

Biomedical Ethics

Professor: Monika Piotrowska

Office: Department of Philosophy, DM 341C

Email: monika.piotrowska@fiu.edu

Phone: 305-348-4674

Course Number: PHI 4633 Sec U01

Course Time: Spring 2012, MWF 2:00-2:50 pm

Course Location: Green Library 132

Office Hours: Wed. 11:00 am – 1:00 pm and by appointment

Course Description: Biomedical ethics encompasses a number of ethical issues pertaining to the practice of medicine and the pursuit of biomedical research. The first few weeks of the course will provide an introduction to the theories and concepts used in biomedical ethics, which is intended to serve as a background aid for thinking through the particular issues we will discuss. Specific topics to be discussed include confidentiality and truth-telling in the doctor/patient relationship, the role and responsibilities of nurses, the refusal of life-sustaining treatments, euthanasia, experimentation on human subjects, biomedical enhancement and others. The aim is to help students develop views on these issues by critically analyzing arguments advanced by academics, judges, and healthcare professionals.

Required Text: *Biomedical Ethics* (7th edition) David DeGrazia, Thomas A. Mappes, & Jeffrey Brand-Ballard

Evaluation Criteria: **Class Participation (20%):**

Participation involves a variety of things, such as listening respectfully, making references to the assigned readings in your comments, engaging with other students, etc. In order to get a passing grade in class participation, you will have to speak up. However, speaking up too much can also hurt your grade (see attached class participation grading rubric).

Debate Assignments (40%):

On each day there is a debate, you have an assignment due (see calendar for due dates). You are allowed to drop 2 (out of 15) debate assignments, thus either miss 2 assignments (turning in 13) or drop your 2 lowest scores. Note that on the day YOU are presenting, you will not turn in a debate assignment. I WILL NOT ACCEPT DEBATE ASSIGNMENTS VIA EMAIL. NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED. Each debate assignment consists of two parts:

1. Reflect on a passage: Choose a quote from one of the two readings due that day. Type up the quote (citing the author's last name and page number in parentheses after the quote) and write 4 to 6 sentences describing what you find interesting about this quote.
2. Pose a question: From the other reading, compose what you take to be the most important question left unanswered. Next, explain in 4 to 6 sentences why answering this question would be valuable.

Each assignment should be typed and double-spaced (with the exception of the quote from part 1, which may be single-spaced if lengthy). Leave at least four blank lines between your name (at the top of the page) and your answers. Before you hand in your assignment, fold the top of the page (with your name) backwards, so that I can grade blindly. Blind grading helps me eliminate potential bias.

Debate Presentation (20%):

Each of you will do a presentation that will loosely resemble a debate. A sign-up sheet for the presentations will be distributed in class. You will present in pairs, with each student presenting on one of two assigned readings due on "Debate" day (see calendar). Since the two readings will advance opposing arguments on a single topic, it is not necessary for you to collaborate with the other presenter ahead of time. However, it is necessary for you to study the reading to be presented by your opponent so that you can challenge your opponent.

The presentations will take place in consecutive order, approximately 10 min each. Next, each student will ask her/his opponent at least one challenging question about her/his reading and the opponent will have an opportunity to respond. Finally, the class will have an opportunity to challenge each of the two presenters. At the end of class, each student will vote for the presenter that she/he thought did the best job presenting and defending her/his article. The presenter with the most votes will receive bonus points that will be added to her/his presentation grade.

Note that the goal of these presentations is NOT simply to summarize the article, but to convince the audience that the author of the article is right. To achieve this goal, it is best to focus on the most convincing arguments in the reading and to present these arguments in an interesting and engaging fashion (supplying additional evidence to strengthen the arguments whenever necessary). See attached presentation grading rubric for criteria I will use to evaluate each presentation.

Final Exam (20%)

The final exam will take place during finals week (see calendar). NO EARLY OR MAKE-UP EXAMS WILL BE OFFERED. The exam will be in short answer and essay format and will directly cover material from your readings and the material we discuss in class. There will be a review session on the last day of class, before the final exam. On the day of the exam, you must bring a “blue book” in which to write your answers.

- Grading Scale:** A = 93-100%, A- = 90-92%, B+ = 87-89%, B = 83-86%, B- = 80-82%, C+ = 77-79%, C = 73-76%, C- = 70-72%, D+ = 67-69%, D = 63-66%, D- = 60-62%, E = 59% and below
- Missed Classes:** If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to obtain lecture notes from another student.
- Class Etiquette:** I expect you not to disrupt me, or other students, during class, which means that if I catch you texting, reading the paper, surfing the internet, or talking to another student you will be asked to leave. I do not allow laptops in class (except when used by me to enhance your learning). I expect you to treat other students (and their opinions) with respect and I expect you to show up on time.
- Grading Policy:** You do not get graded on effort but on the quality of work you produce. If you produce work that is of poor quality, providing me with excuses is a waste of your (and my) time. If you need a good grade in this course (because you're on a scholarship, for example) then get a good grade in this course. Trying to get me to sympathize with your situation is NOT an effective way of raising your grade.
- On the other hand, if you are dissatisfied with your grade because you think my grading was unfair you are welcome to raise your concerns with me. I am willing to look over your work again, but be aware that I will re-evaluate it and provide you with a new grade. This means that there is a chance that your grade may go down because I may decide that I was too generous the first time.
- Academic Misconduct:** Academic misconduct includes cheating, plagiarism, and unauthorized collaboration with other students on assignments. *Academic dishonesty disadvantages honest students, and is clearly unfair to hardworking students. Instructors have a duty, therefore, to protect honest students, and to insure that they are not disadvantaged by dishonest students.* For more information, see FIU's Academic Misconduct policy (Section 2.44). There are serious consequences for academic misconduct, including suspension and expulsion from the university.

SEMESTER SCHEDULE¹

	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
Week 1 (January 9-13)	Introduction	Intro to Biomedical Ethics (Ch. 1)	Intro to Biomedical Ethics (Ch. 1)
Week 2 (January 16-20)	NO SCHOOL	Intro to Biomedical Ethics (Ch. 1)	Intro to Biomedical Ethics (Ch. 1)
Week 3 (January 23-27)	Intro to Biomedical Ethics (Ch. 1)	Intro to Biomedical Ethics (Ch. 1)	Physicians' Obligations (Ch. 2 The Hippocratic Oath)
Week 4 (Jan 30-Feb 3)	Paternalism & Autonomy Debate (Ch. 2 Childress & Siegler vs. Ackerman)	Paternalism & Autonomy Cont.	The Role of Nurses Debate (Ch. 2 Newton vs. Kuhse)
Week 5 (February 6-10)	Truth-Telling (Ch. 2 Higgs)	Informed Consent (Ch. 2 Brody)	Informed Consent Cont.
Week 6 (February 13-17)	Confidentiality Debate (Ch. 2 Tobriner vs. Clark)	Intersex (Ch. 3 Morris)	Cochlear Implants Debate (Ch. 3 Crouch vs. Tucker)
Week 7 (February 20-24)	Amputation (Ch. 3 Elliott)	Psychopharmacology Debate (Ch. 3 Kramer vs. Freedman)	Research Ethics (Ch. 4 The Nuremberg Code & Declaration of Helsinki)
Week 8 (Feb 27-March 2)	Randomized Clinical Trials Debate (Ch. 4 Hellmans vs. Litton & Miller)	Clinical Trials in Developing Countries Debate (Ch. 4 Glantz et al. vs. Participants)	Animal Research Debate (Ch. 4 Cohen vs. Hettinger)
Week 9 (March 5-9)	Definition of Death Debate (Ch. 5 Bernat vs. McMahan)	Competent Adults Refusing Life-Sustaining Treatment	NO CLASS
Week 10 (March 12-16)	NO SCHOOL	NO SCHOOL	NO SCHOOL
Week 11 (March 19-23)	Competent Adults cont. Debate (Ch. 5 Powell & Lowenstein vs. Michel)	Advance Directives (Ch. 5 Mappes)	The Morality of Suicide Debate (Ch. 6 Kant vs. Brandt)
Week 12 (March 26-30)	Defining Euthanasia	Active Euthanasia Debate (Ch. 6 Rachels vs. Callahan)	Euthanasia of Infants Debate (Ch. 6 Verhagen & Sauer vs. Kon)
Week 13 (April 2-6)	Reproductive Technologies	NO CLASS	NO CLASS
Week 14 (April 9-13)	Treating Infertility (Ch. 8 The New York State Task Force...)	Donation and Surrogacy Debate (Ch. 8 Murray vs. Steinbock)	Human Cloning Debate (Ch. 8 Kass vs. Wachbroit)
Week 15 (April 16-20)	Genetic Enhancement	Genetic Enhancement Debate (Ch. 8 Sandel vs. Brock)	Review for Final Exam
Week 16 (April 23-27)		Final Exam 12-2 pm	

¹ Schedule is subject to change for pedagogical reasons