

BIO 328 Biomedical Ethics (SWS)

Textbook:

Robert M. Veatch. (2003) *The Basics of Bioethics*. 2nd Edition. Prentice-Hall, Inc.

General Education Thematic Group 10: Ethics (see Attachment).

Prerequisites: junior standing, WRT 150 and/or ENG 305.

Course description:

"The course engages students in the practical application of common ethical dilemmas met today in human medicine. Emphasis will be placed on the reciprocal obligations associated with the interaction of patients with health care workers as well as in the social implications of our modern health care network. In this process, students will be involved in expanding their information base and working with a variety of ethical frameworks for decision making." *2002-2003 GVSU Student Guide: General Education Program And Basic Skills*.

Course objectives:

A) Ethical Perspectives.

- To present the framework of the system of moral values and outline the steps of the decision-making process based on the moral value system.
- To present current ethical issues and challenges in modern healthcare and biomedical science.
- To identify sources of values that influence ethical decision making in patient care and in biomedical science.

B) Critical Reflections.

- To assist students in recognizing their personal system of moral values by using a decision-making model that requires students to clarify their values and consider the consequences of their actions.
- To reflect critically on the values which influence decisions made by physicians and scientists.

C) Communication Skills Improvement.

- To provide an opportunity for students to express their thoughts both orally and on paper.
- To improve the writing skills of students through the use of writing assignment and essay exams.

SWS Requirement:

You must receive a **C** or better in this course to get the SWS credit.

DSS statement:

"If there is any student in this class who has special needs because of learning or physical disabilities, please contact the Disabilities Support Services (DSS) at 331-2490."

Important Dates:

August 30	Classes begin.
September 3	Last day to register for the class (or to drop with full refund)
September 5-7	Labor Day Recess
October 22	Last day to drop with a "W"
November 24-28	Thanksgiving Recess
December 11	Classes end
December 13-18	Exam week

Grading:

You can earn a total of 535 points in this course. Here is the breakdown of your points:

Two lecture exams,	100 points each	200 points
Final exam		100 points
Bioethical Problem Study paper (final written report, paper #3, 1,500 words)		100 points
Topic and the first outline of the final report	5 points	
Expanded outline of the final report	25 points	
Peer review and critique of the final report (paper #2, 250 words)	35 points	
Review paper (AMA Codes of Ethics, paper #1, 250 words)	35 points	
Class participation (discussion groups etc., TBA)	35 points	
Total		535 points

Assignments

During this course, you will write an essay in the form of a position paper (final written report) and will conduct an in-class review and critique of the final paper of one of your peers (see attached guidelines). You will also write a review paper at the beginning of the semester. The review and the critique papers will have a minimum of 250 words each and the final problem study paper will have a minimum of 1,500 words (word count should not include bibliography). The readings for both the review and the critique will be done in class. After taking careful notes you will write the report at home, which will be due the next regular meeting day of the class. Other writing you will be doing will include essays as a part of your lecture exams and outlines of your final report, which should amount to ~1,000 words total.

The writing of your final report will go through the following process:

- Submission of essay topic and first outline;
- Submission of expanded outline (including three references);
- Submission of final copy and in-class peer review.

Your final paper has to include a bibliography containing a minimum of five literature sources, at least two of which have to be articles from a recent (1999-2003) issue of a *printed* medical journal or a book from the GVSU Library. Your textbook will not count towards the five bibliography sources. No online-based sources will be accepted, unless they are online versions of a printed periodical. Here's a short list of acceptable journals available at the GVSU library:

- *The Hastings Center Report*;
- *The Journal of Medical Humanities*;
- *The Journal of the American Medical Association*;
- *The Journal of Medicine and Philosophy*;
- *The Journal of Ethics*;
- *Professional Ethics*;
- *JONA'S Healthcare Law, Ethics and Regulation*.

If you are using literature sources outside of the GVSU library holdings, you will need to submit copies of those publications along with your assignment. If a book was used, a copy of a title page will be sufficient.

The expanded outline of your final report should provide a detailed overview of what you intend to put in your final paper. It has to give a good idea of what your final paper would look like, but it does not need to be as detailed as the final report. For example, if you intend to talk about the moral status of the developing human fetus in your final paper, you only need to state that you intend to do so in the expanded outline followed by a sentence specifying the conclusions you will be making at the end of that argument. Your expanded outline should have at least three references from the above-mentioned library sources.

The first outline of your final report (submitted with the final paper topic at the end of the 5th week of the semester) does not need to have a bibliography; it should only contain a brief outline of what you intend to talk about in your final paper and include the steps you would take to argue your point of view (please see accompanying handout for guidelines on how to write a position paper).

Your review, critique, detailed outline, and final report papers should have a cover page containing your name, the name of the course and the topic of the report. Each assignment should contain a word count. You will also have to include a header in your text that would contain the title of your paper, the course number and the current semester (BIO 328, Fall 2004). In the final report, your name should not appear anywhere else in the paper, except the title page. This is necessary to maintain the anonymity of the peer review process. Don't forget to number the pages. Any paper that does not comply with this format will receive an automatic 5-point deduction. The formatting requirements do not apply to the take-home portions of your lecture exams or to the first outline/final paper topic submission.

Papers are due at the date and time specified. Papers that are turned in late will receive a 5-point deduction. Furthermore, an additional **one-point deduction** will be given for each day missed after the deadline (excluding weekends). If you foresee special difficulties with the deadline, speak to the instructor well in advance.

Paper #1, a review. The AMA Code of Ethics. There will be a link in the "External Links" folder on the Blackboard containing the 1847 Code of Ethics of the American Medical Association. Your textbook contains the latest (2001) version of the Code. You will need to read the historical justification for the 1847 code (pp. 83-90) and the ethics code itself (pp.91-106). You will then write a review of the major points of both versions of the code, noting the differences.

Paper #2, a critique. You will be given a final report of one of your peers to review and to critique.

Paper #3. Paper #3 is your final report on selected topics in Biomedical Ethics, written in the form of a thesis-forward argument (see attached guidelines). Below are examples of possible topics:

- 1) Should animals be sacrificed for the sake of biomedical research?
- 2) Should removal of a Mechanical Life Support machine at the request of a patient be considered killing or letting the patient die?
- 3) Can family interests ethically outweigh patient autonomy?
- 4) Do insurance companies have rights to genetic test results?
- 5) To what extent should medical technology be used to prolong life?
- 6) Is there a moral difference between cloning and *in vitro* fertilization, when used solely for reproductive purposes?

You are encouraged to choose a topic of your own for your final paper.

The following conversion will be used to calculate your final letter grade for the course:

92% and above =	A
90 – 91% =	A-
88 – 89% =	B+
82 – 87% =	B
80 – 81% =	B-
78 – 79% =	C+
72 – 77% =	C
70 – 71% =	C-
68 – 69% =	D+
62 – 67% =	D
60 – 61% =	D- (cannot be a final grade)
below 61% =	F

What to look for on **Blackboard** (<http://bb.gvsu.edu>):

- Syllabus
- Assignments
- Announcements
- Lecture notes/presentations
- Lecture exam review sheets
- Grades
- Discussion groups

To access the course web site, go to GVSU home page and click on the Current Students link. Next, click on the My GVSU (Blackboard) link. Once you have signed-on, go to the link for Courses in which you are participating. Your USERNAME and PASSWORD are the same as your GVSU network login. If you do not know your username or password go to www.student.gvsu.edu, click Reset / Change Your Password. Please take note of your user name before you reset your password. If you are unsuccessful in resetting your password phone 331-2101 for assistance.

Tentative lecture outline

Week 1. August 31, September 2 Ch. 1&2

Introduction to the course.

PART I. INTRODUCTION TO BIOMEDICAL ETHICS.

The scope of Biomedical Ethics. Standards of professional practice. The purpose of a professional code. The Hippocratic tradition of Western medicine. Current framework of Biomedical Ethics. The American Medical Association (AMA) Code of Ethics and its revisions.

Week 2.

September 7 – Labor Day

September 9

PART II. ETHICAL THEORIES AND MORAL PRINCIPLES.

How to choose a moral code. The moral discourse framework. Metaethics, normative ethics, and applied ethics. Most commonly used ethical systems.

Week 3. September 14, 16 Ch. 5, pp. 73-74

Reason-based ethical systems. Deontology and teleology. Utilitarianism, Kant's ethics, ethics of David Ross, Rawls's Theory of Justice. The Rights Theory. Basic human rights and freedoms. Justifications for rights. Rights and duties.

September 16

In-class reading for written assignment #1 (AMA Code of Ethics)

Week 4. September 21, 23 Ch. 4&10

Major moral principles of Biomedical Ethics: Non-maleficence, Beneficence, Autonomy, Veracity, Fidelity, Utility, Justice. Challenges to autonomy. Paternalism. Resolving conflicts among principles. The concept of duty revisited.

September 21

Written assignment #1 is due

Week 5. September 28, 30 Ch. 3, pp.29-34; Ch. 5, pp. 72-74.

PART II. AUTONOMY AND CONFIDENTIALITY ISSUES IN MEDICAL PRACTICE.

Patients and respect of their autonomy as the main focus of medical practice. Introduction to the concept of moral standing.

Ch. 5. pp. 64-71; 74-84.

Informed consent in diagnosis and treatment. Truth telling in medicine. The issue of patient confidentiality. Advance directives (living wills). Medical futility.

September 30

Topics and first outline of the final report are due.

Week 6. October 5, 7 Ch. 3, pp.29; 42 & Ch. 8, pp. 140-143

PART III. ETHICAL ISSUES IN BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH.

Ethics of medical experimentations. Use of human subjects in biomedical research. Informed consent in medical research. Use of animals in medical research.

October 7

Exam #1

Week 7. October 12, 14 Ch. 9

PART IV. BIOETHICAL ISSUES IN HUMAN GENETICS AND REPRODUCTIVE MEDICINE.

Stem cells. Use of human embryonic (stem) cells in medical research and therapy. *In vitro* fertilization. Cloning.

Week 8. October 19-21 Ch. 9

Eugenics and its legacy. The Human Genome Project. Ethical, Legal, and Social Issues (ELSI) in modern genetics. Ethics of genetic testing. Ethical issues in reproductive medicine. *In vitro* fertilization. Video presentation on the use of genetic information.

October 21

Submission of the expanded outline of the final report.

Week 9. October 26, 28 Ch. 3

PART V. ETHICAL ASPECTS OF END-OF-LIFE DECISIONS.

The concept of death and dying. Death and personhood. Defining death in medical and ethical terms.

Week 10. November 2, 4 Ch. 6

Care for critically ill, terminally ill, and dying patients. The end of life choices. Euthanasia and the physician-assisted suicide. Rights of patients with terminal diseases. Video presentations on the end of life decisions.

Week 11. November 9, 11 Ch. 7

Extending the principle of autonomy. End of life decisions for incompetent patients. Human fetuses as incompetent patients.

November 11

Exam #2

Weeks 12, 13. November 16, 18, 23 Ch. 3, pp. 40-42.

Symmetry between the end of life and the beginning of life. Moral issues surrounding the termination of pregnancy. History of the abortion debate in the US. Legal and social aspects of abortion. Video presentation on the abortion debate.

Week 14. November 30, December 2 Ch. 8

PART VI. THE CONCEPT OF UTILITY IN MODERN MEDICAL PRACTICE.

Allocation of health care resources. Utility, justice and duty revisited.

December 2

Submission of the final version of the Bioethical Problem Study Report (Paper #3) and in-class peer review and critique.

Week 15. December 7, 9

Final review of the course. The future of medicine: hopes and challenges.

December 7

Paper #2 (critique) is due.

Final Exam:

Monday, December 13, Noon – 1:50PM

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