

PHIL1342-920: Bioethics

Summer Session II (6/30/22 - 8/5/2022)

MWF 12:00pm - 2:30p (EST)

University of Pennsylvania, Online

1. Contact Information

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Office Hours: TBD

2. Course Description

Here are two claims: (i) we are mortal, imperfectly biological creatures, and (ii) we are generally capable of leading our lives in accordance with our morals. If both claims seem plausible, then a question arises: how should we navigate the morally complicated challenges raised by biological phenomena like illness, disability, conception, birth, and death? This course aims to investigate some of these challenges, both theoretically and practically, using the tools of philosophy.

It is not assumed that students who enroll in this course have any formal philosophical education. For this reason, the first few classes are devoted to introducing students to basic ethical theories (consequentialism, deontology, virtue ethics) and developing their foundational philosophical skills (formal logical reasoning, argument analysis, argument construction). The remaining days are spent examining major issues in bioethics organized by topic which include consent, privacy, abortion, disability, animal experimentation, mental health, biological ties, eugenics, euthanasia, and death. As we explore these issues, we will consider both the abstract questions they raise for our moral thinking and the practical challenges they present to our everyday living.

3. Course Requirements

3.1 Texts

No books are required for this course. All readings will be available on the course's Canvas website (and many are publicly available through a quick Google search!).

3.2 Assignments

The course will have a variety of assignments.

3.2.1 Canvas Assignments

Before each class, students will be required to complete one brief reading quiz and contribute to one discussion post. The reading quiz is designed to gauge basic comprehension of (one of) the

readings. Students will be given multiple attempts to take each quiz but must finish before class starts at noon to receive full credit. The discussion post will have a prompt that varies each week. Students will be required to (i) respond to the prompt, and (ii) comment on another student's response to the prompt. Students must complete (i) before class starts at noon to receive full credit. Students will have until the end of each week to complete (ii) to receive full credit.

3.2.2 Argument Analyses

Once in the course, students will be required to analyze a given argument. The analysis includes reconstructing the argument in logical form, reconstructing the argument in ordinary language, and raising an objection to the argument. The purpose of this assignment is to prepare the student for the Final Paper Outline assignment.

3.2.3 Final Paper Outline

Once in the course, students will be required to outline their final paper. The outline includes reconstructing an argument from the class readings in logical form, constructing an original argument in logical form, considering an objection to the original argument, and responding to the objection. The purpose of this assignment is to prepare the student for their Final Paper.

3.2.4 Final Paper

Once in the course, students will be required to write a 5 – 7 page final paper. This paper must respond to one of the issues explored in the course, or an alternative topic that has been approved by Youngbin. The paper must incorporate an argument from at least one class reading, construct an original argument, consider an objection to the original argument, and respond to the objection. This assignment will serve as the final assessment of the student's acquisition of foundational philosophical skills and comprehension of one issue in bioethics.

3.2.5 Participation

Students will be required to be actively and respectfully engaged during class. Given the online setting of the course, this includes keeping the video camera on during class time.

3.2.6 Percentages

Canvas Assignments	30%
Argument Analyses	15%
Final Paper Outline	20%
Final Paper	25%
Participation	10%

4. (Tentative) Schedule

Date	Subject	Readings
7/1/22	Introduction	(Optional) P. D. Magnus, et al. - Forallx (Ch. 1 - 6)
7/4/22	No Class	N/A
7/6/22	Ethical Theory I	1) B. Hooker - Consequentialism
7/8/22	Ethical Theory II	TBD
7/11/22	Philosophical Skills	1) Q. Spencer - A Racial Classification for Medical Genetics
7/13/22	Informed Consent	1) J. Collins - Should Doctors Tell the Truth? 2) R. Faden & T. Beauchamp - The Concept of Informed Consent
7/15/22	Privacy	1) J. Rachels - Why Privacy is Important 2) L. Vaughn - Discussion of Tarasoff Case 3) L. Fleck & M. Angell - Please Don't Tell 4) M. Siegler - Confidentiality in Medicine: A Decrepit Concept
7/18/22	Abortion*	1) D. Marquis - Why Abortion is Immoral 2) J. Jarvis Thompson - A Defense of Abortion
7/20/22	Disability*	1) R. Amundson - Against Normal Function 2) R. Garland-Thomson - The Case for Conserving Disability
7/22/22	Disability & Culture*	1) E. Barnes - Disability, Minority, and Difference 2) N. Levy - Reconsidering Cochlear Implants: The Lessons of Martha's Vineyard
7/25/22	Animal Experimentation	1) P. Singer - All Animals are Equal 2) C. Cohen - The Case for the Use of Animals in Biomedical Research (Optional) L. Francis & R. Norman - Some Animals are More Equal than Others
7/27/22	Mental Health*	1) S. Wilkinson - Is 'Normal Grief' a Mental Disorder? 2) N. Arpaly - How It is Not 'Just Like Diabetes': Mental Disorders and the Moral Psychologist
7/29/22	Biological Ties*	1) J. D. Velleman - Family History 2) S. Haslanger - Family, Ancestry, and Self: What is the Moral Significance of Biological Ties?
8/1/22	Eugenics	1) J. Savulescu - Procreative Beneficence: Why We Should Select the Best Children 2) M. Sandel - The Case Against Perfection 3) L. Kass - Ageless Bodies, Happy Souls
8/3/22	Euthanasia	1) J. Rachels - Active and Passive Euthanasia 2) W. Nesbitt - Is Killing No Worse than Letting Die? 3) H. Kuhse - Why Killing is Not Always Worse — and Sometimes Better — than Letting Die
8/5/22	End of Life	1) R. Dworkin - Life Past Reason 2) R. Dresser - Dworkin on Dementia: Elegant Policy, Questionable Theory 3) E. Emanuel - Why I Hope to Die at 75

Note: * signifies a day where students can pick one of the readings to read

5. Course Policies

- Given the online setting of this course, video cameras are to be kept on during class time.
- Don't cheat. If you're unsure what constitutes cheating, read Penn's Code of Academic Integrity ([link](#)). A confirmed violation of the Code will result in your being reported to the relevant disciplinary authorities, and (very likely) your failure in the course.
- Following Penn policy and equal access laws, I am available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that you may require as a student with a disability. Requests for academic accommodations should be made during the first two weeks of the semester, except under unusual circumstances, to arrange reasonable accommodations. Students must register with Student Dis-abilities Services (SDS) for disability verification and for determination of reasonable academic accommodations.