic fraud.”

Unless otherwise instructed, **using any materials or collaboration with anyone during the in-class exams or for homework/short assignments is prohibited.** All exams are **closed book**. All short-assignments are to be completed **without the assistance of others**.

In accordance with university policy, any case of suspected academic dishonesty will be reported to the Honor Council. **I reserve the right to fail a student for the entire course if he or she is found in violation of the honor code for cheating.**

TITLE

IX

I am committed to supporting survivors of sexual misconduct, including relationship violence and sexual assault. However, university policy also requires me to report any disclosures about sexual misconduct to the Title IX Coordinator, whose role is to coordinate the University's response to sexual misconduct.

Georgetown has a number of fully confidential professional resources who can provide support and assistance to survivors of sexual assault and other forms of sexual misconduct. These resources include:

Jen Schweer, MA, LPC
Associate Director of Health Education Services for Sexual Assault Response and Prevention
(202) 687-0323
jls242@georgetown.edu

Erica Shirley, Trauma Specialist
Counseling and Psychiatric Services (CAPS)
(202) 687-6985
els54@georgetown.edu

More information about campus resources and reporting sexual misconduct can be found at Georgetown's Sexual Assault page: <https://sexualassault.georgetown.edu/>