

# PHRE 530: Bioethics (or Ethics and Medicine)

Dr. Joshua Kissel

He/They

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Winter 2021-22

Classroom: Chapel Basement 15

**Period 2:** M 920-10, W 1020-1135, F 955-1110

**Period 3:** M 1050-1130, T/Th 830-945

## Course Description:

This is a course in ethics and moral philosophy. This course deals with normative questions around what is (morally) valuable and how we, individual agents, ought to act in response to these values. In particular, it is an *applied* ethics course because our target is the field of bioethics (ethics of life).

This course begins by jumping right into ethical thinking. We will start our first two weeks exploring the question of animal experimentation. What moral status do other animals have and are we justified in using them for experimental purposes—if so, what justifies our treatment of them? We'll explore this question from the perspective of three sorts of moral theories. After the winter break, we'll turn some other questions of bioethics, questions that will be up to you! These might include discussion of abortion, an exploration of public health (especially as it relates to pandemic policies we know so directly), the moral legitimacy of the profit motive in healthcare, or questions of consent for medical treatment (or cessation).

NOTE: The actual content for this class as taught is included below. We covered animal experimentation, abortion, several issues in biotech with a focus on the (possible) distinction between 'enhancement' and medical therapy, and we wrapped the course up with some discussions of political philosophy and healthcare which included whether we have a right to healthcare, an exploration of whether the delivery of healthcare as such might foster oppression.

## Course Objectives:

- (1) Evaluate the validity and soundness of arguments.
- (2) Contrast competing normative theories.
- (3) Interrogate and identify the moral thinking underlying their own positions on several questions of applied ethics.
- (4) Assess the justifiability of the claims and arguments identified in 2 and 3.

In addition, students will acquire some background in important areas of philosophy notably bioethics but also including critical reasoning, validity and soundness, normative ethical theory (including virtue ethics, consequentialism, and Kantian deontology), the scope of ethics and moral status, and applied questions related to medicine and healthcare.

## Conference Time:

During my conference times (Mon: 1005-1045 and Wed: 950-1015) I will be sitting quietly behind a desk in Chapel Basement in my office (C14D), staring at a wall unless students come to

meet with me. This time is meant for you to ask questions, discuss philosophy, or just hang out. It is *your* time, and you do not need an excuse or any clarity about what you want to do. I request, but do not require, that you send me an email alerting me to when you want to come, and if you happen to know, what you plan to discuss.

If for whatever reason you cannot make the regular conference time but still would like to meet please send me an email asap with a range of time that you could meet, and we will try to work something out! Additionally, I can be available to meet via Zoom if necessary.

**Materials:**

All readings will be posted to Canvas in the files tab. You will also have links to the readings for each week in the module for that week. *Please bring all readings for the given module to class each day.*

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**Class Expectations – Fostering Productive and Effective Discussions**

**Respect:**

This course is designed to help each of you meet each of our course objectives. A large part of achieving these goals is actively engaging with our course materials. Active participation in class, on canvas, and on our assignments is proven to boost retention, speed up the learning process, and facilitate creative thinking, among other things.

Most of all, the truths of the texts we are reading are not delivered from on high. We need to engage critically with our texts; in other words, *we need to practice doing philosophy as a collective discipline*. I strongly encourage you *to talk to one another and not just to me*. Here are some suggestions and guidelines to facilitate such collaborative philosophy:

- Practice being patient with others.
- Listen carefully and respectfully.
- Leave others room to speak; don't monopolize or dominate.
- When agreeing, explaining why you agree.
- Criticize ideas and arguments, not the people who offer them.

**How do we criticize others and discuss controversial ethical views without attacking our peers?**

Endeavor to follow these guidelines:

- *Textual Evidence*: The best points bring us back to the text. Use quotes and page numbers to ground your questions or comments.
- *Prior Points*: Our discussions should lead somewhere. Try to build on what's been said, before offering a different point.
- *Eye Contact*: Look around the discussion circle and speak to everyone (not just me).

- *Assume the Best*: Treat those who disagree with you as if they, like you, have the best of intentions and assume that they too want to find the best answer to these questions. This goes for our authors too!

### **Attendance:**

Always email me if you're going to be late or absent. As a rule, I rely on the policies in the Blue Book, but if you give me advance notice, I'll be better able to work with you.

I will record attendance daily. Being late to class three times will negatively affect your participation score in the way an unexcused absence would.

### **Academic Honesty:**

Honesty is the basic value on which this community rests and is an essential component of academic integrity. Academic integrity is demanded by the very nature of a school community. Honesty in the academic area means claiming as one's own only that work which is one's own. All scholarship builds upon the ideas and information of others; the honest person makes clear in written work exactly what the source of any borrowed information or idea is, whether it be library materials, the internet, classmates, or family members. Since words are the bearers of both information and the unique style of the writer, the words of others, if borrowed, must be properly acknowledged. In addition, work done for one course may not be used to secure credit in another. It is not acceptable to submit one piece of work to more than one course without prior consultation with and written permission from all instructors involved.

Simply: use the Writing Center (and note when you do), ask questions, and when in doubt, cite!

### **Screen Policy:**

Screens are often shown to result in [worse learning outcomes](#) and [lower grades](#) for students, they even effect students who are *not* using screens themselves. I share all lecture notes or powerpoint slides on Canvas; and when we do not use powerpoints I often share a handout in class to help make it easier for you all to follow along *and* participate in discussion. This is in order to help make note-taking less laborious.

At the same time, I recognize that some students will prefer to take notes on laptops or will have their readings on electronic devices rather than printing them off. For these reasons I **permit** screens for notetaking in most parts of class.

Exceptions to the permitted use of screens:

- During discussion periods I will often require students to close their laptops/set aside electronic devices. **Bring paper and a writing device to jot down thoughts for these times.**
- I also suggest all students use paper for notetaking.
- Additionally, I **require** everyone leave phones on airplane mode, occasionally you may feel the need to take a picture of the board but otherwise keep them out of sight.

Special accommodations are exempted. [E.g., medical exemptions.]

**Students with Disabilities, Health Related Needs, and/or Other Wellness Related Concerns:**

It is my goal to create a learning experience that is as accessible as possible. If you anticipate any issues related to the format, materials, or requirements of this course, please email me so we can explore potential options. If you are a student with a disability, or think you may have a disability, you can also initiate this conversation with Laura Warner, Director of Student Accessibility Services: [lwagner@andover.edu](mailto:lwagner@andover.edu). Please visit [their Canvas page](#) for contact and other information. If you have already been approved for accommodations, please email me so we can develop an implementation plan together. Barring unforeseen circumstances, any necessary arrangements should be made within in the first two weeks of class or as soon as possible thereafter.

**Assessment, Grading, and Course Outline**

**General Grading Schema for all Assessments**

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|---|-----|
| 1. Discussions Participation and Attendance         | 10% |
| 2. First Paper Outline (mini) – Animal Exploitation | 15% |
| 3. Second Paper Outline – Choose Topic              | 20% |
| 4. Peer Review                                      | 5%  |
| 5. Final Paper (1000-1200 words)                    | 50% |

Percentage to 6 Point Scale Conversions

6 97-100	6- <97-94	5+ <94-91	5 <91-88	5- <88-85	4+ <85-82	4 <82-79	4- <79-76	3+ <76-73	3 or less <73...
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**Assignment Due Dates [Details for Particular Assignments Will be Posted on Canvas]:**

Assignment	(Some) Details. More extensive details will but available on Canvas for each assignment.	All assignments due at the start of class unless otherwise noted
1. Paper Outline 1 (mini) – Animal Experimentation	Three Parts: 1. Thesis Sentence 2. Formalized author argument in premise-conclusion from (based on in-class group work). <b>Focus is this part!</b> 3. Engagement with formalized argument (formal <i>or</i> informal/prose).	<b>Due Dec 14<sup>th</sup></b> (Period 2) <b>Due Dec 15<sup>th</sup></b> (Period 3)  [short extension may be available]
2. Paper Outline 2 (full) choose	Three Parts: 1. Introduction and Thesis Sentence, 2. Formalized author argument in premise-conclusion from. 3. Engagement with formalized argument. Must be in formalized in premise-conclusion form. <b>Focus is this part!</b>	Deadlines Vary depending on subject.  <b>Abortion: Jan 20/21</b> <b>Biotech: Feb 7</b> <b>Political Phil and Healthcare: Feb 17/18</b>

4. Peer Review	I will be reviewing your feedback and the comments you share with your peers during our paper review sessions the week of Feb 21-25.	<b>Feb 21-25</b> (in-class)
5. Final Paper	Paper of 1000-1250 words on either (i) a paper outline from assignment 1 or 2, or (ii) a new paper topic (in consultation with me).  Final papers must be submitted to Canvas by the start time of the exam period listed on the end-of-term schedule. Early submissions are of course encouraged!	Period 2: 9am <b>March 3<sup>rd</sup></b> Period 3: 9am <b>March 2<sup>nd</sup></b>

### Course Outline:

Notice: Period 2 meets M/W/F and Period 3 Meets M/T/Th. I mark this thusly: Dec 2/3.

Know your period! All assignments are due at the start of *your* period!

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignments and/or Activities
1. Dec 2/3 (75 Min)	Introduction to Class, Validity and Soundness, and ethics	Required Reading: What Will Future Generations Condemn Us For? – Kwame Anthony Appiah (3 pgs.)	
2. Dec 6 (40 Min)	Animal Experimentation - Consequentialism	Peter Singer – All Animals Are Equal (10 pgs.)	
3. Dec 7/8 (75 min)	Animal Experimentation – Deontology/Kant	Tom Regan – The Case for Animal Rights (10 pgs.)	
4. Dec 9/10 (75 Min)	Animal Experimentation – Virtue	Rosalind Hursthouse – Virtue Ethics and the Treatment of Animals, pgs.; 2-7, 18-21 (10 pgs.)	
5. Dec 13 (40 Min)	Argument Formalizing	Identify one of the animal experimentations authors as your target and outline their argument. You'll be working in small groups	In-Class Vote for Preferred Units
6. Dec 14/15 (75 Min)	Paper Outline in Class Work (and Conference Time)	The paper outline you plan to write is due by the end of class today. I will be available for conferencing and students can peer-review.	<b>Paper Outline 1 due by end of class</b>
<b>WINTER BREAK</b>			
7. Jan 4/5 (75 Min)	Abortion	Film: Choose one and Make Discussion Post. A) Cider House Rules (1999), <a href="#">[Trailer]</a> B) Never Rarely Sometimes Always (2020), <a href="#">[Trailer]</a>	Discussion Board Post 1

8. Jan 6/7 (75 Min)	Abortion	Discussion Boards on Films	Discussion Board Post 2
9. Jan 10 (40 Min)	Abortion – Basic Anti-Abortion Argument	Douthat, Ross - <a href="#">The Case Against Abortion</a> NYT 11/30/21 (2311 words)	
10. Jan 11/12 (75 Min)	Abortion – Defending Abortion Beyond Personhood	Thomson, Judith Jarvis – A Defense of Abortion 357-367 (11 pgs)	
11. Jan 13/14 (75 Min)	Abortion – Valuable Futures like Ours	Marquis, Don – Why Abortion is Immoral 367-379 (13 pgs)	
<b>Jan 17 No Class MLK Day!</b>			
12. Jan 18/19 (75 Min)	Abortion	Continue Marquis and Thomson Discussion	Self-Assessment: What’s working and what isn’t for you?
13. Jan 20/21 (75 Min)	Abortion	Abortions Debates and Case Studies, Come Prepared to Defend Both Pro-Life and Pro-Choice Positions	<b>Deadline for Abortion Paper Outline</b>
14. Jan 24 (40 Min)	Biotechnology and Enhancement – A Cautionary Argument	Sandel, Michael – <a href="#">The Case Against Perfection</a> 1-21 (21 pgs) (The Atlantic)	
15. Jan 25/26 (75 Min)	Gene Therapy and Enhancement	Harris, John – Is Gene Therapy a Form of Eugenics? 616-622 (7 pgs)	
16. Jan 27/28 (75 Min)	An Obligation to Enhance?	Bortolotti, Lisa – Do We Have an Obligation to Make Smarter Babies? 221-230 (10 pages)	
<b>Jan 31 No Class</b>			
17. Feb 1/2 (75 Min)	Human Cloning	Brock, Dan W – Cloning Human Beings: An Assessment of the Ethical Issues Pro and Con Dan 551-561 (11 pgs)	
<b>Feb 3/4 No Class</b>			
18. Feb 7 (40 Min)	Biotechnology and the Market – Surrogacy and Commodification	Anderson, Elizabeth - Is Women's Labor a Commodity? 514-526 (13 pgs, only 10 are maintext)	<b>Deadline for Biotechnology Paper Outline</b>
19. Feb 8/9 (75 Min)	Intersectional Injustices – Healthcare and Oppression	Sherwin, Susan – Gender, Race, and Class in the Delivery of Health Care 253-258 (6 pages)	
20. Feb 10/11 (75 Min)	Is Healthcare a Right?	Daniels, Norman – Is There a Right to Health Care and, if So, What Does It Encompass? 763-769 (7 pgs)	
21. Feb 14 (40 Min)	Is Healthcare a Right?	Taylor, James Stacey – Market Based Reforms in Health Care Are Both	

		Practical and Morally Sound 537-546 (10 pgs), focus on 540-544 (4 pgs)	
<b>Feb 15/16 No Class</b>	<b>Department Day</b>		
22. Feb 17/18 (75 Min)	Catch-up // Rawls Game	Rawls Game, if we're caught up	<b>Deadline for Political Philosophy and Healthcare Justice Paper Outline</b>
23. Feb 21 (40 min)	Final Paper Discussion and Guidelines  Distribute Outlines	In Class Peer Reviewing of Outlines for Final Paper.  <b>You should have your outline draft, updated in response to my comments ready to share.</b>	
24. Feb 22/23 (75 min)	Group Discussion of Outlines	In Class Peer Reviewing of Outlines for Final Paper	
25. Feb 24/25 (75 min)	Final Paper Workshopping	We'll continue reviewing as necessary. We'll begin final paper workshopping as well.	Peer Reviewing Work Due
26. Feb 28 Conferences	Final Paper Conferences	Optional final paper conferences. Please email me to schedule a slot!	<b>See Due Date Above</b>