

Philosophy 235: Bioethics

Syllabus (© Spring 2018)

Class Days / Times:

Section 1: 10:00 – 10:50 AM on Mondays, Wednesdays, & Fridays in West Quad 210

Section 2: 11:00 – 11:50 AM on Mondays, Wednesdays, & Fridays in West Quad 211

Professor: Dr. Rachel Fredericks

I prefer that my students call me Rachel, just like everyone else, but you may call me Professor (or Doctor) Fredericks if that makes you more comfortable.

Email Address: rlfredericks@bsu.edu

I prefer communicating by email, not telephone, and I can usually respond to student emails within 24 hours during the week and 48 hours on the weekend.

Office Hours: Mondays, noon – 1:00 pm; Tuesdays & Thursdays, 1:45 – 2:45 pm; Wednesdays, 1:00 – 2:00 pm; and by appointment (email me to schedule as needed)

Office Location: North Quad (NQ) 230 / **Office Phone:** 765-285-1261

Office hours are a chance to have a conversation about course material, whether you are struggling or you are curious to go beyond what we discussed in class. They can be incredibly helpful, and I enjoy getting to know you better one on one.

Course Description

This is a course in bioethics (bio=life, ethics=morality), a challenging one in which we confront ethical questions related to health and healthcare. We try to answer questions about what we *should* do when it comes to health and healthcare and why we *should* do those things, whether we need care ourselves, for our loved ones, or we are healthcare professionals, researchers, tax-payers, citizens, and/or policy makers.

We discuss a wide range of topics from multiple perspectives, but there is no way we can consider all the defensible positions a person could take on these issues. Nevertheless, the main goals of the course, which are (a) to help you understand a variety of morally significant challenges relating to health and healthcare and (b) to give you the tools to develop and justify *your own* views about how to respond to those challenges, can be achieved without discussing every possible position and argument.

Students in their first philosophy class often find it more difficult than they were expecting, but since our focus is on building philosophical skills step-by-step, students also tend to see lots of improvement. I'm here to help – please ask!

Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to work independently and / or collaboratively to:

1. Increase their knowledge of key moral problems faced by people in various roles relating to contemporary health and health care,
2. Read, analyze, and understand complex philosophical texts,
3. Explain ethical reasoning accurately, clearly, charitably, logically, and persuasively, both verbally and in writing,
4. Critically evaluate arguments advanced by professional philosophers and peers,
5. Apply philosophical skills and content to examine and respond to news stories and events in their own lives, and
6. Reflect on their own values and experiences to develop self-knowledge.

Required Texts

All required (and recommended) readings will be distributed online via Canvas.

- Always do the required reading *before* coming to class on the day listed.
- Always bring a copy (paper or electronic) of the reading with you to class.

Students may not reproduce, distribute, or publicly post course materials without my permission. Assignments, handouts, and other materials are protected by copyright.

Schedule

All groups of students have different interests, needs, and talents, so I might change this schedule, but I will do so as little as possible and give as much warning as I can if / when I do make schedule changes.

Week 1 (January 8-12): Introduction (to each other and to philosophical methods)

Monday: Syllabus

Wednesday: John D. Mariana, "How to Read Philosophy"

Friday: Rachel Fredericks, "Guide To Taking Notes"

Homework #1: Reflecting on Learning (5 points) DUE via Canvas 30 minutes before class

Week 2 (January 15-19): Arguments, Objections, & Responses

Monday: MLK Day: NO CLASSES

Wednesday: Sharon Rupp, "Be Employable. Study Philosophy"

Friday: Peter Tyson, "The Hippocratic Oath Today"

Homework #2: Taking Notes in Your Own Voice (5 points) DUE via Canvas 30 minutes before class

Week 3 (January 22-26): Doctors' & Patients' Responsibilities

Monday: AMA, "Principles of Medical Ethics," and AMA, "Fundamental Elements of the Patient-Physician Relationship"

5 points available during class

Wednesday: Maureen Kelley, "Limits on Patient Responsibility"

Homework #3: Quoting a Thesis Statement (5 points) DUE via Canvas 30 minutes before class

Friday: Maureen Kelley, "Limits on Patient Responsibility"

Week 4 (January 29 – February 2): Health Care Distribution

Monday: Paul Menzel and Donald W. Light, "A Conservative Case for Universal Access to Health Care"

Homework #4: Explaining Reasons Why (10 points) DUE via Canvas 30 minutes before class

Wednesday: Paul Menzel and Donald W. Light, "A Conservative Case for Universal Access to Health Care"

Friday: Malcolm Gladwell, "The Moral-Hazard Myth"

Week 5 (February 5-9)

INSTEAD OF OUR REGULAR CLASSES on Monday and Wednesday of this week, we will attend a poverty simulation in the student center ballroom from 6:00 to 8:30 PM on Tuesday (February 6). If you truly cannot attend, you must contact me ASAP (before the event!!) for a chance to complete an alternative assignment. If you wait until after the event, and don't have documentation of an emergency that was out of your control, you will not be able to complete this week's homework assignment.

Friday: In Class Activity (no new reading to do before class, just Homework #5)

Homework #5: Reflecting on Learning and Writing an Original Thesis Statement (10 points) DUE via Canvas 30 minutes before class

Week 6 (February 12-16)

Monday: James Dwyer, "Illegal Immigrants, Health Care, and Social Responsibility"

1 point available during class

Wednesday: James Dwyer, "Illegal Immigrants, Health Care, and Social Responsibility"

Friday: Choose one from a selection of relevant news articles posted on Canvas to read and write your homework assignment about before class

Homework #6: Applying Philosophy to the News (10 points) DUE via Canvas 30 minutes before class

Week 7 (February 19-23): Biomedical Research:

Monday: Carl Elliott, "Guinea-Pigging"

Homework #7: Recreating an Argument (10 points) DUE via Canvas 30 minutes before class

Wednesday: David DeGrazia, "The Ethics of Animal Research: What Are the Prospects for Agreement?"

Friday: David DeGrazia, "The Ethics of Animal Research: What Are the Prospects for Agreement?"

1 point available during class

Week 8 (February 26 – March 2)

Monday: IN CLASS GROUP MIDTERM (20 points)

Wednesday: IN CLASS INDIVIDUAL MIDTERM (40 points)

Friday: In Class Activity (no new reading to do before class)

5 points available during class

SPRING BREAK (March 5-9) - Have fun!

Week 9 (March 12-16): The Environmental Turn

Monday: Andrew Jameton and Jessica Pierce, "Sustainable Health Care and Emerging Ethical Responsibilities"

Homework #8: Drawing Connections within the Course (10 points) DUE via Canvas 30 minutes before class

Wednesday: Andrew Jameton and Jessica Pierce, "Sustainable Health Care and Emerging Ethical Responsibilities"

Friday: In Class Activity: TBD

Week 10 (March 19-23): Euthanasia & Physician-Assisted Suicide

Monday: Peter Singer, "Voluntary Euthanasia: A Utilitarian Perspective"

1 point available in class

Wednesday: Peter Singer, "Voluntary Euthanasia: A Utilitarian Perspective"

Friday: Michael Gill, "A Moral Defense of Oregon's Assisted Suicide Law"

Homework #9: More Practice Recreating an Argument (10 points) DUE via Canvas 30 minutes before class

Week 11 (March 26-30)

Monday: Michael Gill, "A Moral Defense of Oregon's Assisted Suicide Law"

Wednesday: Susan Wolf, "Gender, Feminism, and Death: Physician-Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia"

Homework #10: Explaining an Objection (10 points) DUE via Canvas 30 minutes before class

Friday: Susan Wolf, "Gender, Feminism, and Death: Physician-Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia"

Week 12 (April 2-6): Abortion

Monday: Judith Jarvis Thomson, "A Defense of Abortion"

5 points available during class

Wednesday: Judith Jarvis Thomson, "A Defense of Abortion"

Friday: Don Marquis, "Abortion and the Beginning and End of Human Life"

Homework #11: Defining and Explaining Contrasting Views (5 points) DUE via Canvas 30 minutes before class

Week 13 (April 9-13)

Monday: Don Marquis, "Abortion and the Beginning and End of Human Life"

Wednesday: Farhat Moazam, "Feminist Discourse on Sex Screening and Selective Abortion of Female Foetuses"

Homework #12: Developing an Example (5 points) DUE via Canvas 30 minutes before class

Friday: Farhat Moazam, "Feminist Discourse on Sex Screening and Selective Abortion of Female Foetuses"

1 point available in class

Week 14 (April 16-20): Bioengineering

Monday: Michael J. Sandel, "The Case Against Perfection: What's Wrong with Designer Children, Bionic Athletes, and Genetic Engineering"

Homework #13: Evaluating an Argument (10 points) DUE via Canvas 30 minutes before class

Wednesday: Michael J. Sandel, "The Case Against Perfection: What's Wrong with Designer Children, Bionic Athletes, and Genetic Engineering"

Friday: In Class Activity: TBD

Homework #14: Identifying Bioethical Issues in the News (5 points) DUE via Canvas 30 minutes before class

Week 15 (April 23-27)

Monday: In Class Activity (continued)

5 points available during class

Wednesday: Sara Goering, "Gene Therapies and the Pursuit of a Better Human"

Friday: Sara Goering, "Gene Therapies and the Pursuit of a Better Human"

Week 16 (April 30 – May 4)

Monday: Review Session

1 point available during class

Final Exam

Section 1 (which normally meets at 10 AM): Wednesday, May 2, 9:45 – 11:45 AM in our regular location (WQ 210)

Section 2 (which normally meets at 11 AM): Thursday, May 3, 9:45 – 11:45 AM in our regular location (WQ 211)

Assignments & Assessment

All assignments (other than those completed during class):

- Need to be typed (double-spaced, please!!) and submitted (as attachments!!) electronically via Canvas
- Must include appropriate citations for all quotations *and paraphrases*, plus a complete list of bibliographic references at the end.
 - Please use the MLA style guide to format your citations and references.
 - You do not need to put the Works Cited section on a separate page.
 - Please do provide the URL for any sources found on the Internet.
- Will be given comments & grades electronically, via Canvas, and
- Will be graded anonymously, so PLEASE do NOT write your name in them.
 - Empirical research shows that basically everyone has implicit (unconscious) biases, even if they are strongly committed to equality, fairness, and so on. Thankfully, we can do things to minimize the effects of implicit bias, and anonymous grading is an easy and effective one.

Attendance and active class participation are key to success in this course. Philosophy is an activity (something you *do*), not just something you passively watch or listen to. So, I expect you to come to class having done the assigned readings and ready to ask questions and explain your views. The quality and quantity of your contributions to discussion are the primary basis for your participation grade, but I also take into account office hours, notes you write on your card, and email conversations.

Generally, for homework, you will practice a specific skill as you do the reading BEFORE class, so your homework will be about material that we haven't yet discussed. You may not be used to that, but it has lots of benefits. It gives everyone an incentive to come to class prepared, which means we have better discussions during class. Completing the work on your own also helps you remember the material better than you otherwise would, which comes in handy later. It also helps you practice your critical thinking skills and makes you more independent thinkers, which is so, so valuable.

Seeing how you do on your own also helps me figure out appropriate pacing, your interests, and other things that help me improve the course over time. However, if you have questions about homework, you can always ask me for clarification (earlier is better!). You are also welcome to talk to classmates about homework, *so long as* everyone turns in their own original work; talking about the material can be very useful, but everything you turn in should be written in your own words, using your own voice.

Late homework will not earn credit unless (a) you and I agree upon an alternate arrangement ahead of time, which requires planning and good reasons on your part, or (b) you experience a documented illness or other emergency beyond your control. In the latter case, you need to contact me with your documentation as soon as possible. Similarly, if you miss a class during which we do an in-class activity for credit, you will not earn credit for that activity, unless you've made arrangements with me ahead of time or show me appropriate documentation to excuse your absence. While late homework does not earn points (unless you fulfill (a) or (b)), I will give you feedback on late homework that you submit, so you have the opportunity to learn from your efforts.

On the midterm and final exams, you will be answering questions of the types that you have already answered on your homework – that is, you'll be asked to do tasks that you have already practiced and that we have already talked about quite a bit. See Canvas for much more detailed information about the exams as they draw nearer.

Here is the breakdown of the points available for different kinds of assignments:

- In-class assignments: 25 points
- Homework: 110 points
- Group midterm: 20
- Individual midterm: 40 points
- Participation: 15 points
- Final: 90 points
- Total: 300 points

Here is the schema I will use to convert points to letter grades:

A = 95% = 284 points	C = 73% = 218 points
A- = 90% = 269 points	C- = 70% = 209 points
B+ = 87% = 260 points	D+ = 67% = 200 points
B = 83% = 248 points	D = 63% = 188 points
B- = 80% = 239 points	D- = 60% = 179 points
C+ = 77% = 230 points	F < 60 % ≤ 178 points

Philosophical Writing

In philosophical writing, every word and phrase matters. Since philosophical writing tend to be an unfamiliar and challenging form of writing for students, I recommend paying careful attention to (a) the detailed assignment prompts, (b) the detailed writing guidelines and tips posted on Canvas and discussed in class, and (c) the written feedback on your assignments.

In general, written assignments will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

1. Structure and Organization
 - a. Is the assignment well organized?
 - b. Does it have a clear thesis statement in the first person?
 - c. Are there clear transitions between paragraphs and sections of the assignment?
2. Exposition and Interpretation
 - a. Do you give a clear, accurate, and charitable interpretation of the view(s) considered?
 - b. Do you make clear the underlying assumptions of the view(s) and their implications?
 - c. Do you support your interpretations with relevant citations to the text?
3. Argument and Critical Evaluation
 - a. Do you give rational arguments for the claims you make? Is it obvious what they are?
 - b. When critiquing a view, do you consider possible responses to that critique?
 - c. Do you show that you have thought independently about the problem in question?
4. Writing Style
 - a. Is your prose style clear and easy to understand?
 - b. Are there any recurring grammatical or spelling errors?
 - c. Do you avoid awkward and confusing sentence structures?

The Writing Center

One key to improving your writing is getting feedback and revision suggestions on your text during the writing process. The Writing Center at Ball State offers free writing feedback sessions (online or face-to-face) to all students. They work with students on essays, reports, reflections, research projects, web content, lesson plans, slideshows, poster presentations, resumes, and other digital or print texts. Students can make an appointment by going to www.bsu.edu/writingcenter, stopping by Robert Bell 295, or by calling 765-285-8370.

The Learning Center

Did you know that the Learning Center offers free tutoring for many courses, including science and humanities, languages, math and business, help with any writing task, and study strategies, including time management, test taking, note taking, and effective textbook reading?

The Learning Center opens for Fall 2017 tutoring on Monday, August 28th, at 9 am. Hours are Monday-Thursday, 9 am-8 pm, and Friday, 9 am-12 pm. Call 765-285-3780 or visit NQ 350 to make an appointment to meet with a tutor. Check them out online at www.bsu.edu/learningcenter. They can help!

Student Conduct

A respectful, civil environment is crucial for learning any subject, but especially so for philosophy, which involves questioning, defending, and criticizing the beliefs and practices that mean the most to us. Conduct that interferes with other students' ability to learn or my ability to teach is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. In particular, students should not interrupt other students or the professor; dominate class discussion; disparage or disrespect the ideas, beliefs, or practices of others (which does not mean that one cannot or should not respectfully provide reasons to disagree); habitually arrive late or leave early; make or receive phone calls; text; surf the internet; or use other technology that is not directly related to course goals.

Academic Dishonesty

Academically honest students do not use others' ideas or words without formally acknowledging the author or source through appropriate use of quotation marks, references, and the like. Plagiarism, a form of academic *dishonesty*, is presenting someone else's work or thought as one's own original work or thought. If I discover that a student has plagiarized, cheated, or otherwise violated the academic dishonesty policy, the student will receive a score of zero for the assignment in question, and if the violation is sufficiently significant, may fail the course as whole, at my discretion.

More detailed resources relating to academic dishonesty and how to avoid it are posted on Canvas. If, after investigating them, you have questions, please contact me *as soon as possible*. It is much better for everyone if you get help clearing up any confusion right away, rather than waiting and needing to deal with a bigger problem.

Diversity & Inclusion

Ball State University aspires to be a university that attracts and retains a diverse faculty, staff and student body. We are committed to ensuring that all members of the campus

community are welcome through our practice of valuing the various experiences and worldviews of those we serve. We promote a culture of respect and civil discourse as evident in our [Beneficence Pledge](#). For Bias Incident Response information, go to <http://cms.bsu.edu/campuslife/multiculturalcenter/bias-incident-reporting> or e-mail mc2@bsu.edu.

Disability Accommodations

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, please contact me as soon as possible. Ball State's Disability Services office coordinates services for students with disabilities; documentation of a disability needs to be on file in that office before any accommodations can be provided. Disability Services can be contacted at 765-285-5293 or dsd@bsu.edu.

Concerns or Problems

If you have a concern or problem about the course, please contact me ASAP so we can work together on the best possible plan for moving forward! ☺