

GEORGIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
FALL 2016 BIOLOGY 4650-A BIOETHICS
Wednesday 3:05 pm – 4:55 pm, Cherry Emerson #320

Learning outcomes: After completing this class, students will be able to: (1) Describe basic ethical theories and principles. (2) Apply ethical thinking to issues in biology and medicine. (3) Describe and evaluate the ethical challenges and complexity of issues involved in medicine, biological research, and public policy. (4) Synthesize reading, discussion, and writing skills in order to assess bioethical issues.

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Class organization: This is a two credit course intended for advanced undergraduates. BIOL 1510 or 1511 is a prerequisite. Class will be held Wednesday 3:05 pm – 4:55 pm, Aug 22, 2016 - Dec 15, 2016 in Cherry Emerson #320. This course includes reading assignments, exams, group activities, quizzes, class discussion, and written reports. Reading, attending, and participating in class is fundamental to this course. Be courteous to your fellow students and do not disrupt class by entering and leaving the room, reading, talking, allowing cell phones to ring, etc.

Required textbook: Lewis Vaughn, “Bioethics: Principles, Issues and Cases” 3rd Edition, Oxford University Press, New York, 2012, ISBN 9780190250102.

Assessments:

Attendance & participation: Attendance and class participation is required for success in this course. *Arriving late will affect your participation score.* Communicate with the course instructor as soon as possible if you have to miss a class for any reason; written confirmation of a legitimate excuse, such as a severe illness, will be required for excused absences. If you miss any part of a class without legitimate excuse, then you will receive no credit for that day’s assignments. There are no make-up assignments. If your absence is excused, your grade will be calculated from the remaining graded assignments.

Class participation in the form of discussing issues, asking questions, and respectful listening will make up a substantial portion of your grade. *You will not be graded, nor will you be judged, on your specific beliefs.* Bioethical discussions often involve questions of values; such discussions can become personal, subjective, and emotional. However, it is essential to understand and develop skills in making rational decisions and arguments, and to remain respectful of others when they speak. *Bioethical discussions in this course are not meant to lead to decisions regarding particular issues. Rather, they should result in understanding and evaluating the perspectives, ideas, and arguments both for and against different viewpoints.*

You will receive participation credit if it is clear that you have thought carefully about the subject matter, applied moral reasoning to the topic at hand, and contributed to the class in a respectful manner. You will be assessed on the quality of your contributions to class and small group activities. A quality comment possesses one or more of the following properties:

- Offers a different, but relevant, perspective
- Contributes to moving the discussion and analysis forward
- Builds on other comments
- Does not rely entirely on “I feel,” statements, but also considers evidence-based arguments
- Demonstrates reflective thinking

Team activities & evaluations: Students will work in groups to use moral theories, principles, and arguments to assess and evaluate case studies on bioethical topics. These are group assignments and will be turned in at the end of class. Groups will change during the semester, and students will evaluate themselves and their team members on engagement and effectiveness within the team.

Writing assignments: Students will engage in various written activities including reading responses, in-class short papers, or out-of class short reports: Reading responses will be due via t-square by 11:59pm the day before each class. The reading response should be a brief (~300-500 word) discussion of topics in the reading that you found interesting, confusing, or otherwise noteworthy. The reading response should *not* be simply a summary of the reading, but rather evidence of your critical thinking about the ideas discussed in the reading. In-class short papers may ask you to consider and evaluate ethical positions related to class discussions or readings. Short reports will typically include comments on topics explored outside of class or as individual follow-up discussions on topics discussed in class.

All out-of-class writing assignments will be submitted via the Tsquare Blogs tool, which cannot correctly display any formatted text (i.e., pasted from Word). If you write your response in an off-line application, first copy the text into Notepad, or a similar format-free editor, before pasting to the Tsquare blog. Failure to paste format-free text may result in a penalty applied to the assignment grade.

Reading quizzes: Reading quizzes will be given if it is evident that a substantial portion of the class is not conscientiously completing the Reading Responses before class. When given, reading quizzes will be unannounced in the first 10 minutes of class, and will generally be based directly on the readings for the week.

Exams: There will be two midterms and one final exam. The exams will be based on the assigned readings and application of ethics principles and theories to bioethical case study analyses, and are meant to test if you have thoroughly understood and followed the subject matter. The exams will also ask you to synthesize materials and test your ability to make coherent bioethical arguments. Exams will typically consist of short answer questions and free response.

Academic Integrity: Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in any form. This includes cheating, lying about course matters, plagiarism, stealing classroom materials, or helping others commit a violation of the Honor Code. Students are reminded of the obligations and expectations associated with the Georgia Tech Academic Honor Code and Student Code of Conduct, available online at www.honor.gatech.edu. Plagiarizing is defined by Webster's as "to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own; use (another's production) without crediting the source." Plagiarism and other academic integrity violations will be dealt with according to the GT Academic Honor Code. Unless specifically identified as group work, all assignments are to be completed alone. Please ask for help if any part of this policy is unclear.

Learning Accommodations: If needed, we will make classroom accommodations for students with disabilities. These accommodations must be arranged in advance and in accordance with the Office of Disability Services (<http://www.disabilityservices.gatech.edu>).

Late Assignments: In-class group activities are due at the end of class and will not be accepted late. Out of class writing assignments (reading responses and short reports) are due at 11:59pm on their respective due dates (typically the day before class). Late assignments will be accepted with a 10% penalty per day late. Assignments more than 3 days late will not be accepted. Extensions are typically not permitted but will be considered on a case-by-case basis for exceptional circumstances. Please discuss such circumstances with the instructor outside of class as soon as possible.

Final Grade Calculation:

Assessment	Value
Class participation	10%
Team activities & team evaluations	15%
Individual writing assignments (in and out of class); Quizzes	25%
Midterm exam 1	10%
Midterm exam 2	15%
Final exam	25%
Total	100%

The most stringent scale used will be 90-100% an A, 80-89% a B, 70-79% a C, 60-69% a D, and 59% or less an F. This scale is subject to adjustment at the discretion of the instructor.

Tentative Schedule This schedule and the reading list is subject to change! In addition to the assigned readings given below, many weeks will include additional short readings on breaking-news or cutting-edge topics in bioethics.

Week	Date	Topic and assigned readings	Pages
1	24-Aug	Introduction and course overview Pre-class survey Begin Part I: Principles and theories in bioethics Introduction to principles and theories in bioethics	NA
2	31-Aug G1s	<i>Moral principles and theories</i> Moral Reasoning in Bioethics Bioethics and Moral Theories	3-18, 24-25 34-52
		Begin Part II: Foundations in clinical and research ethics	
3	7-Sep	<i>Paternalism and autonomy</i> Paternalism and Patient Autonomy "The Refutation of Medical Paternalism" "Why Doctors Should Intervene"	81-93 104-109 110-115
4	14-Sep	<i>Truth and patient confidentiality</i> Truth-Telling and Confidentiality "Telling the Truth to Patients: A Clinical Ethics Exploration" "On Telling Patients the Truth" "Respect for Patients, Physicians, and the Truth"	144-154 155-159 159-161 164-171
5	21-Sep	<i>Informed consent</i> Informed Consent "The Concept of Informed Consent" "Transparency: Informed Consent in Primary Care" Midterm I: Principles and theories in bioethics	196-208 208-213 223-229
6	28-Sep G2s	<i>Human research</i> Human Research "The Belmont Report"	239-259 263-266
		Begin Part III: Current issues in clinical and research ethics	
7	5-Oct	<i>Drugs: Off-label prescription, illicit drugs as medicine, and drug abuse</i> "Off-Label Prescribing" "Some Ethical Considerations for the "Off-Label" use of Drugs such as Avastin" "Medical Marijuana: a Primer on Ethics, Evidence, and Politics" "Ethical, Legal... Challenges Posed by "Controlled Medication Seekers"... " "The prescription opioid epidemic: an overview for anesthesiologists"	Tsquare Tsquare Tsquare Tsquare Tsquare
8	12-Oct	<i>Justice and allocation of limited resources</i> Dividing Up Health Care Resources Allocation of Artificial and Transplantable Organs (Pence Ch. 11)	719-736 Tsquare
9	19-Oct	<i>Justice and access to healthcare</i> "Is There a Right to Health Care, and if So, What Does It Encompass?" "The Right to a Decent Minimum of Health Care" "Rights to Health Care, Social Justice, and Fairness in Health Care..." Midterm II: Foundations in clinical and research ethics	736-743 743-749 749-757

10	26-Oct G3s	<i>The right to die</i> Euthanasia & Physician-Assisted Suicide "When Self-Determination Runs Amok"	625-641 658-662
11	2-Nov	<i>Abortion</i> Abortion "An Almost Absolute Value in History" "Abortion and the Concept of a Person"	309-325 348-352 377-383
12	9-Nov	<i>Reproductive technology, cloning, and surrogacy</i> Reproductive technology "IVF: The Simple Case" "Surrogate Mothering: Exploitation or Empowerment?" "Cloning Human Beings: An Assessment of the Ethical Issues..."	409-428 429-432 473-482 520-530
13	16-Nov	<i>Genetic information and testing</i> Genetic choices "Implications of Prenatal Diagnosis for the Human Right to Life" "Genetics and Reproductive Risk: Can Having Children Be Immoral?" "Disowning Knowledge: Issues in Genetic Testing"	539-560 560-564 564-570 585-589
14	23-Nov	THANKSGIVING BREAK – NO CLASS	
	30 Nov	<i>Gene therapy, therapeutic cloning, and stem cells</i> "Is Gene Therapy a Form of Eugenics?" "Genetic Enhancement" "Germ-Line Gene Therapy" "... "Respect for Embryos" ... in the Context of Stem Cell Research"	593-599 599-604 613-620 620-623
16	9-Dec	FINAL EXAM (Comprehensive)-Friday 2:50-5:40	NA