

Bioethics¹
 PHIL 3520-001 Spring 2022
 Mo-We-Fr 10:45–11:35
 BU C 301

INSTRUCTOR

TJ Perkins

t.perkins@utah.edu

OFFICE HOURS

Mondays 12:00-1:00 and by appointment.

Room CTIHB 405 (Philosophy Department)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

There are two very distinct approaches to doing bioethics: (a) you can use familiar frameworks from classical ethics to try and address particularly bio-ethical problems; or (b) you can use a set of ready-made ethical principles designed especially with bioethics in mind, though on a somewhat less-than-principled case-by-case basis. Which approach is better? You decide.

To help inform your decision, we'll try applying both approaches to a host of relevant cases.

Cases in bioethics come from an impressive range of topics, including but not limited to:

- Abortion, Disability, & Eugenics
- Advance Directives & Euthanasia
- Alternative Medicine
- Big Pharma
- Cloning & Stem Cell Research
- Confidentiality & Disclosure
- Conscientious Objecting
- Definitions of Death & Disease
- Embryo Enhancement & Surrogacy
- Free & Informed Consent
- Health Care Allocation
- IRB Regulation & Review
- Mental Illness
- Organ Donation & Profiteering
- Reproductive Rights
- Vaccine Refusal

OUTCOMES

Students in this course can expect to develop their own, rigorous answers to the above questions. They can also expect to:

¹ This syllabus has been adopted from Joyce Havstad's 2019 PHIL 3500 (Bioethics) syllabus.

1. Develop and extend pre-existing skills in general scholarship—including reading, writing, discussion, and debate.
2. Recognize and assess some historical, sociological, and philosophical methods.
3. Argumentatively parse and defend not just descriptive but also normative claims.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Do the reading. Come to class, take good notes, and contribute to group discussion. Get engaged, design a project, and write an insightful research paper on a topic that intrigues you. **Don't plagiarize (see the academic misconduct policy below).** Take one open-note, take-home final. Don't cheat. Think for yourself throughout.

COURSE MATERIALS

You don't have to buy any books for this course—all readings are available as PDFs on Canvas.

ASSESSMENT

- Class attendance—25%
- Discussion Group Participation—10%
- Paper Outline Draft—5%
- Major Research Project—35%
- Take-Home Final Exam—25%

Simply attending on most Mondays and Wednesdays will earn you a substantial portion of your grade. Fridays are for discussion group, where participation will earn you further points. Just by meeting with the instructor to discuss a paper outline and / or review a rough draft, you will earn another piece of your grade. The most important assignment is the completed version of your major research paper. There will also be an take-home final.

Grades will be earned 1 point at a time, with 100 points available overall in the course. Each point corresponds to 1 percent. Grades will never be discussed over email. Grade changes can be requested in person, though the grade may decrease rather than increase upon re-evaluation by the instructor.

IN-DEPTH REVIEW OF ASSESSMENT CATEGORIES

Class Attendance

Coming to class on Monday and Wednesday, on-time and for the duration, earns 1 point per day. A maximum of 25 points can be earned in this category—so, you can skip up to 2 days of Monday or Wednesday class with absolutely no penalty. Absences can be excused with proper documentation and make-up work.

Discussion Group Participation

Fridays are for discussion group. Near the end of class on Wednesday, we will identify a key question relating to either the prior or the upcoming readings. Your task on Friday will be to come to the discussion group with a proposed answer to, or at least a reflection on, the question.

As long as you show up to Friday discussions on time, stay for the duration, and have a response to the chosen question prepared to share with the group when called upon, you will earn 1 point per contribution. There will be 11 discussion group meetings, and a maximum of 10 points can be earned in this category—so, you can choose to skip, or attend without contributing, 1 Friday meeting with absolutely no penalty. Absences can be excused with proper documentation and make-up work.

Paper Outline or Draft

Your primary assignment in this class will be to complete a major research paper, one inspired by something that you find especially intriguing within the course content. In order to ensure that these papers go as well as can be, you need to meet with the instructor in office hours/by appointment by Friday, March 4 (Week 8). As long as you come to see the instructor, and you have either a proposed paper outline or a rough draft to review and discuss at that point, you will earn all 5 points in this category.

Major Research Paper

In Weeks 1–10 of the course, we will be examining at least one fundamental yet intriguing topic per week. In almost all cases, we will look at each issue from both a traditional and an alternative ethical perspective. Often, we'll get introduced to a bioethical dilemma on Monday, and consider resolutions on Wednesday.

Once you've identified what topic you'd like to write your major research paper on, and met with the instructor about your outline or draft, you should focus on producing a really excellent final version. Week 11 of the course has been set aside just for this purpose: Monday is for workshopping your arguments; Wednesday is for generating and responding to counter-arguments; and Friday is the last day to submit your paper via Canvas.

Final versions of these papers should be at least 2,000 words long. Although you are encouraged to get as much help as you need on this paper from the instructor or other reputable sources, you must write this paper yourself. Without appropriate documentation, late papers submitted will be graded on half the normal scale, and no credit will be given for any papers submitted more than a week after the original due date. After grading, you can ask for a re-grade—but remember that the instructor may either increase or decrease the number of points awarded, upon reassessment. You can earn up to 35 points on this paper.

Take-Home Final

At the end of the course there will be a take-home, open-note final exam. The exam will be only somewhat comprehensive. The test will consist of a selection of several short essay questions

that you will be given two weeks to complete. You will need to compose answers to most but not all of the questions. Your answers must be your own. You can earn up to 25 points on this exam.

GRADES

The **overall grade scale** for the course is as follows:

100–94%	= A (4.0)
93–90%	= A- (3.7)
89–87%	= B+ (3.3)
86–84%	= B (3.0)
83–80%	= B- (2.7)
79–77%	= C+ (2.3)
76–74%	= C (2.0)
73–70%	= C- (1.7)
69–67%	= D+ (1.3)
66–64%	= D (1.0)
63–60%	= D- (0.7)
59–0%	= E (0.0)

A/A-	“excellent performance, superior achievement”
B+/B/B-	“good performance, substantial achievement”
C+/C/C-	“standard performance and achievement”
D+/D/D-	“substandard performance, marginal achievement”
E	“unsatisfactory performance and achievement”

Quotes from section III.G.1 of *Policy 6–100 Instruction and Evaluation* Revision 25 (effective July 1, 2017).

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

While scholastic dishonesty is not anticipated, students are subject to university policy governing these matters. Students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with *Policy 6-400 Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities*. Ignorance of the policy is not considered an excuse. This means that neither cheating nor plagiarism is allowed in this course. Among other things: no copying from others, and no borrowing from others without proper attribution when completing written assignments. The work you submit in this class must be original work created for this class.

Here is an informal tip on how to avoid any question of plagiarism during paper writing:

whenever you borrow an idea from someone else, make sure to credit that person in parentheses after the sentence or paragraph you wrote using that idea; **whenever you borrow words from someone else**, make sure to put those words in quotation marks and to credit that person in parentheses after the quote. Any sources used for their ideas or words must be cited using some sort of professional citation method (like APA, MLA, or Chicago style).

Failure to abide by these norms will be reported to the Dean of Students. Academic sanctions may result, including but not limited to: grade reduction; failing grade; probation; suspension or dismissal from the program or the university; and even revocation of certificate or degree.

COMMUNICATION

The instructor is extremely available during office hours. You are encouraged to “drop in” during these “walk-in” times—no appointment is necessary. Come to ask questions about the course, or just to chat about an idea you had while doing the reading or thinking about the material. If the scheduled time does not work for you, request an alternative.

The instructor is generally accessible via email, but cannot guarantee immediate response. In case of emergency, the instructor will always attend to correspondence as promptly as possible. But during an emergency, please do not worry about obtaining permission from the instructor to turn an assignment in late. Simply plan on obtaining documentation, once the crisis has passed—such as a doctor’s note, incident report, obituary, etc. If you supply that documentation, your personal emergency will be accommodated, and your coursework will be available for make-up until the end of the final day of the course. Once grades are in, they are final.

Following federal guidelines (FERPA), grades will never be discussed over email. Grade changes can be requested, though grades may decrease rather than increase upon re-evaluation by the instructor. University add/drop policy will be followed.

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR

You can expect the instructor to ask for your name prior to addressing you in class. The instructor also avoids biased, expectant, and slanted language whenever possible. Considerate and respectful behavior is generally expected of everyone.

Some weeks we will be discussing controversial topics in the course. It is essential that we maintain a safe and constructive classroom environment, where students with a variety of different perspectives can feel comfortable sharing their ideas and reasons for those ideas. Please be respectful, both as a speaker and a listener. Be charitable. Give course mates the benefit of the doubt (especially if they are saying something with which you do not agree). Feel free to ask for clarifications, reasons, unstated assumptions, and evidence. Be constructive. Use the “me than three” rule for participating in a discussion. We are not trying to win a debate.

In the unfortunate case of extremely uncharitable or highly disruptive student behavior, the instructor reserves the right to incorporate this behavior into determination of a student’s overall grade. Note the instructor has never needed to invoke this right.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS/TOPICS

<u>Week</u>	<u>Monday</u>	<u>Wednesday</u>	<u>Friday</u>
1. Jan 10, 12, 14	Course Intro & Syllabus	Beauchamp & Childress (2001) on 10 Cases in Bioethics	Gillon (1995) on Principlism
2. Jan 17, 19, 21	Labor Day (No Classes)	Rachels & Rachels (2012) on Cultural Relativism	Discussion
3. Jan 24, 26, 28	Robertson, Kahn, & Wagner (2002) on Conception	Davis (1995) on Problems with Principlism	Discussion
4. Jan 31, Feb 2, 4	Collins & Pinch (2005) on Vaccines & Parental Rights	Nussbaum (1988) on Virtue Ethics	Discussion
5. Feb 7, 9, 11	Gould (1984) on Forced Sterilization	Kant (1785) on Deontology	Discussion
6. Feb 14, 16, 18	Harris (1975) on the Survival Lottery	Mill (1861) on Utilitarianism	Discussion
7. Feb 21, 23, 25	Siegler (1982) on Confidentiality	Andorno & Laurie (2004) on the Right Not to Know	Discussion
8. Feb 28, Mar 2, 4	Lippert et al. (2017) on Genome Identification	Pence (2015) on Health Care	Discussion* Last Day to Discuss Paper Drafts/Outlines
9. Mar 7, 9, 11	Spring	Break	(No Classes)
10. Mar 14, 16, 18	Szasz (1960) on the Myth of Mental Illness	Oliver (2006) on the Myth of Thomas Szasz	Discussion
11. Mar 21, 23, 25	Paper Workshop Day on Arguments	Paper Workshop Day on Counter-Arguments	Personal Study Day Research Paper Due
12. Mar 28, 30, Apr 1	ACMG (2013) on Fetal Screening	Foot (1967) on the Doctrine of Double Effect	Discussion
13. Apr 4, 6, 8	HMS (1968) on Definitions of Death	Rachels (1975) on the Doctrine of Doing and Allowing	Discussion
14. Apr 11, 13, 15	Thomson (1971) on Abortion	Parfit (1983) on Future Generations	Discussion Take-Home Final Exam Assigned
15. Apr 18, 20, 22	Exam Preparation Day	Exam Preparation Day	Personal Study Day
16. Apr 25, 27, 29	Personal Study Day (April 26: Last day of Spring classes)		Take-Home Final Exam Due