

# CRCRTH619 // BIOMEDICAL ETHICS

SUMMER 2016 - UMASS | BOSTON  
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<<SCHEDULE OFFICE HOURS VIA EMAIL>>

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## I. Course Description:

This course develops students' critical thinking about dilemmas in medicine and health care policy, such as those that arise around allocation of scarce resources, criteria for organ transplants, informed consent, experimentation on human subjects, AIDS research, embryo research and selective termination of pregnancy, euthanasia, and physician-assisted suicide. Through such cases the course introduces methods in moral reasoning, rights-based reasoning, decision-making under uncertainty, and utilitarianism in classic and contemporary normative reasoning. This course will take an approach towards biomedical ethics that is heavily informed by empirical ethics and situation-based approaches to ethical considerations of biomedicine and technology.

This is 6 week course

## II. Assumed Preparation:

It is assumed that students will have some familiarity with bioethics, ethical issues in modern medicine, some general exposure to philosophical reflection and a course(s) in the social sciences. This course focuses on thinking about bioethics critically and further developing these skills. However, rudimentary analytical skills are assumed.

## II. Academic Information:

Credits: 3 credit hours  
Dates: Summer 2016

## IV. Course Objectives:

Bioethics and biomedical ethics have been the domain of analytical philosophy and to some extent theology and academic medicine. However, critical thinking, creative thinking, and reflective practice are imperative to an invigorated bioethics. This course is both 1) an introduction current bioethical issues as well as 2) an analysis of biomedical ethics itself as a historically situated way of thinking and sense-making. This course invites an overview of the history of bioethics in the West, an analysis of bioethics and its underlying assumptions, and the placement of bioethics in our contemporary society. Using a theoretical overview, a set of case-related exercises and group discussion, this course explores contemporary debates in bioethics with a view towards the ways that classical bioethics succeeds and fails in its attempt to confront a highly complex nexus of problems and opportunities afforded thorough biomedical and scientific advancements. As opposed to a purely traditional approach, this course takes classical biomedical ethics as a starting point from which to critically and creatively think about alternative approaches towards ethical problems and the importance of reflexivity in biomedical ethics. At the end of this course, students will possess the following skills:

1. Students will be able to identify classical concepts, theories and methods in the field of biomedical ethics.
2. Students will be able to analyze the role of social context in the process of ethical decision-making.
3. Students will be able to identify long-standing issues in biomedicine as well as contemporary debates.
4. Students will be able to articulate the role of science and technology in the emergence of bioethical issue.

5. With a view towards reflexivity, students will be able to develop alternative and creative approaches towards bioethics.

## **V. Course Requirements:**

The following requirements are in alignment with the specified learning outcomes outlined within this syllabus:

### **1. Assignments:**

- (a) A minimum of 1 discussion post per module (9 posts cumulatively)
- (b) Comments on the weekly Kami reading assignments (counts towards discussion grade)
- (c) 1 Short Paper
- (d) 1 Collaborative Special Project

### **2. Completion of Course Readings:**

#### **Texts:**

- (REQUIRED) Petryna, A., Lakoff, A., & Kleinman, A. (Eds.). (2006). *Global pharmaceuticals*. Duke University Press. ISBN: 082233741X

- (OPTIONAL) DeVries, R., & Subedi, J. (Eds.). (1998). *Bioethics and Society: Constructing the Ethical Enterprise*. Prentice Hall. ISBN: 0135312523

- (REQUIRED) All additional required readings (articles and text excerpts) are available on the course website.

## **VI. Guidelines for submitting work:**

With the exception of the discussion posts, all other homework assignments are to be submitted via Blackboard. All deadlines refer to Eastern Standard Time.

## **VII. Academic Integrity**

Each student in this course is expected to abide by the University's Code of Academic Integrity. Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit will be the student's own work. For this course, collaboration is allowed in the special project assignment. Students are encouraged to study together and to discuss information and concepts covered in lecture and the sections with other students. Students can give "consulting" help to or receive "consulting" help from such students. However, this permissible cooperation should never involve one student having possession of a copy of all or part of work done by someone else, in the form of an e mail, an e mail attachment file, a diskette, or a hard copy. Should copying occur, both the student who copied work from another student and the student who gave material to be copied will both automatically receive a zero for the assignment. Penalty for violation of this Code can also be extended to include failure of the course and University disciplinary action. During examinations, you must do your own work. Talking or discussion is not permitted during the examinations, nor may you compare papers, copy from others, or collaborate in any way. Any collaborative behavior during the examinations will result in failure of the exam, and may lead to failure of the course and University disciplinary action.

## **VIII. Accommodations for students with disabilities**

Any student with a documented disability needing academic adjustments is requested to notify the instructor as early in the semester as possible, and must do so before the mid-term exam. Verification from disabled Student Support Services is required. All discussions will remain confidential. The Ross Center for Disability Services provides a full range of support services including: note taking, reading on tape, interpreting for students who are deaf, administering exams with accommodation to disability, counseling, and more. All students with disabilities and the entire University community are

welcome to visit and inquire about our many services and resources. Online students with disabilities should contact the Ross Center if accommodation is needed. The Ross Center is located in the Campus Center; Tel: 617.287.7430.

### IX: Withdrawal Policy:

The last day to withdraw without academic penalty can be found by accessing the webpage associated with the university registrar. Ceasing to attend class or oral notice thereof DOES NOT constitute official withdrawal from the course. Students who simply stop attending classes without officially withdrawing usually are assigned failing grades. Students wishing to withdraw after the scheduled change period (add/drop) must obtain and complete a withdrawal form from the Academic Services Department in the Registrar's Office.

### XV. Grade Breakdown

Grade Points

A	1000 – 900	PASSING GRADE	
B	899 -- 800	PASSING GRADE	
C	799 – 700	PASSING GRADE	( The lowest passing grade for graduate courses at UMB is C)
D/F	699 or under	<b>FAILING GRADE</b>	

### XII. Abbreviated Assignment Descriptions

Assignment	#	Point Values	Description	Assessment Purpose	Assignment Requirements
1 Discussion Posts per MODULE (the course is six weeks long)  (the expectation is MORE than one post in a week)  <b>All Modules have specific post deadlines.</b>  <b>Leave at least two comments per Crocodoc reading assignment.</b>	6	100 pts each  (600 total)	<i>Grades are assigned weekly</i>  The posts are responses to module-based discussion board questions. Some weeks have more than one required module. Posts are also to be made in response to the thoughts of the other students. At least one post must be made in response to each module.	- I will use these posts to make sure student have a) completed the readings and b) demonstrated conceptual understandings. - Posts are designed to foster interactive dialogue, student participation, and to assess students' 'command over the readings and concepts.	<b>Each post must -</b> - Contain 400 words or more (quotations / paraphrases are not counted) - Adhere to the General Writing Requirements (below) - Include a bibliography - Must provide incontrovertible evidence that the student has comprehended the readings for the module and is 'thinking with' the readings via the discussion post. - These posts can cite only ONE external, non-assigned reading. This rule is designed to minimize Internet searches.
Short Paper	1	200 pts each  (200 total)	In this assignment, students are to create their own ethical theory. Using the classical theories as inspiration.	- I will use these papers to make sure student have a) completed the readings, b) have understood the concepts, and c) demonstrate critical and creative thinking.	<b>Each paper must -</b> - Be at least 1500 words - Draw upon ALL assigned readings - Adhere to general writing requirements

Special Project	1	200 pts each  (200 total)	Students must form groups and decide upon an ethics case. After deciding upon the case, students should create a report that outlines their decision and provides a justification for the decision.	- I will use these papers to make sure student have an opportunity to exercise critical thinking skills - I will use these reports to assess the student learning of the course and program objectives.	<b>Each Group Project Report must –</b>  - Contain 1000 words or more - Use the assigned course readings in the justification section of the group report.
TOTAL	8	1000 Potential points			

### General Writing Requirements:

1. All papers must adhere to APA or MLA standards both in formatting and in bibliographic citation.
2. Please double-space all papers, use 1 inch margins and employ one of the following fonts: Times New Roman, Times, Garamond (all 12 point) or Arial (9 point).
3. Students must adhere to academic honesty policies and observe the word-count requirements. Quotations are not counted towards word-count requirements. The word-count (original) must be outlined atop of every written assignment.
4. Cover pages are required for the short paper.

### IX. Tentative Course Schedule (*This may change*)

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<b>Week 1</b> July 18-24	<b>MODULE 1</b> What is Bioethics? The History of Bioethics		Module 1 Postings and Comments due on July 24
	<b>MODULE 2</b> Classical concepts and approaches in bioethics	- Classical Ethical/ Philosophical Theories - Moral Subjectivism- Pollard (optional)	Module 2 Postings and Comments due on July 24
<b>Week 2</b> July 25-31	<b>MODULE 3</b> Critiques of classical approaches and standard Bioethics	- On the Social Embeddedness of Bioethics – Devries, et al - Changing Society, Changing Medicine, Changing Bioethics- Devries, et al - Autonomy and Difference: - DeVries, et al - Nobody tosses a dwarf? (optional)	Module 3 Postings and Comments due on July 31
	<b>MODULE 4</b> Critiques... (continued)	- The Triumph of Autonomy in American Bioethics- in Devries et, al - Gilligan "Moral Orientation and Moral Development"	Module 4 Postings and Comments on July 31
<b>Week 3</b> August 1-7	<b>MODULE 5</b> Case Study 1: End of Life + Transplantation	- The Social Construction of Euthanasia and Medical Ethics in the Netherlands- in Devries, et al - Gupta 'Immigrant Organ Sharing Article'	Module 5 Postings and Comments due on August 7

	<b>MODULE 6</b> Case Study 2: Pharmaceutical Ethics	- The New Medical Oikumene – Petryna, et al - Pharmaceutical Nexus - Petryna, et al - Globalizing Human Subjects Research - Petryna, et al	Module 6 Postings due on August 7
<b>Week 4</b> August 8-14	<b>MODULE 7</b> Access, Inequality & Bioethics	- Whyte, et al – Treating AIDS – Petryna, et al - Lexin and Light – Research Article - Friedman - Healthcare Fix	Module 7 Postings and Comments due August 14
<b>Week 5</b> August 15-21	<b>MODULE 8</b> Science, Technology & Bioethics	- Abi-Rached – ‘The implications of the new brain Sciences’ - Good-‘ Biotechnical Embrace’ - Greene - Pharmaceutical Branding	Module 8 Postings and comments due August 21 <b>Reminder: Special Project due August 21</b>
<b>Week 6</b> August 22-28	<b>MODULE 9</b> Alternatives ways of bioethical thinking	- To Enrich Bioethics, Add One Part Social to One Part Clinical, - Devries - Ethics Wars	Module 9 Postings and Comments due August 28
			<b>Special Project Assignment - Due August 21</b>
			<b>Short Paper - Due August 28</b>

### XIII. Detailed Assignment Instructions

#### +Module Discussion Posts

Each module will have a required, readings-based question posted in the discussion forum. There are 9 modules. Students are responsible for responding to the primary question in each module. Thus, in addition to answering the module-based discussion questions posed to the students at the end of each module, students must also create posts in response to the other students. The aims of this assignment are 1) to assess students' understandings of the readings and digestion of the concepts and 2) to foster learning through deliberation and discussion. While these are minimums, students are encouraged post as much as they wish! Students who post more often will get the most out of the course since discussion is central to the teaching of ethics and to ethical deliberation. Grades will be given according to one's entire week of posts.

#### Requirements

1. Each post must contain at least 400 words or more (not including quotations, paraphrases or bibliography )
2. Must CLEARLY STATE the word count at the top of the post
3. Must possess a bibliography (APA)
4. Must provide incontrovertible evidence that the student has comprehended the readings for the module and is 'thinking with' the readings via the discussion posts
5. These posts can cite only ONE external, non-assigned reading. This rule is designed to minimize Internet searches.

**Grading Rubric (100 points per week / 600 points total):**

1. (40 points) – The student’s post provide incontrovertible evidence that the student has comprehended the readings for the module and is ‘thinking with’ the readings via the discussion posts.
2. (20 points) – The posts draw upon those of other students and other assigned course readings.
3. (20 points) – Students make the appropriate amount of thoughtful comments in the Crocodoc readings for each module.
4. (10 points) – The posts adhere to the general writing requirements, word-count requirements and adhere to standard grammatical rules.
5. (10 points) – The minimum amount of relevant posts are made in each discussion forum.

**+Special Project Assignment**

The special project assignment is a case study. Students are to break into groups and “become” an hospital-based ethics committee at a fictional hospital. The purpose of this committee is to deliberate about a specific ethical case that students will be provided. Students must examine the ethics case study provided to them and must come to a decision. The committee’ must write up a decision and a justificatory statement. This five-page statement must be submitted by the deadline. This assignment enables students to identify the tools, practices, and perspectives from the course that can be brought into their specific professional or personal endeavors. This assignment is suitable for inclusion in CCT students’required Reflective Practitioner’s Portfolio.

**Requirements**

1. Must contain 1000 words (bibliography, cover page, appendices are not included in the word count).
2. Must CLEARLY STATE the word count at the top of the post
3. Must possess a bibliography (APA or MLA)
4. Must make use of the course readings in the justification section (the section whereby the decision is explained).
5. The Report can cite only ONE external, non-assigned reading.

**Grading Rubric (200 points total):**

1. (150 points) – The paper makes use of the course readings and concepts in ways that demonstrate critical thinking.
2. (50 points) – The paper adheres to the general writing requirements, word-count requirements and adhere to standard grammatical rules.

**+Short Paper**

This final assignment paper draws upon the final weeks of the course, devoted to revising and re-thinking traditional bioethics- especially in light of feminist ethics, considerations of social science and in thinking about the importance of context in ethical deliberation. In this assignment, students are to create their own ethical theory. Using the classical theories as inspiration (Utilitarianism, Rossian Ethics, Feminist Ethics, Natural Law, etc), create a description of this new ethical theory and show how it AVOIDS some of the limits/problems inherent in these classical theories. This is a predominantly creative exercise. Importantly, this is an opportunity to demonstrate critical thinking. Thinking about how theories are constructed (especially after we have de-constructed or critiqued these) will help students in this exercise.

**Requirements**

1. Must contain at least 1500 words (bibliography, cover page, appendices are not included in the word count).
2. Must possess a bibliography (APA)
3. These papers can cite only ONE external, non-assigned reading.

**Grading Rubric (200 points total):**

1. (90 points) – The student’s paper displays understanding of the classical theories..
2. (90 points) – The paper displays real creativity in thinking about new approaches towards ethical decision-making
3. (20 points) – The posts adhere to page-minimum requirements and standard grammatical expectations.

#### **XIV. Statement about Attendance, Class Participation and Scholarly Discourse**

Please Students are required and expected to participate in class discussions. Student responses to other students via the message board –serves a participatory function. It is also the case that online ‘attendance’ is both required and also, integral to class success. It is also the case that respect must be shown to others in the online classroom and this means that cell-phones must be silenced and classroom engagement must be courteous and respectful. Students who are not respectful or who express an inability to hear diverse viewpoints will not be able to participate in the class.

#### **XVI. Statement about Late Submissions**

All assignments should be submitted on time. The discussion posts, final papers and special project assignment will not be accepted past the deadline. Most of the other assignments are submitted at the discretion of the student. Please consult the instructor about any special circumstances.

#### **XVIII. Contact**

Please contact the instructor with any questions related to the readings, questions that relate to the course or general questions about the assignments.

#### **XIX. Course Evaluation Link**

Use the link below in order to complete a course evaluation:

<http://bit.ly/CCTEval>