

BIOMEDICAL ETHICS
Fall 2015
Syllabus

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Course Description: In this course, we will explore four important issues in biomedical ethics that raise fundamental questions about our obligations concerning life, death, and health, and about what makes life valuable. We will begin with the issue of what sorts of control we ought to have over our future lives—in particular, what sorts of advance medical directives (“living wills”) ought to be respected and how much control patients ought to be given in medical decision-making. In the process of answering this question, we will explore what role autonomy ought to play in our lives, what makes a person the same over time, and what makes life good for a person. In the process, we will set out a framework that we can bring to bear when considering all sorts of moral questions. We will then turn to a set of issues raised by both the possibility of genetic engineering and the ability to employ a variety of performance “enhancements.” In what ways, if any, can doing these things be different, morally speaking, from taking medicine to prevent or cure diseases? Which, if any, such procedures should the state be required to provide? This last question raises the more general issue of distributive justice in health care, and we will turn to some representative views on this topic. Finally, we will discuss a set of more specific related questions, including whether there are limits to what should be for sale, such as human organs and participation in medical experiments as subjects, and what sorts of additional duties might be acquired toward research subjects in the course of experimental studies. The class will provide an opportunity for you to learn about the issues directly under discussion, and it will also give you practice in honing your reasoning skills and give you tools to bring to a wide variety of moral issues you might encounter in the future.

Course Readings: All course readings are available through the class website.

DATE	READINGS
9/25	Introduction
9/28	Ronald Dworkin, <i>Life’s Dominion</i> , excerpt
9/30	Ronald Dworkin, <i>Life’s Dominion</i> , excerpt (continued)
10/2	Rebecca Dresser, “Dworkin on Dementia: Elegant Theory, Questionable Policy”
10/5	Allen Buchanan, “Advance Directives and the Personal Identity Problem”
10/7	Agnieszka Jaworska, “Respecting the Margins of Agency...”
10/9	Agnieszka Jaworska, “Respecting the Margins of Agency...” (continued)
10/12	Deborah Kaplan, “Prenatal Screening and its Impact on Persons with Disabilities” (Short Paper Due)
10/14	Jonathan Glover, “Future People, Disability, and Screening”
10/16	Buchanan, Brock, Daniels and Wikler, <i>From Choice to Chance</i> , excerpt

10/19	Buchanan, Brock, Daniels and Wikler, <i>From Choice to Chance</i> , excerpt
10/21	Michael Sandel, "The Case Against Perfection"
10/23	No New Reading
10/26	S. Matthew Liao, Anders Sandberg, Rebecca Roache, "Human Engineering and Climate Change"
10/28	Mark Stein, "A Utilitarian Approach to Health Care"
10/30	Robert Nozick, <i>Anarchy, State, Utopia</i> , excerpt
11/2	Midterm
11/4	Norman Daniels, <i>Just Health: Meeting Health Needs Fairly</i> , excerpt
11/6	Norman Daniels, <i>Just Health: Meeting Health Needs Fairly</i> , excerpt (continued)
11/9	Deborah Satz, <i>Why Some Things Should Not Be For Sale</i> , excerpt
11/11	Veterans Day
11/13	Deborah Satz, <i>Why Some Things Should Not Be For Sale</i> , excerpt
11/16	Deborah Satz, <i>Why Some Things Should Not Be For Sale</i> excerpt
11/18	Michael Sandel, <i>What Money Can't Buy</i> , excerpt
11/20	Trudo Lemmons and Carl Elliot, "Guinea Pigs on the Payroll"
11/23	Trisha Philips, "Exploitation in Payment to Research Subjects"
11/25	Henry Richardson, "Locating Medical Researchers' Ancillary Care Obligations Within the Division of Moral Labor"
11/27	Thanksgiving Holiday
11/30	Henry Richardson, "Locating Medical Researchers' Ancillary Care Obligations Within the Division of Moral Labor" (continued)
12/2	S. Matthew Liao and Collin O'Neil, "The Grounds of Ancillary Care Duties"
12/4	No New Reading

Course Requirements:

- Short paper (20%)
- Midterm (20%)
- Take-home Final (45%) [Due December 11 at 11 am]
- Section quizzes (top 6 of 10 possible grades counted) (15%)
- Up to 5% extra credit may be earned through participation in discussion sections.

Notes:

- Laptops, phones and other electronic devices may not be used in class **except by permission of the instructor**.
- If accommodations are needed for a disability or for religious reasons, please notify me during the first class period or as soon as possible.
- The Academic Honor Code must be observed in this course. Please note that the policies and readings described above are subject to minor change.
- If you find yourself needing help with any aspect of the course, or would simply like to explore some ideas further, please don't hesitate to see me in office hours or make an appointment to talk.
- Policies and readings are subject to minor change.