

Bioethics: Regulating Right and Wrong (PHIL 209A WB11)
Syllabus, Summer II 2018 - ONLINE

Instructor: Kelsey Gipe

Email: gipe.kelsey@gmail.com

Online Office Hours: Tues. & Wed. 4:30-5:30pm

Discord Server “Office”: [[link](#)]

BIOETHICISTS help to formulate ethical guidelines for medical professionals and the public. These guidelines answer questions such as the following: When life-saving health resources are scarce, how should we decide who gets them? Should patients be able to receive physician-assisted suicide? If so, what should be the conditions on eligibility? What rules should govern the release of incidental findings to subjects of genetic and genomic research?

ETHICAL GUIDELINES pertinent to questions like these can be found in documents such as the World Medical Association’s “Declaration of Helsinki” and the World Health Organization’s “Guiding Principles on Human Cell, Tissue, and Organ Transplantation.” Such guidelines often change over time as a result, for example, of the emergence of new technologies or the discovery of morally problematic dimensions of longstanding practices. This course involves students in the project of constructing and defending ethical rules for three particularly dynamic domains in medicine and health: allocation of scarce resources, physician assisted suicide, and genetic testing.

By the end of this course students can expect to be able to:

- Select and critically evaluate literature relevant to the practice of bioethics in the three domains of allocation of scarce resources, genetic testing, and physician-assisted suicide.
- Apply, in a way authentic to the practice of bioethics, its methods, including that of constructing moral arguments, to produce an amendment to actual or proposed ethical rules in one of these domains.
- Critique, revise, and refine such an amendment in the way bioethicists do.
- Collaborate with others in order to construct a plausible proposal for such a change.
- Demonstrate an ability to grasp and criticize moral arguments regarding allocation of scarce resources, genetic testing, and physician assisted suicide.
- Demonstrate familiarity and facility with fundamental concepts in bioethics, especially concepts salient to these three domains.

Texts:

All readings are available as PDF files on the ELMS site for this course. (Login at <http://www.elms.umd.edu/>.) There is no textbook. The only “text” you will be required to obtain on your own is the film *How to Die in Oregon*, which is available to purchase and stream on Amazon.com and iTunes. Scheduled readings may change as the course progresses. Changes will be announced. Please consult ELMS regularly **and make sure your Canvas settings enable you to receive announcements.**

Requirements:

Two exams, two discussion posts, one group paper, and participation.

exam 1	on allocation of scarce, life-saving resources	23% of grade	Jul 16; due by 11:59pm
exam 2	on physician assisted suicide and genetic testing	24% of grade	Jul 27; due by 11:59pm
3 discussion posts	on material from all 3 different topics of course	12% of grade	Submit posts on the relevant three Wednesdays: Jul 11 (Topic 1), Jul 18 (Topic 2), Jul 25 (Topic 3)
group paper	on material from one part of course	30% of grade (10% rough + 20% final draft)	Submit rough (Jul 19) and final (Jul 27) drafts of group papers on dates specified in the syllabus schedule.
effective participation	responses to discussion posts	6% of grade	Based on interaction on discussion posts. Submit a response to the discussion post of a fellow student each week, for a total of 3 responses.
peer evals	peer evaluations of contribution to group papers	5% of grade	Based on submission of and performance in peer evals from collaborative paper groups.

Regarding Exams:

Approximately 3 days before each exam, I will post a list of questions on ELMS. The questions will require you to summarize, compare, and criticize central ethical arguments or positions defended in readings for the particular part of the course the exam addresses (e.g., the questions handed out before the final will have to do with readings on ethical issues in genetic testing and medical euthanasia). The actual exam will consist of questions I select from that list. Exams will be open book and timed. You will take each exam on ELMS.

Discussion Posts:

You are required to submit a discussion post on ELMS (300-600 words) on three dates: Jul 11, Jul 18, Jul 25.

In each discussion post, you must summarize and criticize an *ethical* position or argument manifest in one of our readings in that particular section of the course. So, for example, if you submit a discussion post on Euthanasia & Physician-Assisted Suicide, you might criticize an ethical position taken in The Philosopher's Brief. Late posts will be accepted, but they will be penalized 1 full grade per day they are late. Only a university-approved excuse will free you from this penalty.

Participation Grade:

Students will also be required to respond thoughtfully to at least one discussion post (written by one of their fellow students) for all three topics. Deadlines for responding will be the *following Wednesday* for both Topic 1 (posts due Jul 11, responses due Jul 18) and Topic 2 (posts due Jul 18, responses due Jul 25), and the *following Monday* for Topic 3 (posts due Jul 25, responses due Jul 30). This needn't be a long response, but it does need to consist of more than saying "good job!" or "well put!" or "I agree!" Try to think of an interesting question to ask, a thoughtful point to add, and/or a (polite) objection to raise to your classmates' posts. Original posters should feel free (and encouraged!) to respond back to classmates' feedback on their posts.

Group Paper:

Students will be randomly assigned to a paper group, which can be found on the shared Google Doc entitled "PHIL209A: Collaborative Paper Groups" on ELMS. Each group will work on a collaborative paper project focused on Topic 1: Resource Allocation. Written collaboration will take place in Google Docs and over email, and verbal collaboration can take place over Discord (students are also free to use other verbal communication methods if they prefer). Each group will draft a paper (1,000-2,000) words regarding allocation of scarce, life-saving medical resources. *Here is the paper prompt for all groups:*

- ***Papers must propose, explain, and justify a significant departure from cost-effectiveness-based prioritization of health resource allocation or Persad, Wertheimer, and Emanuel's "Principles for Allocation of Scarce Medical Interventions."***

Each group will submit a *rough draft paper* by the relevant date specified in the syllabus (Jul 19). Drafts should be uploaded to the relevant assignment on ELMS as a Word document. The instructor will give feedback on this draft. Based on this feedback, students will revise their drafts. *Final drafts of group papers will be due on the date specified in the syllabus (Jul 27).* Final papers should be uploaded to the relevant assignment on ELMS as a Word document.

Please note: All group members are expected to contribute to both rough and final drafts of their group papers. Group members who fail to contribute will lose some or all points on the relevant paper assignments.

Peer Evaluations of Group Paper Participation: Students will be required to fill out peer evaluations for each of their group members regarding what each member contributed to the group paper. *If I hear back from your collaboration group that you didn't contribute much of anything to the group paper, you will automatically lose all 5 points.* Free riding on group projects is a bad habit to get into, not to mention deeply unfair to your other groupmates.

Important Notes on Taking an Online Course:

This is a highly condensed 3-week online course. As such, you should expect to spend multiple hours a day on this course (i.e. watching video lectures; doing readings; working on your group papers; communicating with group members; reading/filling out note pages and worksheets (when applicable) watching assigned videos on Youtube (when applicable); writing and responding to discussion posts; studying for exams). You're receiving normal credit for this class, and so you'll be doing essentially the same amount of work you would be for a semester-long course. Your instructor has made deadlines and expectations explicit along with cutting down the required readings to create a manageable workload. However, students must be aware that this will be a challenging and stressful (albeit interesting and rewarding!) three weeks and should plan accordingly.

Info Regarding Instructor Office Hours & E-mail Availability:

Your instructor will be available for online "office" hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 4:30-5:30pm EST. These will take place on the PHIL209A Discord server. Here is the permanent invite code: [link] Please use your actual name (or something close enough that we can easily identify which student you are) as your username. You don't need to download the Discord app in order to participate. It will work fine in a browser. Also, feel free to log on and listen to the questions your classmates ask. You don't need to talk if you don't want to!

Your instructor will also be available to answer emails from 12pm-8pm EST daily. Students may typically expect a response within a few hours, unless a question is complex and needs some time to resolve. Response times may be longer over the weekend.

Academic integrity:

The University of Maryland Honor Pledge reads: "I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this assignment/examination." The Pledge statement should be handwritten and signed on the front of your papers and exams. Students who fail to write and sign the Pledge will be asked to confer with the instructor. The Code of Academic Integrity identifies four types of academic dishonesty: cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, and plagiarism. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes dishonesty of these four types. Please consult the Code of Academic Integrity <http://www.president.umd.edu/policies/iii100a.html> or speak with the instructor if you would like any further clarification (e.g., on what constitutes plagiarism). Incidents of academic dishonesty will be taken very seriously. Any cases of it will be forwarded to the Student Honor Council.

Grading:

Your final grade will depend on the percentage you earn of the total points possible in the class:

A+: 99-100; A: 94-98; A-: 90-93; B+: 87-89; B: 84-86; B-: 80-83; C+: 77-79; C: 74-76; C-: 70-73;

D+: 67-69; D: 64-66; D-: 60-63. *Numbers in these ranges guarantee the grade in question, but your instructor reserves the right to curve up when appropriate.* Failure to complete an assignment will result in your receiving no points (a zero) for that assignment.

Policy on Medically Necessitated Absence from the Course:

- A student who experiences a prolonged absence or an injury/illness preventing participation in a Major Scheduled Grading Event is required to provide written documentation of the illness from the Health Center or an outside health care provider, verifying the dates of treatment and the time period during which the student was unable to meet academic responsibilities.
- Major Scheduled Grading Events will be: exams, discussion posts, and group paper submissions.

Copyright notice:

Class lectures and other materials are copyrighted and they may not be reproduced for anything other than personal use without written permission from the instructor.

This syllabus is subject to change:

Students will be notified in advance of important changes that could affect grading, assignments, etc.

Religious Observances:

You will not be penalized for any absence that results from religious observance. However, it is your responsibility to notify the instructor within the first week of class regarding any religious observance absence(s) for the duration of the course.

Students with Disabilities:

The University of Maryland is committed to providing appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities. Students with a documented disability should inform the instructors within the add-drop period if academic accommodations are needed. To obtain an Accommodation Letter prepared by Disability Support Service (DSS), a division of the University Counseling Center, please call 301-314-7682, e-mail dissup@umd.edu, or visit the Shoemaker Building for more information.

Readings:

All readings will be made available on the Canvas site for this course. Links to supplementary videos will be provided in ELMS announcements. Students will additionally be responsible for obtaining and watching the film *How to Die in Oregon* (available to purchase/rent/stream on Amazon.com and iTunes).

Schedule:

(Readings might be altered as the course progresses. If there are any changes, they will be announced.)

M Jul 9	Introduction & Philosophy Paper Writing Instructions
TOPIC 1	Allocation of Scarce Life-Saving Resources
Tu Jul 10	Alexander, "They Decide Who Lives, Who Dies" Truog, "Four Babies and Three Machines: Rationing at the Bedside."
W Jul 11	Bognar and Hirose: <i>The Ethics of Health Care Rationing</i> , Chapters 2 and 3 ***DISCUSSION POSTS FOR TOPIC 1 DUE***
Th Jul 12	Persad, Wertheimer, Emanuel: "Principles for Allocation of Scarce Medical Interventions"
F Jul 13	Harris, "QALYfying the Value of Life"; Singer et al., "Double Jeopardy and the Use of QALYs in Health Care Allocation"
TOPIC 2	Genetic Testing
M Jul 16	Green et al., "Charting a course for genomic medicine from base pairs to bedside; Cho: "Understanding Incidental Findings in the Context of Genetics and Genomics" ***EXAM 1 UP ON ELMS; DUE BY 11:59PM***
Tu Jul 17	McGuire et al., "Research ethics and the challenge of whole-genome sequencing"; Lunshof et al., "From genetic privacy to open consent"
W Jul 18	Applebaum et al., "Models of Consent to Return of Incidental Findings in Genomic Research" ***DISCUSSION POSTS FOR TOPIC 2 DUE***
Th Jul 19	<i>Pediatrics</i> 2013: "Ethical and Policy Issues in Genetic Testing and Screening of Children" ***GROUP PAPER DRAFTS DUE***
F Jul 20	<i>The Economist</i> 2015: "Editing Humanity"
TOPIC 3	Euthanasia & Physician-Assisted Suicide
M Jul 23	Van der Heide: "End-of-Life Practices in the Netherlands under the Euthanasia Act"; Bilsen et al., "Medical End-of-Life Practices under the Euthanasia Law in Belgium"; "Oregon's Death with Dignity Act"
Tu Jul 24	Brock: "Voluntary Active Euthanasia"
W Jul 25	Dworkin et al., "Assisted Suicide: The Philosophers' Brief" ***DISCUSSION POSTS FOR TOPIC 3 DUE***
Th Jul 26	Eijnden & Martinovici: "Neonatal Euthanasia: A claim for an immoral law"

F Jul 27

Watch: *How to Die in Oregon*
EXAM 2 UP ON ELMS; DUE BY 11:59PM
FINAL GROUP PAPERS DUE BY 11:59PM
PEER EVALS DUE BY 11:59PM



<http://nedroid.com/2014/08/this-isnt-even-a-hospital-2/>