

Bioethics

Spring 2018

Instructor

Eric Sampson
Email: trae@live.unc.edu
Office: Caldwell 210D
Office Hours: W, F (11-12) or by appt.

Meeting Details

Days: Mon., Wed., Fri.
Time: 10:10 – 11:00am
Place: Phillips Hall, Rm 385
Course: Phil 165.002

Course Description

Bioethicists study, among other things, moral questions concerning the beginning and end of life, the general practice of medicine, and the development of health care policy. These questions are often both theoretically challenging and practically important: Is abortion ever morally permissible? What about physician-assisted suicide? Is there anything wrong with genetically enhancing a child to be extraordinarily intelligent, athletic, or beautiful? When (if ever) are doctors morally permitted to deceive their patients? Should organ donors be allowed to sell transplantable organs? What are our duties to animals? Is it permissible to subject them to incredible suffering if doing so helps us develop medicines for humans? In this course, we'll try to think through these thorny questions and more.

Text

There's no required textbook. All course readings are under the "Resources" tab on Sakai.

Expected Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- recognize and describe important positions in moral philosophy, especially bioethics;
- read, comprehend, and critically engage texts from contemporary ethics and bioethics; and
- advance a philosophical position by presenting an argument for it and defending it from objections.

Course Requirements

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| • Participation | 10% | |
| • Quizzes | 15% | |
| • Exam 1 (5 pp.) | 25% | Due: Wednesday, February 28 (11:59pm) |
| • Exam 2 (in class) | 25% | Date: Wednesday, March 28 (in class) |
| • Exam 3 (5 pp.) | 25% | Due: Monday, April 30 (11:59pm) |

Participation

Participation begins by reading the assigned readings carefully. If no one reads, we've got nothing to talk about. Second, you'll have to contribute with questions or comments. Some people are shy. I get that. Such persons can rack up their participation points on the back half of the semester once they become more comfortable with the class setting. Still, everyone will have to open their mouths at some time—even the shy folks. But don't think quantity of comments is the only (or even the best) way to receive a good participation grade. Quality matters too. The best thing to do is strike a nice balance between quality and quantity. Sometimes you'll say stuff that doesn't quite make sense. That's fine. Philosophy is hard, and you're allowed to struggle a bit. It means you're trying. So contribute even if you're not 100% clear about what's going on. If, however, it's clear to me that you've given absolutely no effort to reading the material, then speaking up doesn't help you in the least.

Attendance

Attendance is expected. You can miss three (3) lectures without any penalty. Any absences beyond those four will result in a deduction of your participation grade.

Some Basic Ethical Theory

Week 1 Shafer-Landau, "Consequentialism: Its Nature and Attractions"
Shafer-Landau, "Ethical Pluralism and Absolute Moral Rules"

Abortion

Week 2 Thomson, "A Defense of Abortion"
Marquis, "An Argument that Abortion is Wrong"

Week 3 Lee and George, "The Wrong of Abortion"
Giubilini and Minerva, "After-birth Abortion: Why Should the Baby Live?"

Eating and Experimenting on Non-Human Animals

Week 4 Singer, "All Animals are Equal"
Cohen, "The Case for the Use of Animals in Biomedical Research"

Week 5 Shafer-Landau, "Vegetarianism, Causation, and Ethical Theory"
[Norcross, "Puppies, Pigs, and People: Eating Meat and Marginal Cases"](#)
Steinbock, "Speciesism and the Idea of Equality"

Genetic Enhancement

Week 6 Savulescu, “Genetic Interventions and the Ethics of Enhancing...”
Sandel, “The Case Against Perfection”

Week 7 Perrson and Savulescu, “The Perils of Cognitive Enhancement”
Harris, “Moral Enhancement and Freedom”

Informed Consent

Week 8 Faden and Beauchamp, “The Concept of Informed Consent”
Katz, “Informed Consent—Must It Remain a Fairy Tale?”

Paternalism and The Doctor-Patient Relationship

Week 9 Emanuel and Emanuel, “Four Models of Patient-Physician Relationship”
Goldman, “The Refutation of Medical Paternalism”
Conly, “Coercive Paternalism in Health Care: Against Freedom of Choice”

Human Research

Week 10 Hellman and Hellman, “Of Mice but Not Men: Problems of the RCT”
Angell, “The Ethics of Clinical Research in the Third World”
Brody, “Ethical Issues in Clinical Trials in Developing Countries”

Euthanasia

Week 11 Rachels, “Active and Passive Euthanasia”
Steinbock, “The Intentional Termination of Life”

Organ Markets

Week 12 Joralemon and Cox, “The Case Against Compensating for Organs”
Dworkin, “Of Markets and Morals: The Case for Organ Sales”

Experimentation

Week 13 “The Nuremberg Code”
Arras, “The Jewish Chronic Disease Hospital Case”
Rothman and Rothman “The Willowbrook Hepatitis Studies”

Krugman, "The Willowbrook Hepatitis Studies Revisited"
Shweder, "Tuskegee Re-Examined"
Lurie and Wolfe, "Unethical Trials on Interventions to Reduce
Perinatal Transmission of HIV in Developing Countries"

Justice in Health Care

Week 14 Menzel, "Justice and Fairness: A Critical Element in U.S. Health
System Reform"
Dorr and Ubel, "Rationing' Health Care"
Persad, Wertheimer, Emmanuel "Principles for Allocation of Scarce
Medical Interventions"