



Introduction to Bioethics PHIL 116-1

Fall 2020 - Online

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Synchronous session: W 9:40 - 10:55

Office hours: By appointment

Description and objectives

This course will introduce students to some of the main ethical issues related to medical treatment, research, and policy. The course will be structured around several problem areas, including the ethics of epidemics and pandemics, medical research, the ethics of reproduction, human enhancement, end-of-life care, healthcare policy, and social justice in healthcare.

Throughout the course of the semester, students will read a variety of texts and analyze a number of case studies so that these bioethical issues can be approached both from a theoretical point of view and from a practical perspective. Moreover, students will have the opportunity to develop their own ideas and thoughts about these crucial problems on several assignments, individual and collaborative, that will enable them, not only to become conversant with these questions but also to improve their comprehension abilities, analytical skills, critical thinking, and expressive competence.

This class will be conducted entirely online. Each week, students will complete a series of asynchronous activities (posted on Canvas) and attend a 75-minutes synchronous session (by Zoom on Wednesdays at 9:40).

Link: <https://emory.zoom.us/j/91439428126>).

Required texts

Many of the readings will be selected from this book. (All other texts will be made available online through Canvas. Please, check schedule below):

- Robert M. Veatch, Amy M. Haddad, Dan C. English. *Case Studies in Biomedical Ethics: Decision-Making, Principles, and Cases*. 2nd edition. London and New York: Oxford University Press, 2015. ISBN 9780199946563.*

* Students with dyslexia, blindness, cerebral palsy, and other reading barriers can access a special edition of this book at <https://www.bookshare.org/>

Requirements and assignments

Attendance to synchronous sessions: Students must make every effort to attend all synchronous sessions. Repeated unexcused absences will result in the lowering of the final grade. Let me know at the beginning of the semester if there are special circumstances that need to be considered. Please, connect on time and have with you a hard or electronic version of the texts under discussion.

Participation in synchronous sessions: Students should prepare for all sessions by attentively reading the assigned material. They are expected to engage actively in class discussions, complete all learning exercises, and participate in group activities. Participation will be taken into account when considering borderline final grades.

Critical Thinking Component: The critical thinking component of this course is designed to develop your skills at understanding, evaluating, and constructing arguments, and to help you think critically about complex problems and ideas. This component should be completed on your own, outside of class time.

In order to complete the CTC you will need to read a series of texts and answer exam questions based on them. The texts can be found on Canvas > Library Course Reserves. The exams, as well as practice tests and practice test answers, are located in separate folders corresponding to each unit on Canvas > Modules.

The CTC will not be graded, but you must have passed all of the exams by December 1 in order to pass the course.

Assignments*
Asynchronous activities: All asynchronous activities will be posted on Canvas > Modules. Unless otherwise stated, they must be submitted at least 24 hours before the synchronous meeting.
Reflection papers: A reflection paper is a 375-words (approx. one page and a half) text in which students analyze (and, therefore, not simply summarize) one of the texts previously read in class.
Reports: A report is a 750-words (approx. three pages) text in which students analyze, formulate arguments, and present conclusions regarding a case study proposed by the instructor.
Debate: Students organized in teams will participate in a debate about a topic chosen in class. Teams are expected to work outside class to plan their speeches, prepare their arguments, and anticipate responses to potential objections.
Final project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal: 250-words proposal (approx. one page) for the final paper. • Presentation: 5 to 7 minutes presentation with PowerPoint. • Final paper: 2,500-words paper (approx. ten pages) and bibliography.

* Reflection papers, reports, final project proposal, and final paper must be submitted online through Canvas (as a Word or PDF document) the day are due. They must include a descriptive title, the student’s name, date, and page numbers. Please use Times New Roman 12-points font or similar, 1 inch margins, and double space between lines. Students are expected to used proper citation procedures. Any citation style (APA, MLA, or The Chicago Manual of Style, among others) is acceptable as long as it is consistently used.

* The instructor will not review full drafts of papers or reports but students are encouraged to discuss their content and/or structure during office hours.

Grading

In this course, I will employ the so-called “specification (or specs) grading system”. Detailed information will be given during the first synchronous session.

Final grade	Requirements that must be satisfied*
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete on time all 8 sets of asynchronous activities. • Pass all 4 reflection papers. • Pass all 2 reports. • Contribute actively to the debate. • Earn at least 80 points out of 100 (for an A-) or 84 p. (for an A) on the final project (15% proposal, 15% presentation, 70% final paper).
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete on time 7 sets of asynchronous activities. • Pass 3 reflection papers. • Pass all 2 reports. • Participate minimally in the debate. • Earn at least 70 p. (for a B-), 74 p. (for a B), or 77 p. (for a B+) on the final project (15% proposal, 15% presentation, 70% final paper).
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete on time 6 sets of asynchronous activities. • Pass 2 reflection papers. • Pass 1 report. • Participate minimally in the debate. • Earn at least 60 p. (for a C-), 64 p. (for a C), or 67 p. (for a C+) on the final project (15% proposal, 15% presentation, 70% final paper)
D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete on time 5 sets of asynchronous activities. • Pass 1 reflection paper. • Pass 1 report. • Earn at least 50 p. (for a D) or 57 p. (for a D+) on the final project: (15% proposal, 15% presentation, 70% final paper).
F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None of the above requirements are satisfied.

* A grade of “pass” on reflection papers and reports is equivalent to a B (or 84%). In order to earn a pass:

- Texts must be submitted on time through Canvas.
- They must be clear, coherent, properly organized, and well written (please pay attention to spelling, grammar, syntax, punctuation, and word choice).
- Students must follow the basic guidelines provided in this syllabus concerning extension, format, and citation.
- Reflection papers: Students must correctly identify the main point(s) and/or central thesis(es) of the text(s) under analysis and elaborate on the significance, strengths, weaknesses, and/or implications of the arguments developed in it and on the plausibility of the conclusion(s) reached by its author(s).

- Reports: Students must offer an analysis of the case study under discussion and provide a concrete solution supported by a clearly developed argument.
- * Students can either contribute actively to the debate or participate minimally in it:
 - Students who contribute actively are those who offer at least two arguments in support of the view they are assigned to defend, respond to at least one objection presented against it, and present one objection to some of the arguments developed by the other team.
 - Students who participate minimally are those who offer at least one argument in support of the view they are assigned to defend and either respond to one objection presented against it or present one objection to some of the arguments developed by the other team.

Tokens

- Each student will begin the course with 3 tokens.
- Tokens can be spent on any of the following:
 - Extension of deadline for asynchronous activities, reflection papers, or reports (24h = 1 token).
 - Revision of a reflection paper or a report (1 revision = 1 token).
 - Earning the opportunity to compensate for poor performance in the debate by producing a short video presentation (1 token).
- Extra tokens can be earned in this way:
 - By writing an additional reflection paper (1 paper = 1 token).
 - By writing an additional report (1 report = 2 tokens).
 - Alternative activity: By attending a conference, watching a documentary, reading an article, etc. and writing a 250-words comment (1 alternative activity = 1 token).
 - The instructor might concede additional tokens under extraordinary circumstances if a student performs particularly well or improves significantly in some aspect of the course.
- Each remaining token that a student has at the end of the course will be worth 1/2 of 1 percentage point that will be added to the grade of the final project.
- Please, contact me whenever you want to spend or earn a token.

Technology requirements and netiquette

- Students will need a computer equipped with microphone and camera to complete this course. The technology platforms that will be used are Emory email, Canvas, Zoom, and Google Docs (it is not necessary to have a Google account). Try to familiarize yourself with these tools and do not hesitate to contact me if you have any question or problem.
- Network etiquette, or “netiquette” refers to a set of guidelines for online communication, whether it is by email, posts, discussion boards, or written and oral conversations, among others. It is important that you follow these rules so that the learning experience of all can be successful and enjoyable:
 - Treat your instructor and classmates with respect and be tolerant of their views and opinions.
 - Ask your instructor and classmates for clarification if you find a comment or discussion posting offensive or difficult to understand.
 - It is good to ask questions and make comments (as long as they are related to the matter under discussion), but try not to dominate the class time so that other students can participate as well.
 - During synchronous sessions, it is fine to write on the chat box, but do not abuse it.
 - When you communicate in writing, try to keep it short and clear, use good grammar and spelling, and avoid using text shortcuts.
 - Emoticons are fine but do not overuse them.
 - Protect your privacy and respect the privacy of others.

Course policies and important information for students

The Honor Code: The Honor Code is in effect throughout the semester. By taking this course, you affirm that it is a violation of the code to plagiarize, to deviate from the teacher's instructions about collaboration, to give false information to a faculty member, and to undertake any other form of academic misconduct:

<http://catalog.college.emory.edu/academic/policies-regulations/honor-code.html>

Citation and plagiarism: *All* texts submitted must be the student's own original work. The student must make sure that all quotations and paraphrased ideas are fully and accurately cited.

This course may employ plagiarism-detection software, including *Turnitin*, for any required assignments. *Turnitin* compares submitted work to sources available on the internet, archived databases of essays, journals, books, and other publications, and its database of assignments submitted in the past at Emory and other universities. Work that generates concerns about originality or citation methods will be reviewed and submitted to the Honor Council as appropriate. This software does not substitute for the judgment of the instructor and other authorities in the detection of plagiarism, and other methods may be employed in this course to determine that all work abides by the standards set forth in the Honor Code.

Confusion over what counts as plagiarism is not an acceptable excuse for plagiarism. Should you have any questions about what plagiarism is, please contact the instructor as soon as possible. All cases of plagiarism will be reported to the Honor Council without exception. For additional information on citation procedures visit: http://guides.main.library.emory.edu/citing_your_sources

Academic support and resources: There is a variety of resources available to students:

- **Access and disability resources:**

If you have a documented disability and have anticipated barriers related to the format or requirements of this course (e.g. mental health, attention, learning, vision, hearing, physical or systemic), and are in need of accommodations, please contact the Office of Accessibility Services (OAS) and the instructor.

<http://college.emory.edu/oue/student-support/students-with-disabilities/index.html>

- **Counseling and psychological services:**

Emory University's Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS) provides free, confidential services for students including: initial assessments, crisis intervention, community referrals, brief individual, couples, and group counseling, consultation, community outreach services, and educational workshops.

<http://studenthealth.emory.edu/cs/index.html>

• **English as a second language (ESL Program):**

The ESL Program supports Emory College students who speak English as a second language both directly (through tutoring and through academic support resources for non-native speakers) and indirectly (through the collaborative partnerships that the Program has established with other programs throughout the College). <http://college.emory.edu/oue/student-support/esl-program/index.html>

• **General support for students:**

The Office for Undergraduate Education offers programs to support student learning. These include mentoring, coaching, and tutoring services for individuals and small groups. <http://college.emory.edu/oue/student-support/index.html>

• **Writing support and peer tutoring (Emory Writing Center):**

Tutors in the Emory Writing Center Program are available to support Emory College students as they work on any type of writing assignment, at any stage of the composing process. Tutors can assist with a range of projects, from traditional papers and presentations to websites and other multimedia projects. Students who are non-native speakers of English are welcome to visit either the Writing Center tutors or the ESL tutors. All other students in the college should see Writing Center tutors. <http://writingcenter.emory.edu>

Schedule and readings

(Check Canvas > Modules for information about asynchronous activities)

Introduction. Weeks 1 and 2 (Synchronous sessions: Aug. 19 and 26)

Introduction to the course and brief history of bioethics.

*** Asynchronous activities set #1 (Tuesday, August 25 at 10 am)**

- *The Hippocratic Oath, The Nuremberg Code, The Declaration of Geneva, The Declaration of Helsinki, and The Belmont Report* (17 pp.)
- Textbook: Part 2, "Ethical Principles in Medical Ethics," Ch. 4 - Ch. 9 (cases and commentaries are optional) (30 pp.)

Bioethics Today. Week 3 (Synchronous session: Sep. 2)

What is bioethics today, why is it important and necessary, and how is it practiced?

* **Asynchronous activities set #2 (Tuesday, September 1 at 10 am)**

* **Reflection paper #1 (Friday, September 4 at 11:59 pm)**

- Textbook: Part 1, “Ethics and Values in Medical Cases,” Ch 1 - Ch. 3 (cases and commentaries of Ch. 3 are optional) (27 pp.)
- Michel Foucault, “The Crisis of Medicine” (15 pp.)

The Ethics of Epidemics and Pandemics. Week 4 (Synchronous session: Sep. 9)

Allocating scarce resources, public health surveillance, restrictions of freedom, research.

* **Asynchronous activities set #3 (Tuesday, September 8 at 10 am)**

- Lawrence O. Gostin, “Good Science + Good Ethics = Good Law: Five Rules for Epidemic Preparedness” (4 pp.)
- Maxwell Smith and Ross Upshur, “Pandemic Disease, Public Health, and Ethics” (15 pp.)
- Isaac Chotiner and Christine Mitchell “The Medical Ethics of the Coronavirus Crisis” (6 pp.)
- Emily Bazelon, “Restarting America Means People Will Die. So When Do We Do It?” (13 pp.)

The Ethics of Medical Research. Week 5 (Synchronous session: Sep. 16)

Research on human subjects; privacy, consent, and confidentiality; animal testing.

* **Report #1 (Friday, September 18 at 11:59 pm)**

- Textbook: Ch. 16, “Experimentation on Human Subjects” (28 pp.)
- Hans Jonas, “Philosophical Reflections on Experimenting with Human Subjects” (26 pp.)

The Ethics of Reproduction. Week 6 (Synchronous session: Sep. 23)

Abortion, sterilization, contraception, and the moral status of the fetus.

* **Asynchronous activities set #4 (Tuesday, September 22 at 10 am)**

* **Reflection paper #2 (Friday, September 25 at 11:59 pm)**

- Textbook: Ch. 10, “Abortion, Sterilization, and Contraception” (20 pp.)
- Don Marquis, “Why Abortion is Immoral” (20 pp.)
- Judith Jarvis Thompson, “In Defense of Abortion” (8 pp.)

Debate. Week 7 (Synchronous session: Sep. 30)

- * Debate between groups A and B on a topic chosen by the students
- * Asynchronous activities set #5 (only members of groups C and D) (Tuesday, September 29 at 10 am)
 - No readings

Debate. Week 8 (Synchronous session: Oct. 7)

- * Debate between groups C and D on a topic chosen by the students
- * Asynchronous activities set #5 (only members of groups A and B) (Tuesday, October 6 at 10 am)
 - No readings

Human Enhancement. Week 9 (Synchronous session: Oct. 14)

Birth technologies, genetic engineering, non-voluntary euthanasia.

- * Asynchronous activities set #6 (Tuesday, October 13 at 10 am)
- * Reflection paper #3 (Friday, October 16 at 11:59 pm)
 - Textbook: Ch. 11, “Genetics, Birth, and the Biological Revolution” (19 pp.)
 - Peter Singer, “Taking Life: Humans” (15 pp.)
 - Harriet McBryde Johnson, “Unspeakable Conversations” (16 pp.)

End of Life Care. Week 10 (Synchronous session: Oct. 21)

Definition of death, terminal diagnosis, life-sustaining treatments, euthanasia.

- * Report #2 (Friday, October 23 at 11:59 pm)
 - Textbook: Ch. 18, “Death and Dying” (23 pp.)
 - Willard Gaylin, “Harvesting the Dead” (8 pp.)
 - Christine K. Cassel, “Decisions to Forgo Life-sustaining Therapy” (12 pp.)

Healthcare Policy. Week 11 (Synchronous session: Oct. 28)

Healthcare costs, public and private insurance, the affordable care act.

- * Asynchronous activities set #7 (Tuesday, October 27 at 10 am)
- * Reflection paper #4 (Friday, October 30 at 11:59 pm)
 - Textbook: Ch. 15, “Health Insurance, Health System Planning, and Rationing” (20 pp.)
 - M. Joseph Sirgy, Dong-Jin Lee, and Grace B. Yu, “Consumer Sovereignty in Healthcare: Fact or Fiction?” (12 pp.)
 - Anja Rudiger, “Human Rights and the Political Economy of Universal Health Care” (11 pp.)

Social Injustice. Week 12 (Synchronous session: Nov. 4)

Race, sex, gender, inequality, and well-being.

* **Asynchronous activities set #8 (Tuesday, November 3 at 10 am)**

* **Final paper proposal (Friday, November 6 at 11:59 pm)**

- Dayna Bowen Matthew, "Physicians' Unconscious Racism" (20 pp.)
- Meredith Turshen, "The Impact of Sexism on Women's Health and Health Care" (8 pp.)
- Ann Travers, "Supportive Healthcare" (22 pp.)
- Nigel Hewett, "What Works to Improve the Health of the Multiply Excluded?" (10 pp.)

Review and Wrap-up. Weeks 13 and 14 (Synchronous sessions: Nov. 11 and 18)

Individual presentations, final questions, and concluding remarks.

* **Individual presentations (November 11 and 18 during synchronous sessions)**

- No readings

Week 15 (No synchronous session)

* **Final paper (December 1 at 11:59pm)**

- No readings