

Bioethics: Exam 1

Here are the guidelines for Exam 1. Please read these CAREFULLY!

1. The exam consists of SIX questions. However, you should only answer **THREE** of them.
2. Each essay should be between **500** and **1000 words**. I won't penalize you for going over, though please make an effort to be as concise as possible, given the material.
3. References to the book or handouts can be **cited** simply as (page number or handout name). If you choose to use outside resources, please use a standard citation style (such as APA, MLA, or Chicago), and provide a full citation. As a general rule, you should be making specific references to class material at least once per paragraph. However, **no more than 15%** of your paper should be quotes.
4. Please don't use the words or ideas of others without proper attribution. Please see the syllabus for details on the policy regarding **plagiarism and academic integrity**. I regularly use www.turnitin.com to check for plagiarism or related issues.
5. Since the goal of the exam is to demonstrate how well *you* understand the class material, you should try to **use your own words and examples to explain what you've learned**. Essays that simply reproduce the handouts will not receive good grades. Nor will essays that simply "give your opinion" on an issue.
6. Please submit your exam as a SINGLE MS WORD file to the D2L assignment folder. Each essay should start on a new page. I will grade exams on a **first-submitted, first-graded** basis.

The Questions

Answer **THREE** of the following questions. Please don't "reuse" material from one essay to answer another (so, for example, while the idea of moral status might come up in a few different contexts, you should do something new with it in each case).

1. Pretend that you are writing a short guide to the "Five Focal Virtues" of caring for new employees at a hospital. It is your job to clearly and accurately describe each of the virtues (using your own words), and then to say what this means of their job. This will require that you give detailed, specific examples showing how each of the five focal virtues can be followed or not followed.
2. In class, we discussed Roe v Wade. This is a chance to expand on that. First, please describe (in your own words) what Blackmun ended up ruling about abortion, and then carefully explain *why* he ruled this way. Then, analyze how *successful* his argument was, in terms of B-C's four principles and theories of moral status. (You can find excerpts of Roe v Wade in the "Content" area of the course).
3. Write a detailed response to one of case studies in "Case Studies for Exam 1" (you can find this file on D2L with the exams). In your response, you should make sure to clearly identify relevant ethical concepts/arguments from class, and explain why/how they apply to the case in question. Most importantly, you should identify a clear problem/question related to the case study, and argue for an answer or solution to it. Your case study response should follow the format given in the Case Studies handout.
4. Describe a fictional character from a book, film, or TV show about which there might be some debate over whether he/her/it has full moral status. (Remember that questions of moral status nearly always involve beings other than "normal" human adults. Examples might be robots, aliens, cyborgs, humans with severe cognitive impairments, etc.) Argue that this character does/does not have moral status using what you've learned so far in class, and say what this means for how they ought to be treated. Be sure to consider objections based on rival theories. Remember, "has moral status" does NOT mean "is a good person"! **You must include in-depth discussion of at least TWO theories of moral status, and how they apply to your chosen character.**
5. Watch an episode of a medical-themed TV show (examples include "Gray's Anatomy", "New Amsterdam", "House", and many others). Now, write an ethical analysis the ways in which patient autonomy was (or was not) respected by the medical staff depicted on the show. Make sure to identify the episode title and season. While it's fine to include a short summary of the events of the episode (of <100 words), most of the essay should be devoted to your own analysis.
6. Conduct a 25- to 30-minute conversation about bioethics with someone (not in this class) who works in medicine, biological research, or a related area. In this interview, you should choose one or two ideas that you've found especially interesting in class (such as a theory of moral status, or the virtue of caring, or informed consent), and carefully explain these ideas to the person as best you can (tell them that it's your job to "teach" these ideas, even if the person is already familiar with them). Now, talk to the person about the applicability of these principles/ideas to their own line of work. Write up a summary of the main points of your conversation, together with some reflections on what you learned while doing it.

Exam Grading Rubric

Each essay is worth TEN points, and the whole exam is worth 30 points. Your grade will depend on how well you do each of the following:

1. How well are you able to **explain** and **apply** the relevant course material? By the end of the essay, the reader should come away with a clear idea of what you've learned in the class, and how it applies to this sort of case.
2. To what extent does your essay offer a coherent and creative response to the problem/question? In an argumentative essay, for example, you should make an (evidence-based) **argument** for a **thesis**, and make sure to fully consider any potential **objections**.

Factors such as your paper's **structure** (e.g. intro/body paragraphs/conclusion) and **language** (e.g. grammar, style) are important to the extent they influence the above.

The grading criteria are as follows:

Grade Description

0	No answer submitted, or evidence of plagiarism.
1-4	Significantly below minimal requirements, in terms of content (e.g., doesn't address the question at all), word count, or both.
5-6	Fails to meet minimal requirements in terms of content (e.g., addresses a related question, or a part of the assigned question) or word count.
7	Meets minimal requirements in terms of both content (it offers an answer the assigned question, and attempts to defend this answer) and word count. However, there may be some significant errors or omissions when it comes to the explanation of relevant class material, or providing a detailed, complete response to the question. Essays that don't make specific and relevant references to course material may receive this grade.
8	Fully meets both content and word count requirements, and provides satisfactory explanations of relevant arguments and concepts from class, with at least some specific references to course materials. There are no major errors in argumentation or explanatory gaps. However, explanations/examples/arguments may suffer from lack of clarity or completeness in comparison to A essays.
9-10	Goes <i>significantly</i> above the minimal requirements. The essay's treatment of course material shows a full mastery of the relevant content, and provides a creative, well-thought out response to it. In order to get an A, an essay should do ALL of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Fully answer all parts of the essay question.2. Make specific, detailed references to course material, and clearly explain WHY this material is relevant to the question you are addressing.3. Offer a creative, well-thought solution to problem or question you are addressing. A essays are often distinguished by the way in which they address objections or counterexamples.4. Meet and exceed the minimum word count. For many essay questions (in order to meet the above requirements) this may require that you write closer to 1,000 than to 500 words. However, word count is not enough to guarantee a good grade.

I will grade essays in the order they are submitted (first-come, first-serve). Grades go up in whole-number increments (there is no .5).

Tips on Writing Philosophy

Philosophy essays can be a bit different from other sorts of writing. Here are some general tips:

1. You should have an **introduction** that concisely introduces the topic, and a **thesis sentence** that clearly states your position. Philosophy papers often begin with theses of the form "I will argue X because Y."
2. When discussing tough ethical or philosophical issues, **avoid phrases like "I feel," "I think," or "I believe."** Part of taking these issues seriously involves granting that one's actions and beliefs have consequences for other people, and that (for this reason) they need to be defended with the sorts of **arguments** and **reasons** that these other people could actually accept. For this reason, appeals to your *own* emotions, religious beliefs, etc. are generally (though not always) inappropriate.

3. Pretend you are writing to **an intelligent and interested (but relatively ignorant) 12-year-old** who doesn't know anything about the subject (rather than your philosophy professor). This means you'll need to write clearly, explain new concepts, and offer interesting, memorable examples. A significant portion of your grade will be based on your ability to explain the arguments/concepts we've been studying using your own words and examples.
4. Your essay should have multiple paragraphs, each of which has a clear **topic sentence** that clearly relates back to your thesis. When writing philosophy, it's easy to get "off topic." So, always ask yourself: is this paragraph helping me provide evidence for my thesis? If the answer is "no," it should be cut or revised.
5. You should always consider possible **objections** to your thesis. Ask yourself: "How would a smart, well-educated opponent respond to my argument?" In some cases, this might be a real author who you can cite; in other cases, you'll have to play your own "devil's advocate."
6. The conclusion should help the reader appreciate the way your argument fits into the "big picture." For example, what exactly do you take yourself to have shown? How does this relate to similar cases? What might be the "next step" of this argument be, if you had more time and space?