

PHIL 116 – Introduction to Bioethics

Emory University – Fall 2017

Instructor's Name:	Catherine Fullarton
Class Meeting Time & Place:	MWF 9:00am – 9:50am, Callaway Center S103
Office Hours:	Wednesday 10:30am-12pm or by appointment
Office Location:	Woodruff Library 655
Email:	cfullar@emory.edu

Course Description:

This course is designed to provide students with an introduction to the study of bioethics, with an emphasis on biomedical ethics and the experience of health, illness, and healthcare. It is designed with a view towards equipping you with a robust sense of how moral decision-making already underlies your everyday experiences – in clinical settings, in research, and beyond – and introducing you to applied ethical frameworks that will help elucidate (and fruitfully complicate) the tensions of those demands, and how to address them.

The course is roughly divided into three sections:

1. Biomedical Ethics

In this first section, we'll discuss concepts like *health*, *illness*, *disease*, and ideas about what it means to *live well* and to *care* for others. We'll examine case studies and read philosophical work addressing issues in medicine, bioethics and disability studies. What is medicine *doing*? What are – or should be – its goals? What obligations do health care practitioners have relative to their patients? How are longer lifespans changing the role of medicine in our lives?

2. Core Ethical Theory

In the second section of the course, we'll examine several core ethical theories relevant for bioethical considerations, including deontological (Kantian) ethics, consequentialism, virtue ethics, and (feminist) care ethics. Our goal will be to develop a nuanced understanding of these frameworks, and to elucidate how they help us make sense of our relations and obligations to ourselves and to others. We'll also problematize these conceptions by considering works that challenge these models. Once we apply a bit of pressure, where do these ethical theories excel or falter? Where are their insights still valuable, if at all? If not, how could or should we revise them to improve them (or should we simply abandon them)?

3. Bioethics, More Broadly

In the final section, we'll consider issues in bioethics *beyond* medicine. Food deserts, biological warfare, ecological sustainability as a human rights issue, animal extinction and conservation efforts, selective abortion, physician-assisted suicide... The scope of bioethical issues is wide, and the list of considerations is long. Your own questions and research interests will help determine where we focus our attention, here (more on that later...).

Our goal will be to develop a nuanced understanding of the texts and issues we study, and to see how they can help us make sense of our relations and responsibilities to ourselves and others. Doing so will require close reading, thoughtful preparation, active discussion in class, and a

commitment to being present and to engaging thoughtfully and respectfully with others. This is reflected in the evaluation structure.

This course is open to all students at all levels. Students outside of philosophy – including students in health sciences, medicine, law, etc. – should find this course to be relevant and rewarding. No background in or familiarity with philosophy is expected or required.

Required Texts:

The following course texts are required. To acquire them, I encourage you to consult local independent bookstores (like Eagle Eye Bookstore, on the corner of North Decatur Rd. and Clairmont Ave., and Charon Books, in Little 5 Points). Copies of these books should be readily available in used condition, and for free through Emory's library system, as noted.

- Julia Driver, Ed., *Ethics: The Fundamentals*. (ISBN: 9781405111546) [On 24hr reserve at Woodruff Library]
- Havi Carel, *Illness: The Cry of the Flesh*. (ISBN: 978-1844651528) [Available online through Emory's library system]
- Irena Madjar and Jo Ann Walton, *Nursing and the Experience of Illness: Phenomenology in Practice* (ISBN: 9780415207836)
- Ivan Illich, *Medical Nemesis: The Expropriation of Health* (ISBN: 071452512X)

Please pay special attention to editions/translations. Editions/translations can vary, and it's helpful for us to be on the same page.

Additional readings will be readily available through electronic journals (please come see me or speak to a research librarian ASAP if you aren't sure how to access these resources). Some additional readings will be available through Canvas, as noted in the syllabus.

Though not *required*, the following texts are extensively employed in bioethics, and so are recommended as further reading, to supplement our work in this course. Students intending to continue in medicine or bioethics – and those looking for more background reading in the area – will find them to be invaluable resources:

- Beauchamp & Childress, *Principles of Biomedical Ethics*, 7th Edition, 2013 (ISBN: 9780199924585) [On 24hr reserve at Woodruff Library]
- Patricia Benner, Ed., *Interpretive Phenomenology: Embodiment, Caring, and Ethics in Health and Illness* (ISBN: 9781452204727). [Available for free, online, through Emory's library system]

Evaluations:

Weekly Response Papers (1-1.5 pages each) + Peer-Evaluations 40%

Each week, students will be required to submit short expository papers or reading responses, *and* to provide feedback on their peers' work. Expository papers should provide a clear and concise explication of a key idea or issue in the text for that week's class (*not* necessarily the whole reading), and should culminate with one or two thoughtful questions that could be used to initiate in-class discussion of the material. Further information about peer-reviewing will be

provided in class. **Response Papers are due by 5pm on the Sunday before the week in which the material is to be discussed. Peer-Evaluations are due by 5pm on the following Tuesday.** Exceptions are noted in the syllabus. Rubrics will be provided to guide your work and peer evaluations.

Students will receive feedback and be graded *both* on their responses *and* on the feedback they provide to their peers. The final grade for this portion of the work will consider overall performance on both responses (24pts) and feedback provided to peers (12pts), *plus* credit for consistently strong performance or improvement over the term (up to 4pts).

Term Paper Proposal (approx. 1 page) + Presentation 10%

Before beginning their term paper, students must submit a proposal outlining their intended project/research, and have it approved by the instructor. This proposal should clearly outline a relevant philosophical question that the student intends to examine, and the material that will be used to address this question. It should also include a proposed bibliography that includes *at least* one text from the readings (secondary sources beyond the course readings are *not* required). See details about the term paper below, for more information. **The proposal is due by 11:59pm on Friday Oct. 27th.** It will be returned with feedback by the end of Week 12.

In-class presentations of term paper proposals will be scheduled during Weeks 13-16 so that you can get feedback on your work, and ask questions and provide feedback on your peers' work. The grade for this portion considers the written proposal (4pts), in-class presentation (4pts) *and* the feedback you provide to your peers (2pts).

Final Paper (approx. 5-6 pages) 30%

Students are required to write one 5-6-page term paper addressing a relevant philosophical question, and engaging *at least* one of the texts examined in class.

The term paper is due by 11:59pm on Friday December 8th.

Engagement 20%

Thoughtful, respectful engagement is crucial to this course. Students are required to come to class prepared, having completed the readings *in advance*, and ready to engage thoughtfully in each class. This includes *bringing the textbook or printed text that we will be discussing*. It also includes contributing thoughtfully to discussion.

“The philosophical pursuit of wisdom requires more than attendance. Excellent (‘A’ level) collaboration means: *Reliable and friendly attendance so that other people can come to trust you as a discussion partner. Exchanging ideas with others verbally. Making thoughtful efforts to understand material before class. Being charitable and inquisitive about the views of other people. Critically evaluating your own views and reasons.* [Engagement] score will be determined at the end of the course with an overall view of attendance, discussion, and most fundamentally, whether a student’s presence was reliably philosophically helpful to others. Students who regularly attend and are otherwise friendly, but rarely find ways to philosophically collaborate will not earn above about 76 points (a ‘C’) for collaboration.”¹

Students are permitted *one unexcused absence*; after the first unexcused absence, students will lose 2% of the final grade for each subsequent unexcused absence. In order to count as *excused*, absences *must* be accompanied by a note from the Office of Undergraduate Education (OUE).

¹ Prof. Greg Kirk.

Attendance is taken at the start of class, which means that lateness *will* be counted as an absence.

Critical Thinking Component

REQUIRED

This is a four-credit class. Attendance and participation, writing assignments, presentations and the final paper will comprise three out of the four credits. Students will earn their fourth credit by completing a mandatory online component designed to equip them with basic critical thinking skills. All students in introductory philosophy courses are required to complete this online component. It is a self-guided course, located on the course's Canvas site, which focuses on informal logic. It has 13 short online tests, all of which must be passed by the Thanksgiving Break (November 24th). While this component is not graded, it is a condition of passing the course as a whole. In other words, *failure to complete this component will result in the student not passing the course, regardless of grades earned on other course requirements.*

Grading:

Weekly Response Papers & Peer-Evaluation	40%
Term Paper Proposal & Presentation	10%
Term Paper (5-6 pages)	30%
Engagement	20%
Critical Thinking Module***	P/NP
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TOTAL	100%**

*Please note that these grade weightings should be considered guidelines rather than fixed values; I reserve the right to adjust for performance improvement (or diminishment of effort) over the course of the term.

**Students *must complete all required assignments* in order to complete the course.

***The Critical Thinking Module *must be completed in order to pass the course*. It carries no grade – it is pass/fail – but you cannot receive credit for this course without completing it.

A Note on Writing...

Maurice Merleau-Ponty, a prominent phenomenologist whose work inspired many of the texts we'll be reading, wrote that "language accomplishes thought." Part of what this means is that we thinking is incomplete – we can't express sophisticated thoughts or accomplish nuanced thinking - without some degree of linguistic proficiency. In this class, you'll have many opportunities to enhance your writing abilities *and* your critical thinking. If you would like further support with either, you are always encouraged to make an appointment to meet with me or to consult the Emory Writing Center – an invaluable resource.

If writing in English is a particular challenge for you, please come see me during office hours and we can discuss your specific concerns.

Other Important Policies

Attendance & Participation

Students are expected to attend every class, and to engage thoughtfully with each other and with the course ideas. As such, only one unexcused absence will be permitted, following which students will be docked marks for unexcused absences. Students who miss class for a legitimate academic or personal reason should visit the Office of Undergraduate Education (OUE) to have the absence documented. Absences without a note from OUE will be considered unexcused.

Paper Extensions

The goal of this course is to have students engage thoughtfully with difficult philosophical material. As such, students are highly encouraged to plan ahead to ensure sufficient time to complete their assignments to the best of their ability. Extensions may be provided in the case of unforeseen hardships. To request an extension, the student must email *at least* 48hrs before the assignment deadline and include in their email *both*: (1) the reason for the request, and (2) the proposed new submission deadline. Students will receive email confirmation if the request is granted.

Because they involve peer-review, extensions cannot be granted for weekly writing assignments.

Accessibility Information

Please contact the Access, Disability Services and Resources Center (contact information below) as soon as possible if particular accommodations would be supportive of your learning.

For ADA accommodation requests, please contact Access, Disability Services, and Resources at 404-727-9877 (voice) or 404-712-2049 (TDD).

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious academic misconduct that could result in expulsion from the university. If you are *at all* uncertain about or unfamiliar with this term, it is *imperative* that you review the Emory University Code of Conduct on this subject. Ignorance of the policy is *not* an excuse for plagiarism.

Student Code of Conduct

All students should familiarize themselves with the Emory University Undergraduate Code of Conduct. Enrollment in this class constitutes agreement with that document.

Reading Schedule & Due Dates

I. BIOMEDICAL ETHICS

Week 1 – Introduction (Aug. 23, 25)

Required Reading:

van den Berg, “The Meaning of Being Ill,” *Psychology of the Sickbed*. (PDF on Canvas)

Assignments:

- Introductory Questionnaire & Course Contract due (hard copy) in-class on Friday.

Week 2 – The Experience of the Body & The Meaning of Illness (Aug. 28, 30, Sept. 1)

Required Readings:

Havi Carel, “Introduction,” *Illness*. (PDF)

Havi Carel, “Chapter 1: The Body in Illness,” *Illness*. (PDF)

S. Kay Toombs, “The Meaning of Illness: A Theoretical Approach to the Patient-Physician Relationship,” *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy* 12 (1987): 219-240.

S. Kay Toombs, “The Temporality of Illness: Four Levels of Experience,” *Theoretical Medicine* 11 (1990):227-241.

Optional Reading:

Madjar & Walton, “Nursing and Phenomenology,” *Nursing and the Experience of Illness*

Assignments:

- Response Paper due Sunday Aug. 27th at 5pm.
- Peer-Review due Tuesday Aug. 29th at 5pm.

Week 3 – Phenomenology of Health, Illness & Disability (Sept. 6, 8)

Note: No class Monday Sept. 4th – Labor Day

Required Readings:

S. Kay Toombs, “The Lived Experience of Disability,” *Human Studies* 18:1 (1995).

Havi Carel, “Chapter 4: Illness as Dis-Ability and Health Within Illness,” *Illness*. (PDF)

Elizabeth Lindsey, “Health Within Illness: The Experiences of Chronically Ill/Disabled People,” *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 24 (1996): 465-472.

Optional Reading:

Havi Carel, “Can I Be Ill and Happy?” (PDF)

Assignments:

- Response Paper due Sunday Sept. 3rd at 5pm.
- Peer-Review due Tuesday Sept. 5th at 5pm.

Week 4 – Ableism, Disability, Transability (Sept. 11, 13, 15)

Required Readings:

Lennard J. Davis, “Introduction: Disability, Normality, and Power” *The Disability Studies Reader*, 4th Ed. (2013).

Tom Shakespeare, “The Social Model of Disability,” *The Disability Studies Reader*, 4th Ed. (2013).

Joseph N. Strauss, “Autism as Culture,” *The Disability Studies Reader*, 4th Ed. (2013): 460-484.

Carl Elliott, “[A New Way to Be Mad](#),” *The Atlantic* (Dec. 2000).

Optional Readings:

“[Episode 010: Joel Reynolds on Disability](#),” *The UnMute Podcast* (11 Dec. 2015) [You may start at the beginning, or jump ahead and start at 03:55]
Joel Reynolds, “I’d Rather Be Dead than Disabled,” *Review of Communication* 17:3, 149-163 (2017).

Assignments:

- Response Paper due Sunday Sept. 10th at 5pm.
- Peer-Review due Tuesday Sept. 12th at 5pm.

Week 5 – The Place of the Patient in Treatment & Research (Sept. 18, 20, 22)

No class this Monday (Sept. 18th).

In lieu of a lecture today, please watch Margaret Edson’s film *W;t* (starring Emma Thomson), available on [YouTube](#).

Required Readings:

Madjar & Walton, “On Surviving Breast Cancer and Mastectomy,” *Nursing and the Experience of Illness* (PDF on Canvas)
Siddhartha Mukherjee, *The Emperor of All Maladies* (selection, PDF on Canvas)
HeLa (selections, PDF on Canvas)

Assignments:

- Response Paper due Sunday Sept. 17th at 5pm.
- Peer-Review due Tuesday Sept. 20th at 5pm.

Week 5 – Critiques of Medicalization – Ivan Illich (Sept. 25, 27, 29)

Required Readings:

Ivan Illich, *Medical Nemesis*, “Part 1: Clinical Iatrogenesis,” “Part 3: Cultural Iatrogenesis – The Killing of Pain,” and “Part 4: The Politics of Health – Specific Counterproductivity & The Recovery of Health”

Assignments:

- Response Paper due Sunday Sept. 24th at 5pm.
- Peer-Review due Tuesday Sept. 26th at 5pm.

Week 6 – Critiques of Medicalization – R. D. Laing (Oct. 2, 4, 6)

Required Readings:

R. D. Laing, *The Divided Self*, “Chapter 1: The Existential-Phenomenological Foundations for a Science of Persons,” and “Chapter 2: Ontological Insecurity”

Recommended Reading:

Madjar & Walton, "On Living with Schizophrenia," *Nursing and the Experience of Illness* (PDF on Canvas)

Assignments:

- Response Paper due Sunday Oct. 1st at 5pm.
- Peer-Review due Tuesday Oct. 3rd at 5pm.

II. CORE ETHICAL THEORY

Week 8 – Utilitarianism / Consequentialism (Oct. 9, 11, 13)

Note: No class Monday Oct. 9th – Fall Break

Required Readings:

J. S. Mill, *Utilitarianism* (Chapters [1](#) & [2](#))

Julia Driver, "Chapter 3: Classical Utilitarianism," *Ethics: The Fundamentals*
"The Gift," *New Yorker* (article about Zell Kravinsky, PDF on Canvas)

Optional Further Reading:

Jeremy Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* ([Chapters 1-4](#))

Julia Driver, "Chapter 4: Contemporary Consequentialism"

Assignments:

- Response Paper due Sunday Oct. 8th at 5pm.
- Peer-Review due Tuesday Oct. 10th at 5pm.

Week 9 – Kantian Ethics / Deontology (Oct. 16, 18, 20)

Required Readings:

Julia Driver, "Chapter 5: Kantian Ethics," *Ethics: The Fundamentals*

Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysic of Morals* ([Chapter 1](#))

The Belmont Report (PDF on Canvas)

Assignments:

- Response Paper due Sunday Oct. 15th at 5pm.
- Peer-Review due Tuesday Oct. 17th at 5pm.

Note: I will be away at a conference on Friday Oct. 20th. Class will not meet that day. Please use this time to prepare your Final Paper Proposals, due next week, and to start thinking about your presentations.

Week 10 – Virtue Ethics (Oct. 23, 25, 27)

Required Readings:

Julia Driver, "Chapter 8: Virtue Ethics," *Ethics: The Fundamentals*
Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Books 1 & 2 (PDF on Canvas)

Assignments:

- Response Paper due Sunday Oct. 22nd at 5pm.
- Peer-Review due Tuesday Oct. 24th at 5pm.
- Final Paper Proposal due Friday Oct. 27th by 11:59pm.

Week 11 – Feminist Care Ethics (Oct. 30, Nov. 1, 3)

Required Readings:

Julia Driver, "Chapter 9: Feminist Ethics," *Ethics: The Fundamentals*
Nel Noddings, *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics & Moral Education* (selection, PDF on Canvas)

Assignments:

- Response Paper due Sunday Oct. 29th at 5pm.
- Peer-Review due Tuesday Oct. 31st at 5pm.

III. BIOETHICS, MORE BROADLY

Week 12 – Topics in Bioethics & Student Presentations (Nov. 6, 8, 10) – Physician-assisted Suicide, Voluntary Euthanasia & the Right-to-Die

Required Readings:

Bruce Jennings, "Preface," *A Hastings Center Special Report: Improving End-of-Life Care: Why Has it Been So Difficult?* Ed. Bruce Jennings, et. al. (2005).

Daniel Callahan, "Death: 'The Distinguished Thing'," *A Hastings Center Special Report*

Joanne Lynn, "Living Long in Fragile Health," *A Hastings Center Special Report*

Adrienne Asch, "Recognizing Death While Affirming Life," *A Hastings Center Special Report*

Gadiner et al, "International Perspectives on the Diagnosis of Death" (PDF on Canvas)

Assignments:

- Response Paper due Sunday Nov. 5th at 5pm.
- Peer-Review due Tuesday Nov. 7th at 5pm.
- Student Presentations this week: TBD.

Week 13 – Topics in Bioethics & Student Presentations (Nov. 13, 15, 17) – Fetal Genetic Screening & CRISPR/Cas-9, Elective Amputation & Bioenhancement

Required Readings:

Adrienne Asch, “Prenatal Diagnosis and Selective Abortion: A Challenge to Practice and Policy” (PDF on Canvas)

David Perry, “We’re Failing Our Test Run for the Age of CRISP-R” (PDF on Canvas)

McGee, “Ethical Issues in Enhancement: An Introduction” (PDF on Canvas)

Zylinska, “Playing God, Playing Adam: The Politics and Ethics of Enhancement” (PDF on Canvas)

Carl Elliot, “A New Way to be Mad,” *The Atlantic* (PDF on Canvas)

Assignments:

- Response Paper due Sunday Nov. 5th at 5pm.
- Peer-Review due Tuesday Nov. 7th at 5pm.
- Student Presentations this week: TBD.

Week 14 – Topics in Bioethics & Student Presentations (Nov. 20) – Poverty as a Determinant of Health; Food Deserts

Required Readings:

Staples, “Chronic Disease Often Linked to Poor Diet” (PDF on Canvas)

Staples, “Starving for Nutrition” (PDF on Canvas)

Reinheld, “With All Due Caution: Global Anti-Obesity Campaigns and the Individuation of Responsibility” (PDF on Canvas)

Optional Further Reading:

Gilson, “Vulnerability, Relationality, and Dependency: Feminist Conceptual Resources for Food Justice” (PDF on Canvas)

“Food Waste,” *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver* (Link on Canvas)

Assignments:

- Critical Thinking Component *must* be completed by Friday Nov. 24th
- Student Presentations this week: TBD.

Note: Friday Nov. 24th is Thanksgiving – no class that day.

Week 15 – Topics in Bioethics & Student Presentations (Nov. 27, 29, Dec. 1) – Consent, Autonomy and Disclosure

Required Readings:

Siegler, “Confidentiality in Medicine – A Decrepit Concept” (PDF on Canvas)

Anesi, “The ‘Decrepit Concept’ of Confidentiality 30 Years Later” (PDF on Canvas)

Tom Beauchamp, “Informed Consent, Its History, Meaning, and Present Challenges” (PDF on Canvas)

Amy Harmon, “Where’d You Go with My DNA?” *New York Times* (24 April 2010).

Robert Klitzman, “Should You Worry About Being the Next Henrietta Lacks?” *New York Times* (21 April 2017).

Rebecca Skloot, “Your Cells. Their Research. Your Permission?” *New York Times* (30 Dec. 2015).

Christian Säfken and Andreas Frewer, “The Duty to Warn and Clinical Ethics: Legal and Ethical Aspects of Confidentiality and HIV/AIDS,” *HEC Forum* (Dec. 2004) Vol. 19.4: 313-26.

Optional Further Reading:

Gert Helgesson and Stefan Eriksson, “Does Informed Consent Have an Expiry Date?” *Cambridge Quarterly of Healthcare Ethics* (2011), Vol. 20: 85-92.

Lainie Friedman Ross, “Informed Consent in Pediatric Research,” *Cambridge Quarterly of Healthcare Ethics* (2004), Vol. 13: 346-358.

Assignments:

- Student Presentations this week: TBD.

Week 16 – Course Review & Concluding Thoughts (Dec. 4)

Required Readings:

None!

Assignments:

- Final Paper due Friday Dec. 8th by 11:59pm.

Optional Extra Credit Work:

At any time *before* Week 14, you can earn up to 5% in extra credit by completing any of the following extra credit assignments. (This extra credit will be added to your overall grade *up to* a maximum of 100% in the course; i.e., if it increases your grade *beyond* 100%, you’ll get 100%). You can earn a maximum of 5% through extra credit work, even if you do more than one project.

- **Report on a Bioethics Talk or Event**
Attend a [bioethics talk or academic event](#) organized by the [Emory Center for Ethics](#) and

submit a 1-page report summarizing the key ideas presented and articulating 1-2 discussion questions the talk raised for you that could help us think further about the issues presented. When formulating these questions, consider what kinds of things you might want to ask the presenter, if you had the chance to follow-up with them. After submitting this assignment, I may call on you to present your report to the class, or encourage you to email the speaker with your questions (so make them good!).

– **Submit to a Bioethics Conference**

Write your final paper early enough (i.e., *before* Week 14, per above, and *at least* 7 days before the submission deadline) that I can grade it (and you can revise it) before submitting it to a conference or journal before the end-of-term. ([Here](#) are some examples of undergraduate Bioethics conferences and journals you might consider. Be mindful of submission deadlines – they may be *before* Week 14!)

Grading Scale:

93.0 – 100.0	A
90.0 – 92.9	A-
87.0 – 89.9	B+
83.0 – 86.9	B
80.0 – 82.9	B-
77.0 – 79.9	C+
73.0 – 76.9	C
70.0 – 72.9	C-
67.0 – 69.9	D+
60.0 – 66.9	D
Below 60.0	F

Critical Thinking Module P/NP

Final Disclaimer:

This syllabus should be considered provisional. The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus at any time, as the course progresses. Such changes will be reflected in the version of the syllabus available through Canvas.