

PHIL 2740: Ethics & Biomedicine
Department of Philosophy
University of Manitoba
Summer 2022

Course Instructor: Michael Montess
Office Hours: 3:30-4:15 MTWR
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Course Time: 2:15-3:30 MTWR
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This course will focus on bioethics as the application of ethical theories to issues in health, medicine, and related technological developments. We will explore the theory behind bioethics as a discipline and the practice of applying these theories to interesting real-world cases. We will use the new edition of *Bioethics: Principles, Issues, and Cases* by Lewis Vaughn as our textbook for this course. First, we will learn about moral reasoning in bioethics and several moral theories, including Utilitarianism, Kantianism, virtue ethics, and feminist ethics of care. We will not only learn about traditional principles in bioethics like autonomy, beneficence and justice, but we will learn about moral concepts like trust and solidarity, which are increasingly important in bioethical investigations. Second, we will apply these theories, principles and moral concepts to several cases (i.e. abortion, reproductive technology, and euthanasia or physician-assisted suicide) and consider the role of bioethics during pandemics (i.e. COVID-19 and HIV/AIDS) and the effects of racism on healthcare. By focusing on both bioethical theory and practice, we will discover how ethics and philosophy can have an important impact on our health, our well-being, our lives and our society more broadly.

Course Texts

Vaughn, Lewis. (2022). *Bioethics: Principles, Issues, and Cases (5th Edition)*. Oxford University Press.

Any additional readings will be made available to students.

Course Requirements

Participation (20%)

The participation requirement reinforces a commitment to all the requirements of this course for the students. Students are expected to attend classes in order to participate in class discussions and they are expected to come prepared with comments and questions about the material covered in the readings. Attendance and engagement will contribute to the participation grade, which is worth 20%.

Digital Literacy Assignment (15%)

Students are expected to find and critically analyze digital media that focuses on a case that relates to bioethics (i.e. health, medicine or related technological developments). This can include popular news articles, YouTube videos, TV shows, blog posts, popular songs, movie clips, etc. Students are expected to share the links to these sources and provide a critical analysis of how bioethical theories connect to the case or how the source utilizes bioethical theories. This assignment should be approximately 250-300 words. This assignment is worth 15%. This digital literacy will help demonstrate the importance of bioethics and philosophy in general. Students might be asked to share their sources with the class, especially if the sources help clarify the theories, principles, concepts or cases that we are investigating.

Critical Reflection Assignment (15%)

Students are expected to submit a critical reflection on the different moral theories which form the basis of bioethics. Students are expected to write about which of the theories they find the best for evaluating bioethical cases. This should include a summary of the theory, a short critique of the theory and a brief example of the theory being applied to a particular case. This case can be from the student's life and it does not have to be a case that involves health, medicine or related technological developments. The case should merely highlight how the theory works and why it works well. This assignment should be approximately 250-300 words. The critical reflection assignment is worth 15%. This critical reflection will help students understand the theories and how to engage critically with theories and cases alike.

Essay Outline (10%)

Students are expected to submit an essay outline that identifies their thesis, outlines their argument, explains who or what they are drawing on for support, and gestures towards the kind of conclusions they hope to draw and why they think these conclusions are significant. Students are expected to choose one of the topics that we are covering in the course and apply one of the theories to it in a unique way. If the readings for the course already apply one of the particular theories to the case, then students have to choose either another case or theory. For example, a student could choose the case of reproductive technology and apply the theory of virtue ethics. In class, students are expected to be ready to discuss their outlines, which means being prepared to answer questions about their outlines and ask questions about other outlines. This assignment should include a thesis and a numbered argument outline as well as a bibliography. Students will be provided with detailed guidelines for the essay outline in advance of the due date. This assignment is worth 10%. Essay outlines must be approved in order to be used as the basis for the essay.

Essay (40%)

Students are expected to submit an essay, which demonstrates what they have learned in the class about applying theory in practice. The final essay should be approximately 2000 words. The essay will expand on the approved essay outlines. Students will be provided with detailed guidelines for the essay in advance of the due date.

Course Schedule

Week 1 (May 9 - 12) - Introduction & Moral Reasoning

Vaughn, Lewis. Chapter 1 "Moral Reasoning in Bioethics". *Bioethics: Principles, Issues, and Cases*.

Week 2 (May 16 - 19) - Moral Theories

Vaughn, Lewis. Chapter 2 "Bioethics and Moral Theories." *Bioethics: Principles, Issues, and Cases* (Readings by Mill, Kant, Aristotle & Baier)

Digital Literacy Assignment Due (May 19)

Week 3 (May 24 - 27) - Abortion

Vaughn, Lewis. Chapter 7 "Abortion". *Bioethics: Principles, Issues, and Cases* (Reading by Thomson & United States Supreme Court)

Critical Reflection Assignment Due (May 27)

Week 4 (May 30 - June 2) - Reproductive Technology

Vaughn, Lewis. Chapter 8 "Reproductive Technology". *Bioethics: Principles, Issues, and Cases* (Readings by Singer & Brock)

Essay Outline Due (June 2)

Week 4 (June 6 - 9) - Euthanasia & Physician-Assisted Suicide

Vaughn, Lewis. Chapter 10 "Euthanasia & Physician-Assisted Suicide". *Bioethics: Principles, Issues, and Cases*, (Readings by Brock & Rachels)

Week 5 (June 13 - 16) - Pandemics & Racism

Vaughn, Lewis. Chapter 12 "Pandemic Ethics" & Chapter 13 "Race, Racial Bias & Health Care", *Bioethics: Principles, Issues, and Cases* (Readings by Sandal & Walsh, Emmanuel et al. & Root)

Essay Due (June 16)