

PHIL 1342-920: BIOETHICS

Summer Session II: June 30-August 4, 2023

M, W, F 12-2:30pm (EST)

University of Pennsylvania, Online (via Zoom)

1. Contact Information

Instructor: Maja Sidzińska

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Office Hours: Wednesdays, 2:30-5:30pm

2. Course Description

“Bioethics” is short for *biomedical ethics*, which refers to the study of moral decision-making in the context of medical practice and science. Examples of bioethical questions include: What is disease? What rules should guide medical practices in the doctor’s office, in the public sphere, or on a global arena? Are euthanasia, surrogacy, abortion, or human genetic enhancement morally permissible? In this survey course, we will be concerned with how moral principles inform decisions about our lives, our healthcare, and our deaths, and we will consider how these biological aspects of our lives inform moral principles in turn.

No previous engagement with philosophy is expected. The course will begin by providing students with select analytical tools and normative approaches that can be used to engage bioethical questions.

3. Course Requirements (subject to change)

Books: No books are required for this course. All readings will be available on the course’s Canvas website.

Emphasis: This course is designed to emphasize detailed engagement with our assigned readings, and verbal engagement with each other (students with instructor and vice versa, and students with each other).

Structure: This is a condensed and therefore fast-paced summer course, scheduled for 7.5 total hours of instruction time per week. This means that each class meeting is equivalent to one week’s worth of time in a normal (fall or spring) semester. Therefore, missing one day of instructional time amounts to missing one week of class. Given this,

and given the focus on engagement with readings and with each other, it is imperative that students attend each class. Nevertheless, some instructional time will be asynchronous (i.e., not taking place together on Zoom). Furthermore, the reading load has been relaxed in light of the condensed nature and fast pace of the summer session. However, this means that the readings that *are* assigned are expected to be read fully and thoroughly.

Assignments: The exact assignments to be completed will be determined based on the number of enrolled students and on the geographical locations—and thus time zones—of students. Assignments will likely include some—*but not all!*—of the following activities: (a) short paper outline, (b) short paper, (c) reading responses or quizzes, (d) class presentations (potentially in groups), (e) answering questions in class, (f) an oral final exam (i.e., a philosophical conversation with the instructor), (g) web content production, or (h) general participation (including attendance).

Assignment weights: Exact assignment weights (i.e., what percentage of a student’s grade each assignment counts toward) will be determined once the assignments are finalized.

Success criteria: General criteria for the successful completion of assignments include 1) demonstrating genuine philosophical engagement with our readings, 2) the use of details and specific examples or specific reasons or evidence in making arguments or expressing views, 3) the ability to meaningfully respond to opposing points of view, 4) the ability to synthesize information in original ways, and to critique or endorse perspectives found in course readings for original reasons, 5) the ability to discriminate relevant from irrelevant reasons, evidence, and examples, and 6) the ability to think through to the logical conclusions or likely consequences of one’s views.

4. Course Grading Scale

Grade	Percentage
A+	99% or more
A	93-98.99%
A-	90-92.99%
B+	87-89.99%
B	83-86.99%
B-	80-82.99%
C+	77-79.99%
C	73-76.99%
C-	70-72.99%
D+	67-69.99%
D	63-66.99%
D-	60-62.99%
F	Below 60%

5. Reading Schedule (subject to change)

Date	Topic	Readings
F 6/30	Introduction	n/a
M 7/3	Philosophical Skills	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Constructing arguments, giving reasons, citing evidence—readings TBD 2. Analysis and synthesis—readings TBD
W 7/5	Ethical Theories & Bioethical Principles	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ethical theories: deontology, consequentialism, virtue ethics, and care ethics—readings TBD 2. Bioethical principles: non-maleficence, beneficence, autonomy, and justice—readings TBD
F 7/7	Defining Disease	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rogers & Walker (2017), “The Line-drawing Problem in Disease Definition” 2. Aftab & Rashed (2020), “Mental Disorder and Social Deviance”
M 7/10	Informed Consent	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Beauchamp (2011), “Informed Consent: Its History, Meaning, and Present Challenges” 2. Cohen (2014), “The Nocebo Effect of Informed Consent”
W 7/12	Privacy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rachels (1975), “Why Privacy is Important” 2. Siegler (1982), “Confidentiality in Medicine—A Decrepit Concept” 3. Adi & Mathbout (2018), “The Duty to Protect: Four Decades after <i>Tarasoff</i>”
F 7/14	Medicalization	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Davis (2010), “Medicalization, Social Control, and the Relief of Suffering” 2. Kaczmarek (2021), “Promoting Diseases to Promote Drugs: The Role of the Pharmaceutical Industry in Fostering Good and Bad Medicalization”
M 7/17	Euthanasia	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rachels (1975), “Active and Passive Euthanasia” 2. Dieterle (2007), Physician Assisted Suicide: A New Look at the Arguments”
W 7/19	Pregnancy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Kingma (2021), “Harming One to Benefit Another: The Paradox of Autonomy and Consent in Maternity Care” 2. Finn & Isaac (2021), “Evaluating Ectogenesis via the Metaphysics of Pregnancy”

F 7/21	Abortion	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Marquis (1989), "Why Abortion is Immoral" 2. Jarvis Thomson (1971), "A Defense of Abortion" 3. Saul (2003), "Abortion" in <i>Feminism: Issues and Arguments</i>
M 7/24	Surrogacy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Anderson (2000), "Why Commercial Surrogate Motherhood Unethically Commodifies Women and Children" 2. McLachlan & Swales (2009), "Commercial Surrogate Motherhood and the Alleged Commodification of Children"
W 7/26	Eugenics	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Savulescu (2001), "Procreative Beneficence: Why We Should Select the Best Children" 2. Sparrow (2011), "A Not-So-New Eugenics: Harris and Savulescu on Human Enhancement"
F 7/28	Disability	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Silvers (2010), "An Essay on Modeling: The Social Model of Disability" 2. Savulescu & Kahane (2011), "Disability: A Welfarist Approach"
M 7/31	Medical Racism	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Byrd & Clayton (2001), "Race, Medicine, and Healthcare in the United States: A Historical Survey" 2. Wilson (2022), "Is Trust Enough? Anti-Black Racism and the Perception of Black Vaccine "Hesitancy"'"
W 8/2	Global Health	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Brock (2010), "Broadening the Bioethics Agenda" 2. Beaton et al (2021), "Crisis Nationalism: To What Degree is National Partiality Justifiable During a Global Pandemic?"
F 8/4	Conclusion	Review

6. Course Policies

- Given that our course occurs online, video cameras are to be kept on during class time.
- Late work policy is TBD.
- Absence policy is TBD.
- Do not cheat. [Here](#) is Penn's Code of Academic Integrity, which spells out what constitutes cheating. The use of AI (such as ChatGPT) for the completion of

assignments or other course tasks also constitutes cheating, and is forbidden in this course. Cheating will result in your referral to the relevant university authorities, a failing grade on the relevant assignment, and likely a failing grade for the entire course.

- The University of Pennsylvania provides reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities who have been approved by the Office of Student Disabilities Services (SDS). If you need accommodations, please immediately [register with SDS](#), and the SDS office will inform me of your needs. All services are confidential.
- The University of Pennsylvania also provides accommodations for students whose religious holidays fall on class days. Please refer to the policy found [here](#), which this course will follow.