

PHIL 156 – BIOETHICS
MTWRF - 9:45 AM – 11:15 AM
DEY – 404

Instructor:

Felipe De Brigard
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About the Course:

Bioethics is usually defined as applied ethics focused on issues pertaining health care, medical science, and technology (Vaughn 2010). It seeks to answer questions like: Is abortion morally permissible? Should people be allowed to experiment with human embryos? Is euthanasia morally permissible? Should human stem-cell research be forbidden? How should we decide who gets a transplant? In this class, we will study philosophical methodologies and principles relevant to the conscientious analysis of these difficult cases. Thus, at the beginning, we will explore some of the most influential moral theories in philosophy, in order to acquire the background knowledge and vocabulary that philosophers employ in discussions on bioethics. We will move then to particular issues in bioethics, which will include abortion, euthanasia, genetic manipulation, confidentiality, informed consent, and many more. Finally, we will dedicate the last few classes to the study of a new and exciting area of ethical research: neuroethics. Advances in neuroscience pose serious ethical concerns, not only to the practice of neuroscience itself, but more importantly, to our understanding of human beings as free and autonomous individuals.

Grading:

There will be two exams in this class: one in-class test on May 19th and a final exam on June 15th. There will be also two short papers (1000 to 1250 words): one due June 1st, and one due June 15th. In addition, each student will lead the discussion of one session with a presentation of the assigned text. Another student will be in charge of writing down a protocol of such meeting, to be read at the beginning of the next session. Finally, we will have a group in-class activity on June 5th. Grades will be weighted as follows:

| | |
|-----------------|-----|
| First exam: | 10% |
| Presentation: | 15% |
| Protocol: | 10% |
| Class activity: | 10% |
| First paper: | 20% |
| Second Paper: | 20% |
| Final exam: | 15% |

Registered students are required to attend class. Attendance will be called randomly. If a registered student fails to attend to more than 10% of the classes (i.e. 3 or more sessions) with no excuse, s/he will receive an F as a final grade.

Remember: Academic dishonesty in any form is unacceptable, because any breach in academic integrity, however small, strikes destructively at the University's life and work.

The Honor Code and the Campus Code, embodying the ideals of academic honesty, integrity, and responsible citizenship, have for over 100 years governed the performance of all academic work

and student conduct at the University. Acceptance by a student of enrollment in the University presupposes a commitment to the principles embodied in these codes and a respect for this most significant University tradition.

Your participation in this course comes with my expectation that your work will be completed in full observance of the Honor Code. (You can learn more about it at <http://instrument.unc.edu>).

Required Texts:

Kuhse, H. & Singer, P. (2006). *Bioethics: An Anthology*. Blackwell. [K&S]

Levy. N. (2007). *Neuroethics*. Cambridge University Press. [L]

A few papers that will be posted on Blackboard [BB].

Schedule:

| Class | Date | Text |
|-------|---------------------------|---|
| 1 | May 12 th (T) | Introduction |
| 2 | May 13 th (W) | Moral Reasoning in Bioethics [BB] |
| 3 | May 14 th (R) | Moral Reasoning in Bioethics [BB] |
| 4 | May 15 th (F) | Bioethics and Moral Theories [BB] |
| 5 | May 18 th (M) | Bioethics and Moral Theories [BB] |
| 6 | May 19 th (T) | A Defense of Abortion [3 – K&S]. <i>Exam 1</i> |
| 7 | May 20 th (W) | Why Abortion is Immoral [4 – K&S] |
| 8 | May 21 st (R) | Surrogate Mothering [7, 8 – K&S] |
| 9 | May 22 nd (F) | MOVIE |
| 10 | May 26 th (T) | Genetic research on intelligence [21 – K&S] |
| 11 | May 27 th (W) | Genetic Dilemmas [24 – K&S] |
| 12 | May 28 th (R) | Euthanasia [27, 28 – K&S] |
| 13 | May 29 th (F) | Killing vs. Letting die [29, 30 – K&S] |
| 14 | June 1 st (M) | Ethics and Clinical Research [54 – K&S]. <i>Paper 1 due</i> |
| 15 | June 2 nd (T) | The morality of Clinical Research [57 – K&S] |
| 16 | June 3 rd (W) | Experiments with Animals [62, 63, 64 – K&S] |
| 17 | June 4 th (R) | Lies [67, 68 – K&S] |
| 18 | June 5 th (F) | Group Activity – Reading: TBD |
| 19 | June 8 th (M) | Neuroethics [Ch 1, L] |
| 20 | June 9 th (T) | Neuroethics [Ch 2,3 – L] |
| 21 | June 10 th (W) | Neuroethics [Ch 4,5 – L] |
| 22 | June 11 th (R) | Neuroethics [Ch 6,7 – L] |
| 23 | June 12 th (F) | Neuroethics [Ch 8,9 – L] |
| 24 | June 15 th (M) | Final Paper - Final Exam |