

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT
FALL 2013
PHIL 205 BIOMEDICAL ETHICS
SEC. 1 TUES. & THURS. 11:00 – 12:15 NICELY 206
SEC. 2 TUES. & THURS. 12:30 – 1:45 NICELY 206

Instructor: Dr. Chris Johns E-Mail: cj08@aub.edu.lb Phone: Ext. 4259	Office: 139 Fisk Hall Office Hours: T & Th 2:00 – 3:00 PM, and by appointment.
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Course Description:

This course serves as an introduction to the field of Biomedical ethics. “Ethics” is concerned with “right conduct” and biomedical ethics is concerned with right conduct in regard to the following topics: patient- doctor relations, paternalism, autonomy, biomedical enhancement, death and life-sustaining treatment, suicide, euthanasia, abortion, and stem cells. We will look at these issues in the light of various traditional ethical frameworks, such as utilitarianism, deontology, virtue ethics, and feminist ethics. We will also examine real world case, and the student will be expected to know how to think about the real world in a conscientious and responsible way. Ethics is generally concerned with what sorts of things have *value*, and with what *obligations* we have toward ourselves and others, and most importantly *why* we have obligations at all, if we do. While the ethics of these issues lack definitive answers, if not only due to their variety and complexity, the overall goal is to become a more conscientious moral agent.

This course fulfills the Gen Ed, Humanities I requirement.

Basically, approximately 20 pages of reading material are due each week. You are expected to have read the material ahead of time, so that we can discuss it in class. Some of the readings are quite complicated. You will need to keep track of complex arguments, opinions (including your own) details, scientific findings, and terms. You will then write in brief essays, analyzing these arguments and developing your own views. We will have occasional quizzes, a midterm, and a final. Occasionally, we will do “group work” where you will answer several questions in a small group and discuss them with the class. This is not an easy class. If you are not willing to work hard, I advise you to take something else—or, stay and learn!

This course mainly emphasizes philosophical thinking, which I take to mean the slow, careful, reflective reading and analysis of texts and concepts. Classes will be discussion-driven and centered on the assigned readings. My goal is not only to introduce the student to various problems in biomedical ethics, but to develop the habit of reading and thinking philosophically.

Program Learning Outcomes

- The ability to precisely identify the conclusion for which a writer is arguing.
- The ability to accurately represent the argument(s) which someone is using to support his/her conclusion.
- The ability to identify and assess objections to arguments in our readings.
- The ability to develop, explain, and defend your own views.

Essential: Read this syllabus carefully. By taking this class, you agree to understand and comply with this syllabus. By ‘syllabus’ I mean any document appearing directly under the SYLLABUS section of Moodle. To maintain organization and fairness, I must maintain the policies stated herein. If I make any changes to the syllabus, I will inform you. If you have a question about any policy, I am happy to talk about it. But if it is in the syllabus, you can never say that you did not know.

Note: You should attend only the section you are officially *registered* for, e.g., if you are registered for Sec. 1, you should not attend Section 2. You may *occasionally* attend the other session, but only for good reason and if you ask me first.

Required Texts: See course schedule below for assigned readings.

- Course Packet, available at 3ind Riad. (From Bliss, up Jean d’Arc to first left. Then to first right. Store is on left inside building, ground floor.)

Graded Requirements:

- Quizzes (dispersed throughout the semester): 20% of course grade
- In-class midterm essay 1: 20%
- In-class midterm essay 2: 25%
- Final exam: 35%

Quizzes: These are multiple choice or short answer quizzes given occasionally (according to Course Schedule) designed to keep you up with the readings and to sharpen comprehension. The Quiz for that day will be over the readings assigned for that day (or the previous day) only. Quizzes may *not* be made up. Your lowest quiz score will not be included your total Quizzes score. Here is how they are scored:

-1 = 90; -2 = 80; =3 = 70; -4 = 60; -5 = 0. Cheating on the quiz will result in a zero. Cheating means looking at someone else’s quiz, talking, texting, etc., or giving others (or receiving) “answers” from someone in the other section.

In-class essays and final: You will be given a choice of two out of three questions to answer. The questions will be based on the previously assigned readings. They could be based on the CASE STUDIES found in the back of the course pack. Here are the bases on which I will grade your essay: You must be able to identify and discuss the main idea (thesis) of the readings. You must be able to identify the reasons that are given in support of that thesis. You must be able to critically evaluate that thesis. You must be able to write in clear, grammatically correct, English. Your thoughts must be well-organized. Essays that fulfill all of the above, but do so in a precise and well-written manner, will receive at least 90 points. Those that fulfill the above criteria partially or in a “good” manner will receive at least 80 points. Those essays that need work in at least two of the above criteria will receive at least 70 points. Those that do not fulfill several of the criteria, or do so in a weak manner, will receive at least 60 points. Those essays that fail to display much knowledge of the readings, *or* are incomprehensible or thoughtless in expression, will receive a 59 or less. The best way to prepare for these essays is to read the assigned readings *carefully* and pay attention to how we discuss them in class. Also, for most of the readings, I will provide “reading questions” on Moodle that will help you focus on what is important.

Attendance: is up to you. However, given that your final grade depends on your performance on the in-class essays and quizzes, and that we will be discussing these difficult essays in class, it is in your best interest to attend every class, to be attentive, and to participate in the discussions. You must work hard to get a good grade in this class. However, if I notice that you are absent more than five times, I will advise you to drop the course. Please do not start showing up at the end of the semester expecting to make up the work and pass.

Participation and class conduct: Participation is strongly encouraged. In order to participate well, you must do the assigned readings *before* class, and *always bring the assigned text to class*. Ask questions, make comments, and respond (respectfully) to other students. No question or comment is too silly or off-base. Everyone has questions, and surely others have the same questions as you. However, please do not monopolize the discussion. Give others a chance to speak. *Be respectful of me and others by listening to what is going on, rather than talking among yourselves*. A philosophy class is one of the very few places where you have the opportunity to express and examine opinions. However, you should expect to have your opinions *challenged*. You should also expect me to call on you unexpectedly. So, be prepared.

NOTE: Repeat offenders of the following behaviors will be ejected from class and will have **points removed from their final grade**. (1) Talking while someone else is talking. If you cannot avoid talking to your neighbor, then sit somewhere else. (2) Text messaging in class. Answering calls. All

electronic devices must be turned off and put away completely out of sight. I reserve the right to take your “Crackberry” until class is over. If you insist on taking notes with a computer, the internet connection must be turned off. (3) Leaving the room to make or answer phone calls; playing games or reading non-class material during class. (4) Repeated lateness; leaving early. (5) Also, as a courtesy to me, *do not make preparations to leave class until I say class is over*. If I seem unaware that class time has expired, kindly alert me, thank you.

Grade Calculation: I want you to understand how your grades are assigned and calculated, so that you can know better what I expect and so that you can exercise more control over your own progress. See “Calculating and Estimating Your Grades” on Moodle.” This will show you completely explicitly how all calculations are made, so that you can do them yourself. Here is a brief explanation: All grades are recorded on Moodle’s “Grades” (as well as on the assignments themselves), so you can view them as soon as I have put them up (Moodle→Administration→Grades).

To estimate your grade at any point in the semester, simply figure your average and multiply it by the “weighted” amount; then sum the weighted amounts (see “Calculating and Estimating. . .”). Be sure to drop your lowest quizz score. Your course grade will not be rounded up. An 82.75 is an 82.

NOTE: Never tell me that you “need” a certain course or paper grade, nor ask me to “go easy” on grades or anything else. The request is completely inappropriate and unethical. The only reason students make such a request is that they think it will influence their grade—and they are right. If made, I will *reduce* your course grade by at least 2 points. The best way to get the grade you need is to do the required work as best you can; although I offer no guarantees that you will get it.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the intentional or careless use of someone else’s writing or ideas as if they were your own. I consider it equivalent to stealing, lying, and cheating, and no amount of it will be tolerated in my class. Plagiarism is wrong for another reason: The general objective of college is to become a better writer, thinker, learner, and person. Plagiarizing severely undermines that objective and harms, not only you, but all students, professors, the university, and society in general. If you plagiarize, you fail to learn how to write and think. You represent yourself as having skills and knowledge that you in fact do not have. Also, *I despise plagiarism and plagiarists*. I take your work and my work seriously. If you plagiarize, then my work becomes a pointless waste of time. I hate wasting time, because I wish to fill my life with meaning and accomplishments. When I read and respond to your work, I consider myself as engaged in a mutual relationship of trust, respect, truth, care, and progress. If I am reading your plagiarized work, then I am having a false relationship with you. I despise false relationships because they destroy the substance of life. **If you plagiarize anything in this class, you will receive a grade of zero for the assignment and be reported to the Dean. It will go on your record and you could be dismissed from the university. No exceptions.** This includes any submitted work whatsoever (including essay drafts, single sentences and ideas, using dictionary definitions, encyclopedia entries, or any part thereof, paraphrasing, whether from books, internet, magazines, friends, wherever). You must also discourage plagiarism by not giving your paper to someone else to copy. Unfortunately, I catch plagiarizers *every semester*. I am an experienced reader and can usually tell, simply by reading, when a student has plagiarized. (This also applies to papers written by ghost writers.) I can tell because the writing does not match the assignment, because the text has an “internet feel,” or because it uses awkward wording in an attempt to disguise the source. I also use Google, Turnitin, and other resources.

You can, of course, easily avoid plagiarism simply by *citing your sources properly*. If you are unsure of how to cite sources properly, see “**Documenting Sources: Rules & Mechanics**” posted on Moodle. But *you are responsible for any plagiarism*. If you are struggling with an assignment, or with your English, please come and talk to me. I am here to help.

Turnitin. Unfortunately, due to a few people’s insidious attempts to plagiarize, I must force everyone to submit all assignments to Turnitin.com. Failure to submit your work to Turnitin results in an automatic 0 for the assignment.

Here is how it works: As their website says, “Every paper submitted is returned in the form of a Originality Report. Results are based on searches of billions of pages from current and archived instances of the Internet, millions of student papers submitted to Turnitin, and commercial databases of journal articles and periodicals” (http://www.plagiarism.org/plag_solutions.html). NOTE that Turnitin only submits a “similarity” report, not a plagiarism report. The similarity report shows the percentage of your text that is similar or identical to another text, and therefore helps me determine whether you have plagiarized. Some similarity is fine and to be expected. But identical similarity or paraphrased similarity is plagiarism. NOTE: Writing papers does *not* consist of using a source and changing a few words here and there. Nor does paraphrasing a source consist of changing a few words here and there. It means making a compact summary of the main point of a paragraph, for purposes of clarification for the reader. All paraphrasing must be documented. To submit your paper to Turnitin, go to Moodle and click on “Turnitin submission” for the current assignment.

More information on Plagiarism is posted on Moodle.

The Writing Center:

If you have writing issues that need extra attention, please take advantage of the Writing Center. Their instructors help all students, from first-year to doctoral. Keep in mind that they will *not* proofread or copy-edit your work. Walk in or make an appointment: 9 am - 5 pm, Monday – Friday. West Hall 336; Ext. 3157; E-mail: writing@aub.edu.lb

Moodle: Here you will find course material such as the syllabus, some course readings, citation mechanics, tips on writing papers, and such. Class notices and announcements will be sent to you by e-mail (via the “News Forum”) so, **check your AUB e-mail** regularly. You may also post your own thoughts on the News Forum for everyone to see.

E-mail: So that we may better communicate, you must use your AUB e-mail and “authenticate” it so that I can see your name and know who you are.

See Course Schedule, next page--

Course Schedule: This schedule is subject to change, although any changes will be announced well in advance. To be prepared for class discussions, read the assigned material *prior* to class time. *Always* bring the assigned material to class. Bring whatever is assigned for Tuesday to Thursday's class as well. *If you do not bring the readings to class, I may ask you to leave until you return with them!*

Week	Tuesday	Thursday
1. Sept.	3	5 Introduction to Course and Syllabus,
2	10 Some Basic Points about Arguments (Rachels)	12 General Introduction to Biomedical Ethics (1-13)
3	17 General intro cont. (13-23) Quiz 1	19 cont. (23-30)
4	24 General Introduction cont. (30-40)	26 Fundamental concepts (40-51) Quiz 2
5 Oct.	1 The Professional-Patient Relationship (58-68)	3 Professional-patient cont. (69-87)
6	8 Contested Therapies and Biomedical Enhancement Introduction (144-6) "Makeover" (Kramer, 205-213)	10 In-class Essay 1 "Aspirin for the Mind? Some Ethical worries about Psychopharmacology" (213-220)
7	15 Tuesday, October 15, 2013 No class	17 Thursday, October 17, 2013 No class
8	22 Biomedical enhancements cont. "Prozac, Enhancement, and Self-Creation" (DeGrazia, (222-9) "One Pill Makes You Smarter . . . Rise of Ritalin" (Mills, 230-5) Quiz 3	24 "Monitoring and Manipulating Brain Function" (Farah, Wolpe, 235-9)
9	29 Epicurus, "Death is Nothing to Us" (105-111) Death and Decision Regarding life-Sustaining Treatment (316-321)	31 "The Whole-Brain Concept of Death ... (322-330) "An Alternative to Brain Death" (McMahan, 333-8)
10 Nov	5 Death cont. "Ethics and Communication in Do-Not-Resuscitate Orders" (Tomlinson, Brody, 354-8) Quiz 4	7 "The Conscious Incompetent Patient" (Dresser, (370-3)
11	12 Suicide, Physician-Assisted Suicide, And Active Euthanasia (376-84) "Suicide" (Kant, 385-388)	14 "The Morality and Rationality of Suicide" (Brandt, 388-395) Quiz 5
12	19 "Active and Passive Euthanasia" (Rachels, 395-399) "Killing and Allowing to Die" Callahan, 399-404) "Voluntary Active Euthanasia" (Brock, 402-4) "Care of the Hopelessly Ill..." (Quill, Cassel, Meier, 418-21) Quiz 6	21 The Oregon Death with Dignity Act (421-6) "Regulating Physician-Assisted Death" (Miller, et al, 426-431)
13	26 Abortion and Embryonic Stem Cell Research (456-65) "The Unspeakable Crime of Abortion" (Pope John Paul, 466-8)	28 "On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion" (Warren, 468-74) In-class essay 2
14 Dec	3 "A Defense of Abortion" (Thomson, 479-487)	5 "Majority Opinion in Roe v. Wade" (Justice Blackmun, 492-6) Quiz 7
15	10 Last class "Stem Cell Basics" (National Institutes of Health, 501-8) "Killing Embryos for Stem Cell-Research" (McMahan, 508-13) ("When we begin to exist")	12 Reading period, exams begin (11th)
16	17 Final exams: TBA Sec. 1: Sec. 2:	19 (official end of semester, Dec. 21)