

PHIL 269-0: Bioethics (42498), Summer 2024
TTh 5:00-7:30 PM CDT, via Zoom

Instructor: Chad Horne (chad.horne@northwestern.edu).

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 4:00-5:00 PM, via Zoom, or by appointment. See Canvas for the link.

Course Description: This course is a study of moral and political problems related to biomedicine and biotechnology. In the first part of the course, we will study the physician-patient relationship. We will consider what values ought to govern that relationship, how those values may conflict, and how such conflicts are best resolved. We will pay special attention to ethical problems related to cultural differences and to the application of Western bioethical principles in global clinical and research settings. In the second part of the course, we will turn to some specific ethical challenges related to biotechnology, including abortion, genetic manipulation, and physician-assisted suicide. We will close the course by surveying the burgeoning field of public health ethics, with particular attention to ethical issues related to global pandemic preparedness and response.

Learning Objectives: Participation in this course will help you:

- (1) Recognize moral issues and distinguish them from descriptive ones.
- (2) Understand the core moral principles of contemporary bioethics and the values they rest upon.
- (3) Explore the complexities in applying Western bioethical concepts in diverse global settings of clinical care and research.
- (4) Reflect upon your own answers to moral questions and the reasons supporting them.
- (5) Analyze inequalities related to global health, particularly as it pertains to clinical research and pandemic preparedness and response.
- (6) Engage in respectful, rigorous, and constructive dialogue concerning moral issues and communicate thoughtfully and clearly about them

Required Text: Lewis Vaughn, editor, *Bioethics: Principles, Issues, and Cases*, Oxford University Press. I will be working from the fifth edition of this textbook (2022), but the third or fourth editions are also acceptable and normally more affordable. Some additional readings will be made available online through Canvas.

Evaluation: Your grade in this course will be based on the following four elements, weighted as indicated:

Weekly Writing Assignments (5 total, drop 1)	25%
Case Study Assignment:	30%
Argumentative Video Assignment:	30%
Participation in Class Discussion via Zoom and/or on Canvas:	15%

Specific expectations for each of the above elements will be discussed in class.

Grading Scale: This course will use the standard Weinberg College grading scale, where grades ending in 7-9 receive the “plus” designation and grades ending in 0-3 receive the “minus” designation. Thus, for example, a grade of 87 is a “B+,” and a 93 is an “A-.” Final grades ending in .5 or higher will be rounded up to the next whole number.

Conduct of Class: Although our course is officially scheduled to meet from 5:00-8:00 PM CDT, we will not meet for the full three hours. Instead, we will normally meet from 5:00-6:00, take a thirty-minute break, and then meet again from 6:30-7:30. To offset the forgone meeting time, asynchronous lecture materials will be posted to the course Canvas page via Panopto. These videos are also required viewing for this course. Please note as well that during the 6:00-6:30 break, I may ask you to watch a video or do an exercise related to our class; you should not count on having this time free for other projects.

It is expected that your work in this course will show mastery of the material presented in lecture. Links to our synchronous lectures will be shared at the top of the course modules page on Canvas. These lectures will be recorded and archived for students who are unable to join at the scheduled time; archived lectures may be found under the “Zoom” tab on Canvas. Panopto videos will be shared on the course modules page for the relevant meeting date.

When joining our Zoom lectures, please try to find a space where you can be present and uninterrupted for the duration of class. If you are not talking, please have your microphone off.

Recording of Lecture: Zoom lectures will be recorded by the instructor for educational purposes and available to the class during the quarter. You can find these recordings under the Zoom tab on Canvas. None of these recordings will be saved beyond the current term.

Unauthorized student recording of classroom or other academic activities (including office hours) is prohibited. Unauthorized recording is unethical and may also be a violation of University policy and state law. Students requesting the use of assistive technology as an accommodation should contact AccessibleNU. Unauthorized use of classroom recordings – including distributing or posting them – is also prohibited. Under the University’s Copyright Policy, faculty own the copyright to instructional materials – including those resources created specifically for the purposes of instruction, such as syllabi, lectures and lecture notes, and presentations. Students cannot copy, reproduce, display or distribute these materials. Students who engage in unauthorized recording, unauthorized use of a recording or unauthorized distribution of instructional materials will be referred to the appropriate University office for follow-up.

Contact: E-mail is a good way to get in touch with me with administrative questions, but substantive philosophical questions about readings or lecture are best raised in class or in office hours. I will answer e-mail in a timely fashion during normal business hours. If I don’t respond to your e-mail within 24 hours (48 hours on weekends), it is a good idea to re-send it.

Academic Integrity: Students in this course are required to comply with the policies found in the booklet, "Academic Integrity at Northwestern University: A Basic Guide". All papers submitted for credit in this course must be submitted electronically unless otherwise instructed by the professor. Your written work may be tested for plagiarized content. For details regarding academic integrity at Northwestern or to download the guide, visit: <https://www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies/academic-integrity/index.htm>

Accessibility Needs: Northwestern University is committed to providing the most accessible learning environment as possible for students with disabilities. Should you anticipate or experience disability-related barriers in the academic setting, please contact AccessibleNU to move forward with the university's established accommodation process (e: accessiblenu@northwestern.edu; p: 847-467-5530). If you already have established accommodations with AccessibleNU, please let me know as soon as possible, preferably within the first two weeks of the term, so we can work together to implement your disability accommodations. Disability information, including academic accommodations, is confidential under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

Student Support: Northwestern University is committed to supporting the wellness of our students. Student Affairs has multiple resources to support student wellness and mental health. If you are feeling distressed or overwhelmed, please reach out for help. Students can access confidential resources through the Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), Religious and Spiritual Life (RSL) and the Center for Awareness, Response and Education (CARE). Additional information on all of the resources mentioned above can be found here:

- <https://www.northwestern.edu/counseling/>
- <https://www.northwestern.edu/religious-life/>
- <https://www.northwestern.edu/care/>

Course Schedule: The following course schedule is tentative and may be modified as we go along. Please refer weekly to the course Modules on Canvas for an up-to-date list of readings and schedule of important dates. All page numbers refer to Vaughn, *Bioethics*, 5th Edition.

Date: Readings and Assignments:

T 7/23 Course Introduction and the Principles Approach to Bioethics.
Watch: *Extremis* (Netflix) (25 mins).

Part I: The Physician-Patient Relationship

Th 7/25 Paternalism, Patient Autonomy, and the Right to Refuse Treatment.
Read: Gawande, "Whose Body Is It, Anyway?" (Canvas); Cowart and Burt, "Confronting Death," pp. 146-156. (30 pp.)
Case Study Assignment Distributed.

T 7/30 Multiculturalism and Moral Disagreement.
Read: Fan and Li, "Truth Telling in Medicine: The Confucian View" (Canvas); Macklin, "Ethical Relativism in a Multicultural Society" (Canvas). (26 pp.)

Th 8/1 Informed Consent.
Read: Katz, "Informed Consent," pp. 217-227; Faden and Beauchamp, "The Concept of Informed Consent," pp. 212-217; Cherry & Engelhardt, "Informed Consent in Texas" (Canvas). (31 pp.)

Course Schedule (continued):

- T 8/6 The Ethics of Clinical Research.
Read: Brandt, "Racism and Research," pp. 281-293; Hellman and Hellman, "Of Mice but Not Men," 271-276; Freedman, "A Response to a Purported Ethical Difficulty," pp. 277-280; Eyal, Lipsitch, and Smith, "Human Challenge Studies to Accelerate Vaccine Licensure" (Canvas). (26 pp.)
Case Study Assignment Due at 11:59 PM.

Part II: Issues in Biotechnology.

- Th 8/8 Abortion.
Read: Thomson, "A Defense of Abortion," pp. 323-334; Marquis, "Why Abortion Is Immoral," pp. 334-346; *Dobbs v. Jackson* (Canvas). (30 pp.)
- T 8/13 Genetic Choices.
Read: Brock, "The Non-Identity Problem and Genetic Harms," pp. 513-517 Davis, "Genetic Dilemmas," pp. 498-508; Sandel, "The Case Against Perfection" (Canvas); Savulescu, "Genetic Interventions and the Ethics of Enhancement," pp. 529-538. (42 pp.)
Argumentative Video Assignment Distributed.
- Th 8/15 Euthanasia and Physician-Assisted Suicide.
Read: Brock, "Voluntary Active Euthanasia," pp. 589-593; Arras, "Physician-Assisted Suicide: A Tragic View" (Canvas) ; Carr, "Legalizing Assisted Dying Is Dangerous for Disabled People," pp. 613-615. (30 pp.)

Part III: Political Bioethics.

- T 8/20 The Allocation of Scarce Medical Resources.
Read: Singer, "Why We Must Ration Health Care" (Canvas); Harris, "QALYfying the Value of Life (Canvas); Romeo, "The Grim Ethical Dilemma of Rationing Medical Care, Explained" (Canvas). (22 pp.)
- Th 8/22 Public Health Ethics.
Childress et al., "Public Health Ethics," pp. 675-685; Baylis et al., "A Relational Account of Public Health Ethics" (Canvas). (26 pp.)
Argumentative Video Assignment Due by 11:59 P.M.