

BIOETHICS (SPRING 2020)

Instructor	Brendan Shea, Ph.D.	Course number	PHIL 1135-91
Contact Info	Brendan.Shea@rctc.edu 507-722-1146	Prerequisites	None (However, this is a college-level class, so you should be comfortable with reading college-level texts and writing responses to these. See below for more details.)
Office	M2403Q	Class location	East Hall 103
Drop-in Office hours	Mon 9-11; Wed 2-5	Class time	Wed 6-8:45 PM

Welcome to PHIL 1135: Bioethics! I'm your instructor, Brendan Shea (I prefer "Brendan"; "Dr. Shea" or "Prof. Shea" work if you are feeling formal). This is the syllabus for the course. If you have short questions that are NOT answered here, email is generally the best way to get ahold of me. For more detailed questions about the class, I'd encourage you to talk to me during office hours (either in person or over the phone), or to set up an appointment.

Course Description: This course provides background ethical theories, principles and concepts necessary to grasp the ethical issues in life, death, health care, biotechnology and the life sciences. Specific attention will be given to the social context of ethical decisions and there will be an emphasis on critical reasoning and justification. Special topics that may be discussed include: definitions of life and death, autonomy, paternalism, voluntary informed consent, rights, obligations, clinical trials, confidentiality, abortion and reproductive technologies, cloning, stem cells, end of life issues, transplantation and fair allocation of limited resources. (3 cr, 3 hours lecture per week)

COURSE CONTENT AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

Outline of Major Content Areas:

1. Background Ethical Theories and Concepts
 - a) Consequentialism/Utilitarianism
 - b) Deontology/Kantian Ethics
 - c) Feminist/Care Ethics
 - d) Principles-Based Ethics
 - e) Casuistry
2. Critical Concepts
 - a) Autonomy/Competence
 - b) Voluntary Informed Consent
 - c) Rights/Interests
 - d) Distributive Justice
3. Areas of Applied Ethics (may include but are not limited to):
 - a) Death and Dying
 - b) Clinical Trials/Human and Animal Experimentation
 - c) Abortion & Reproductive Technology
 - d) Social Justice and Public Health
 - e) Biotechnology

Learning Outcomes (General): The student will be able to:

1. Identify and explain the major areas of ethical inquiry with regard to life, death, health care biotechnology and life sciences.
2. Understand logical forms of justification
3. Analyze moral concepts, principles and theories.
4. Explain major bioethical concepts and terminology.
5. Identify conclusions and premises of professional, moral arguments.
6. Apply ethical theories to concenter solutions.
7. Formulate their own moral positions and justify them in written arguments.
8. Appreciate multiculturalism and other world views.

Learning Outcomes (MnTC):

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

- Beauchamp and Childress, 2012, *Principles of Biomedical Ethics*, 7th edition (New York: Oxford University Press).
- This course will require that you have reliable, regular internet access (to complete online quizzes, etc.).

GRADING AND COURSE POLICIES

Grading Scale:: >=90.0 (A), 80.0-89.9 (B), 70.0 -79.9 (C), 60.0-69.9 (D), <60 (F).

Goal 6/The Humanities-the Arts, Literature, and Philosophy:
The student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate awareness of the scope and variety of works in the arts and humanities.
2. Understand those works as expressions of individual and human values within a historical and social context.
3. Respond critically to works in the arts and humanities.

Goal 9/Ethical and Civic Responsibility: The student will be able to:

1. Examine, articulate, and apply their own ethical views.
2. Understand and apply core concepts (e.g. politics, rights and obligations, justice, liberty) to specific issues.
3. Analyze and reflect on the ethical dimensions of legal, social, and scientific issues.

RCTC Core Outcomes. This course contributes to meeting the following RCTC Core Learning Outcome(s):

- **Critical Thinking,** Students will think systematically by integrating skills and using a variety of appropriate resources and methods. They will (1) gather relevant information, (2) make logical connections, (3) synthesize, analyze and evaluate information, (4) articulate and defend ideas, (5) use information to create innovative solutions, and (6) apply the Scientific Method.
- **Personal and Professional Accountability.** Students will take ultimate responsibility for achieving their educational and personal goals. They will (1) exhibit honesty and respect, (2) know policies and the consequences of their actions, (3) prioritize tasks to maintain balance, (4) be active learners, (4) face experiences and challenges with a positive attitude, (5) seek resources and services as needed, (6) maintain physical and spiritual wellness, and (7) take pride in self and in one's work.

Your final grade is a weighted average of the following:

- **Bioethics Readiness Quiz (5%).** This quiz will cover the material on the syllabus and chapter 1 of the textbook. It will also ask you to reflect on your own goals for the class, and the ways in which you can best meet them. If you get lower than a B (80%) on this quiz, I'd highly encourage you to contact me to set up an appointment.
- **D2L Quizzes (10%).** For textbook readings, there will be a short D2L reading quiz made up of T/F or multiple-choice questions intended to help you focus on key points in the reading. You will get TWO chances to do each quiz, and your grade will be the BEST of the scores.
- **Activities (25%).** Face-to-face students will do occasional in-class and out-of-class activities, while online students will post to the discussion board. Online students can find the grading criteria for discussion boards below.
- **Three Essay Exams (60% total).** Each exam will consist of three essays, which you can answer in 500 to 1,000 words each (1,500 to 3,000 words per exam). I will DROP your lowest exam score. However, everyone is required to take the first and second exams. You don't need to take the third exam if you are happy with your grade on the first two.
- **Extra Credit (up to +2%).** There may be occasional opportunities for extra credit, which I will let you know about. For reasons of fairness, I can't offer extra credit opportunities to individual students, so please don't ask.

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity. Your work should be your own—please don't use your classmates, friends, parents, internet sites, etc. to help you write your papers or answer test questions. And when you do use outside sources, make sure to give appropriate citation and acknowledgment for any words, ideas, or arguments. If the preponderance of the evidence suggests cheating has occurred (that is, if the evidence suggests that this is *more likely than not*), you will receive a failing grade on the assignment. A second violation will lead to failing grade for the course. Please also see the RCTC statement on academic integrity later in the syllabus.

Attendance. Students in face-to-face classes are expected to attend class regularly, while online students are expected to participate in the class discussions and activities. If you miss more than two weeks consecutively, or 1/3 of the total class sessions, you may receive a failing grade of FW. This may endanger your ability to receive financial aid. With this in mind, it is *your* responsibility to withdraw from the class if you decide not to continue. I am willing to make exceptions if circumstances require, but you need to let me know about these in a timely manner.

Signature Assessment: Bioethics in Practice: The signature assessment for PHIL 1135: Bioethics is a written assignment of between 1200 and 3000 total words. This assessment is part of ALL Bioethics classes here at RCTC, though it may be in the form of a paper, a series of discussion board posts or journal entries, or a written exam. In the assignment, the student should demonstrate the ability to:

1. Explain and apply theoretical principles and ideas of bioethics. This might include, but are not limited to, ideas about utility, autonomy, theories of justice, legal/moral rights, virtues, or the ethics of care.
2. Present cogent arguments on issues related to bioethics, such as euthanasia, abortion, health care, professional-patient relationships, medical research, or other topics.
3. Take into account multiple perspectives, and to recognize potential objections and alternatives.

For this class, ESSAY EXAM 2 has been designated as the signature assessment (This is NOT an additional assignment, and it doesn't require that you do anything extra.).

POLICY ON LATE WORK: PLEASE READ BEFORE EMAILING ME!

Please read the following *before* e-mailing me to request an extension on an assignment. If you a quiz or activity due to a brief sickness, work conflict, class trip, computer malfunction, wedding, auto problem, court date, funeral, sporting event, etc., you do NOT need to email me (though it's fine if you want to give me a heads up). Here are my policies for making up missed or late work:

- Over the course of the semester, you can make up to TWO missed activities, discussion board posts, or quizzes by writing a 500 to 750-word response on the relevant material. This response should (1) clearly explain the main ideas in your own words, and (2) offer a thoughtful, considered response to it (the review questions on the handouts are a good place to start). **They should be submitted within ONE WEEK of the missing assignment.** Full or partial credit will be assigned based on how complete/accurate your response is. A special D2L assignment folder will be set up to submit these. When submitting this, please clearly indicate:
 - Which activity or quiz you missed, and what the initial due date was.
 - What resources (textbook, lecture notes, etc) you used to prepare this essay.
- Take-home essay exams CANNOT be made up for full credit. For exams 1 and 2, your grade will be capped at 90% if it is submitted within 48 hours of the due date, and 80% if it is submitted within one week. Extensions past one week require my prior approval, and may result in additional penalties. Exam 3 cannot be submitted late.
- I will make exceptions to these policies if you can demonstrate a genuine need. Please come talk to me if anything comes up that is preventing you from succeeding in class.

ALL late work should be submitted to the D2L "Late Work" assignment folder. NO LATE WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED DURING THE LAST WEEK OF CLASS (again, absent exceptional circumstances).

OTHER CLASSROOM POLICIES (FACE-TO-FACE STUDENTS)

This is a college-level class! With that in mind, I don't anticipate having to do much policing of behavior 😊. However, my general expectation is that you will respect your fellow classmate's right to learn, and that you avoid doing anything that will make this more difficult for them (such as repeatedly showing up to class late, off-topic talking during lectures or group work, etc.). Disruptive behavior of

this sort may lead to students losing activity/quiz points associated with that class, without the opportunity to make them up. Repeated (or especially serious) violations will be referred to the college, and can lead to more severe consequences.

Technology: “No Cell Phone” and “No Laptop” policy. In this class, my expectation is that all technology (including cell phones, laptops, and tablets) will be turned off and put away (in your bag/pocket, not on the desk), absent a very compelling reason to do otherwise that you let me know about ahead of time (e.g., a documented medical need or learning accommodation). There may be times in class when technology is allowed—I will let you know when this is the case. Research¹ has repeatedly found that cell phone use in classroom is linked to poorer learning outcomes, not only for the student who is using the technology, but for other students in the class. These effects persist even if the cell phone is not actively being used (and is instead simply left face-down on the desk, etc.). With this in mind, I will treat violations of this policy the same as any other disruptive behavior.

RCTC COMMON POLICIES

This course will be taught in accordance with the following policies, which apply to ALL RCTC courses. If you have any questions about these, please let me know!

Academic Integrity Statement. The primary academic mission of Rochester Community and Technical College (RCTC) is the exploration and dissemination of knowledge, and academic honesty and integrity are integral to the academic process. Academic dishonesty - cheating, plagiarism, and collusion - is a serious offense which undermines the educational process and the learning experience for the entire college community. RCTC students are expected to understand and adhere to the concept of academic integrity and to the standards of conduct prescribed by the College's Academic Integrity Policy. Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a student at Rochester Community and Technical College is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

Americans with Disability Act. Rochester Community and Technical College is committed to ensuring its programs, services and activities are accessible to individuals with disabilities, through its compliance with state and federal laws, and System Policy. Appropriate accommodations are provided to those qualified students with disabilities. If you believe you qualify for an academic accommodation, please contact the Director of Disability Support Services, Travis Kromminga at 507-280-2968 or through the Minnesota relay TTY 1-800-627-3529. The office can also be reached via e-mail at DisabilityServices@rctc.edu

Military Friendly Statement. Rochester Community and Technical College (RCTC) is a military friendly campus, pledging to do all we can to help military veterans transition into college to complete their educational goals. RCTC is proud to be a Beyond the Yellow Ribbon campus, serving and honoring our veterans, military service members and their families. Through the Veterans Resource Center, RCTC offers student veterans an on-campus point of contact with other veterans, and program information to assist them in making a successful transition into college. For assistance, students are encouraged to contact the Veterans Assistant Coordinator, Mark Larsen, at 507-779-9375 or e-mail at mark.larsen@state.mn.us, or Glen Saponari, RCTC's VA certifying official at 507-280- 5511 or email at VeteranServices@rctc.edu.

Title IX Statement. Sexual violence and other forms of sexual misconduct is prohibited at Minnesota State colleges and universities (Minnesota State). Any individual who has been, or is being, subjected to conduct prohibited by the Sexual Violence Policy is encouraged to report the incident. Individuals may choose to file a complaint anonymously using the online reporting tool (<https://www.rctc.edu/services/student-affairs/sexual-violence/>). Individuals who choose to file anonymous reports are advised that it may be difficult for the college to follow up or take specific action, where information is limited. For additional information please see the RCTC Sexual Violence Policy, <http://www.rctc.edu/policies/system/sexualviolence> or contact Rebecca Peine, Title IX Coordinator, at 507-285-7195 or email at TitleIX@rctc.edu.

READING AND WRITING ABOUT PHILOSOPHY

Reading and writing about philosophy can highly rewarding (and even fun!), but it also can be difficult, even for people with lots of experience (even professional philosophers still find it difficult sometimes!). With this in mind, here are my expectations/suggestions with regard to the level of reading/writing in this class:

1. Philosophy as a discipline doesn't require any "special" academic background, and philosophers have come from almost every imaginable profession: stonemasons, mathematicians, teachers, physicians, etc. However, philosophy does require the ability to ask "uncomfortable" questions about one's own beliefs and actions, and to take seriously arguments and ideas that disagree with our own most deeply held beliefs.
2. Before starting this class, you should be confident in your ability to read and understand a college-level textbook. This does NOT mean I expect you to grasp every concept/idea right away (I know that some of this stuff is pretty tricky, and that's why I am here to help!). However, I do expect that you will read the textbook BEFORE you come to class (or post to the discussion board, etc.), and come away with a basic understanding of main ideas. If you're unsure about your ability to do this, get in touch with me *early* in the class so we can discuss this.
3. On average, students should expect to spend about five minutes per standard textbook page of philosophical reading, which includes the following:
 - a) "Pre-reading" the chapter or article to get a sense of the structure, headings, key terms, etc.

¹ Louis-Philippe Beland and Richard Murphy, "Ill Communication: Technology, Distraction & Student Performance," *Labour Economics* 41 (2016): 61–76; Jeffrey H. Kuznekoff and Scott Titsworth, "The Impact of Mobile Phone Usage on Student Learning," *Communication Education* 62, no. 3 (July 1, 2013): 233–52, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03634523.2013.767917>; Adrian F. Ward et al., "Brain Drain: The Mere Presence of One's Own Smartphone Reduces Available Cognitive Capacity," *Journal of the Association for Consumer Research* 2, no. 2 (April 1, 2017): 140–54, <https://doi.org/10.1086/691462>.

- b) Reading the chapter carefully, stopping to take notes at least every page or so. At the minimum, your notes should include major topics addressed, definitions of key terms, important arguments or objections to arguments, and notable examples.
 - c) Taking time to review the material AFTER you have finished reading a section. Basically: spend 5-10 minutes trying to review what you have learned WITHOUT looking at the text or your notes. This can help you get a better sense of what you've grasped well, and what you still need to work on. Research has also found that this is a key step in actually being able to remember/use the information in the future.
 - d) As a general rule, techniques like highlighting or rereading are NOT very effective unless they are carefully limited. So, you don't want to be highlighting every other sentence, or trying to re-read a whole chapter. Try to limit your highlighting to just key points, and keep your rereading constrained to parts that genuinely confuse you.
 - e) I would recommend taking a brief "reading break" every 20 to 30 minutes.
4. As part of the class, you will be expected to write extended, argumentative essays. While you will be learning a bit more about how to write these, you should already be aware of basic principles of composition such as the use of **thesis statements**, how to organize your essays into **paragraphs**, and the importance of **citing** your sources using standard forms such as MLA, APA, Chicago, etc. If it has been a while since you have done this, don't worry! There are a number of excellent resources that you can review online. I particularly recommend the Purdue Online Writing Lab (https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html). I'd also encourage you to look at the "Guide to Writing Philosophy Papers", prepared by RCTC Philosophy Faculty (<https://philpapers.org/go.pl?id=SHEHTW&u=https%3A%2F%2Fphilpapers.org%2Farchive%2FSHEHTW.pdf>)
 5. All told, you should be prepared to spend around 100 to 150 hours total on this three-credit class (or 6 to 9 hours per week for a 16-week semester). Very roughly (and this will vary by student), this might break down as something like the following: (a) 40-50 hours on reading, note-taking, and completing quizzes, (b) 25-30 hours working on the exams, and (c) 40-50 hours attending class (or, for online students, reading lecture notes and writing discuss board posts).

GETTING IN TOUCH WITH ME (AND WHAT TO INCLUDE IN AN EMAIL)

The best way to get ahold of me is by e-mail, which I will aim to respond to within ONE working day (for simple questions) or TWO working days (for more complex ones). I don't generally check email on the weekends or holidays. If you don't hear from me by then, please try emailing me again. In order to help me provide you with quick, effective feedback, here's a general template for what I expect in an email.

Dear Brendan (or Professor Shea):

My name is [full name], and I'm a student in [this section] of [this class]. I had a question regarding [identify quiz, textbook chapter, etc. Be specific, and include a copy of anything I might need to answer your question, including the full problem text, if applicable]. Here's everything I've tried so far to figure out the answer for myself [looked at the syllabus, notes, textbook, etc.], and here's my best guess as to the answer. Could you help me by doing the following? [Be specific in what you are asking me to do.] [Feel free to include anything else you'd like here. I'm always happy when students send along ideas/links/whatever vaguely relating to ethics and philosophy 😊]/

As I rule, I will not respond to requests that you be exempted from class policies without very good reason (e.g., for late-work extensions outside the conditions outlined above), or to emails that lack basic identifying information (your full name, class, etc.). For long or complex questions, I highly encourage you to schedule an appointment so that we can talk (either in person or by phone). Oh, and please don't call me Mr. Shea (That's my dad!).

RESOURCES FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

Some helpful resources at RCTC (all of which are included with your course tuition) include the following:

- **Student Support Services/TRIO (SS 159)** provides academic support for first-generation and low-income college students, as well as those with documented disabilities.
- **Drop-in Tutoring (AT 306)** is available free of charge to *all* RCTC students. Please take advantage of it!
- **Online Tutoring** is available at www.tutor.com, accessible via D2L (so, don't go directly to the website—instead, log on to the main RCTC D2L page, and look for the link). This online tutoring option also includes a form where you can submit a paper for review (there is something like a 12-hour turn around).

COURSE CALENDAR

Unless otherwise noted, the readings are from *Principles of Biomedical Ethics*, 7e. I will let you know ahead of time if there are any changes. Most of the readings can be found in your textbook; I will make the others available to you online. **QUIZZES** on each chapter will generally be due on the Thursday of that week.

Week	Week Starting	Reading	Topics Covered
1	1/12	Syllabus & Case Studies	Introduction
2	1/19	Chapter 1: Moral Norms	Ethics, Common Morality, Moral Dilemmas
3	1/26	Chapter 2: Moral Character	Care Ethics, Virtue

4	2/2	Chapter 3: Moral Status	Animals, Abortion
5	2/9	Chapter 4: Respect for Autonomy	Autonomy, Informed Consent
6	2/16	Video: TBA & Exam 1/Workshop	Exam 1 (due 2/24)
7	2/23	Chapter 5: Nonmaleficence	Aid in Dying
8	3/1	Chapter 6: Beneficence	Cost-Benefit Analysis, Paternalism
9	3/8	NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK	
10	3/15	Chapter 7: Justice	Major Theories of Justice, Right to Health Care
11	3/22	Health Care (Online Readings)	U.S./Global Health Care Systems
12	3/29	Case Studies & Exam 2/Workshop	Exam 2 (due 4/6)
13	4/5	Chapter 8: Professional-Patient Relationships	Privacy, Confidentiality, Research Ethics
14	4/12	Chapter 9: Moral Theories	Major Ethical Theories
15	4/19	Movie & Discussion	
16	4/26	Chapter 10: Method and Moral Justification, Case Studies	Approaches to Bioethics
17	5/3	Case Studies & Exam 3/Workshop	Exam 3 (due 12/16)
18	5/10	To be Announced	Semester Ends 12/20