

# Biomedical Ethics

PHIL333, University of British Columbia, Winter Term 2 – January-April 2022

**Lectures:** Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:30-14:00 TBD

## Instructor

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**Office Hours TBD**

## Course Description

Biomedical ethics is the study of ethical issues, applications, and implications that arise in medicine and healthcare. These dilemmas can occur in all areas of health such as in the course of providing care for a patient, in the relationship between medicine and the population, and in any research involving human participants. These moral questions arise from many perspectives, including the life sciences, philosophy, politics, law, theology, and technology.

In part one we will trace the history and background of bioethics. You will learn how and why it became a field of study, what the main ethical theories used in practice are, and what the “Four Principles” refers to. Parts two, three, and four will be collaboratively chosen from a list of five topics encapsulating the main areas of current bioethical enquiry. This way we ensure this class holds to most value possible for each of you. This course assumes no prior knowledge in philosophy or medicine.

## Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, you will:

- Be able to articulate and apply the principles of biomedical ethics to case studies.
- Understand how to conduct a biomedical ethics analysis.
- Appreciate the complexities inherent in biomedical ethics which are not always discussed.

## Assessments

<i>Assessment</i>	<i>Weight</i>	<i>Due</i>
<b>Course Preferences Survey</b>	5%	Jan 18, 23:59
<b>First Reaction Forum Posts</b>	10%	Every Tuesday or Thursday, 09:00
<b>History of Bioethics Midterm</b>	15%	Jan 27, in-class
<b>Case Analysis</b>	25%	Feb 17, 23:59
<b>Final Project</b>		
<b>Proposal</b>	10%	any time <u>before</u> Mar 17, 23:59
<b>Project</b>	35%	Apr 12, 23:59
<b>BONUS – Annotated Bibliography</b>	5%	Apr 7, 23:59

# Course Preference Survey

I want to build this course with your interests and needs in mind. To make this term as relevant as possible to your interests, I want you to respond to the following questions. This is a completion-based assignment, meaning you get full marks just for completing the survey.

- Question 1:** Please rank all five topics by level of interest. These are listed at the end of the syllabus with potential issues to cover as well as example readings. These explanations can be found after the academic policies section.
- Question 2:** Please let me know about anything that would help create a comfortable learning environment for you this semester. This can include things like your pronouns, your preferred name (if different from the name in UBC's system), any topics you find distressing that may come up in discussions, etc. If you do not have anything to respond here, just enter "N/A".
- Question 3:** Is there anything specific you hope that we cover this semester? I will use these responses to help me select individual lecture topics within the collaboratively chosen parts of the course. If you do not have anything to respond here, just enter "N/A".

## First Reaction Forum Posts

As you work through the course material you will inevitably have thoughts, comments, or questions about the content. I want to make sure I address as many of these questions and interests as possible as the course progresses. These reaction submissions will help me fine-tune the course for your learning, and show insight into how your classmates resonated with the content.

This is truly meant to be a first reaction, so please don't spend any more than 10 minutes writing your response. You can write about anything that piques your interest while preparing for that week's class. These do not have to be spectacular or revolutionary. You will get full marks for the week if you post something that relates to that week's materials or topic.

You can choose to submit your first reactions for either the Tuesday or the Thursday lecture. You do not have to submit something for both days. You will receive full marks for the week so long as you submit something for one of the two days.

On days where a unit wrap up is scheduled you may elect to submit a case as your first reaction for that week. When doing this, please send a description or a link, along with why you believe it is relevant to the overall unit. We will then use these to guide our wrap up discussion and to apply our learnings from that unit.

# History of Bioethics Midterm

Good ethics is based in good facts. For this reason, we will have a midterm instead of a wrap-up for the unit on the history of bioethics. The lessons we learn from the past, alongside the principles and ethical theories, shape how we address current problems in bioethics. Without a strong grasp on these, we risk repeating our mistakes.

This midterm will be a combination of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. The midterm will occur in-class, and once you have finished the midterm you may leave.

## Case Analysis

One of the crucial practical skills of a bioethicist is the ability to perform an ethical analysis of a particular case or a general problem. This assignment will help you learn how to identify and reason through complex ethical challenges and situations while integrating your own ethical values and beliefs.

Two weeks before this assignment is due, I will release **three cases** on Canvas. You only need to choose one of these for your assignment. Assignments that address more than one case will more than likely result in a lower grade due to having to include more than one analysis in the same amount of space as the rest of your classmates. Your analysis should be no longer than 1000 words, not including references or footnotes. You do not need to use sources outside the course readings, but you may if you want. Any source used, course or independent, must be cited in your references.

There are many ways to structure a case analysis. Here is just one possible structure for you to use:

1. Restate the case in your own words.
2. List the main ethical issue(s) you believe the case presents.
3. Identify the stakeholders and their potential values.
4. List the relevant facts: medical, patient preferences, quality of life, and contextual.
5. Reflect on these facts through the four principles and any ethical theory you believe would help.
6. Develop any potential options and defend one.

## Final Project

Your final project represents the more academic side of a bioethicist's skillset. Here I will evaluate you on how well you articulate your own position on a problem, how well you represent the positions of others, and how well you mediate this tension.

There are two parts to this final project. First, you need to write a proposal for your topic. Second, you complete the project outlined in your proposal.

For the proposal, you must contact me to discuss your intended topic. This can be in a meeting or through email. Our chat can happen at any point in the semester. Make sure you give yourself ample time to write the proposal, though, since it is **due by March 17**. Remember that the closer it gets to this deadline the more people will likely be asking me for meetings. It is your responsibility to schedule an appointment with me, and if you wait too long there may not be any appointment times left. So, the

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earlier you contact me the better. If you are unable to meet with me you still need to submit a proposal, though there will be a penalty applied for missing the meeting requirement of this assignment.

The purpose of this meeting is not to limit your creativity or stifle your interests. Rather, I want to make sure you have chosen something appropriate for this course and that you aren't taking on too large of a project. I want you to succeed in whatever you are interested in, and this meeting is meant to help set you on the right path. After we discuss your topic, you need to submit a short proposal outlining: the thesis, the format of the project, how you're structuring it, and at least one problem or objection you want to consider.

For the project itself, you are free to choose any issue that fits into the general topics covered in part two, three, or four. Your goal is to communicate to an academic audience your stance on this topic or problem and any bioethical issues that arise from this issue.

Your project can take any of the following formats:

- You can write a traditional academic final essay. Projects taking this format should be no more than 1250 words with proper academic citations and formatting.
- You can create a video report / mock lecture on your topic. Projects taking this format should be no more than 10 minutes and accurately reference the readings you've chosen as sources throughout. You will need to submit a list of references consulted just as if you submitted a traditional essay.
- You can script and record an academic oriented podcast like you might hear from [The Partially Examined Life](#) or [Philosophy Bites](#). Projects taking this format should be no more than 10 minutes and accurately reference the readings you've chosen throughout. You will need to submit a list of references consulted just as if you submitted a traditional essay.
- You can create an academic poster like you might see at a conference. These projects should remain electronic, as if you were submitting to a conference for them to display.
- You can create an art piece / dialogue / skit on your topic, so long as it is geared for an academic level audience. Projects taking this format will have their parameters set in our meeting (as this is a highly variable category). You will need to submit a list of references consulted just as if you submitted a traditional essay.

## Bonus: Annotated Bibliography

During this course, and while working on your projects, you will encounter many different sources of information on your topic. If you keep an annotated bibliography of any sources you explore (not necessarily just those you use), you can earn up to 5% bonus on your final grade. This bonus is applied to the final course mark after all assignments are calculated. So, for example, if you end the class with a 75% (B) but you submit a detailed annotated bibliography you could actually end the course with an 80% (A-) instead. This annotated bibliography can include assigned materials from the course.

# Schedule

Date	Materials	Assignment
<b>Part 1:</b>	<p><b>What’s a “Bioethic” Anyway?</b>                      This section will introduce you to the foundations of biomedical ethics. We will work through the history of bioethics, the principles of bioethics, and the main theories of ethics. Issues of consent, decision-making, and harm will be raised to highlight these theories and principles.</p>	
Jan 11 Introductions	(1) Syllabus (2) “What is an ethicist”	
Jan 13 History of Bioethics	(1) The Belmont Report (1979) (2) Declaration of Helsinki (2013 [1964]) (3) Scher and Kozlowska. (2018). “The Rise of Bioethics: A Historical Overview”. Chapter Three in <i>Rethinking Health Care Ethics</i> . (4) CrashCourse. (2018). “Henrietta Lacks, the Tuskegee Experiment, and Ethical Data Collection”.	
Jan 18 Ethical Theories	(1) Fieser. (n.d.). “Normative Ethics”. Section Two of <i>Ethics</i> as Posted to the IEP. (2) Academy of Ideas. (2014). “Introduction to Ethics”.	Course Preferences
Jan 20 Biomedical Principles	(1) Lawrence (2007). “The Four Principles of Biomedical Ethics: A Foundation for Current Bioethical Debate”. (2) Huxtable. (2013). “For and against the four principles of biomedical ethics”.	
Jan 25 Beyond Principlism	(1) Clouser and Gert. (1990). “A critique of principlism”. (2) Simpson and McDonald (2021). “The (Country) Road Not Often Taken: Challenging Traditional Norms and Assumptions in Bioethics”.	
Jan 27	---	Midterm
<b>Part 2:</b>	<b>TBD</b> TBD	
Feb 1	(1) (2) (3) “How to perform an ethics case analysis”	

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Feb 3	(1) (2)	
Feb 8	(1) (2)	
Feb 10	(1) (2)	
Feb 15	(1) (2)	
Feb 17	Case Discussion & Wrap-Up	Case Analysis

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Feb 21-25      **READING WEEK – NO CLASSES**

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<b>Part 3:</b>	<b>TBD</b> TBD	
Mar 1	(1) (2) (3) “How to write a project proposal”	
Mar 3	(1) (2)	
Mar 8	(1) (2)	
Mar 10	(1) (2)	
Mar 15	(1) (2)	
Mar 17	Case Discussion & Wrap-Up	Final Project Proposal

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<b>Part 4:</b>	<b>TBD</b> TBD	
Mar 22	(1) (2) (3) “How to write an ethics paper”	

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Mar 24 (1)  
(2)

Mar 29 (1)  
(2)

Mar 31 (1)  
(2)

Apr 5 (1)  
(2)

Apr 7 Case Discussion & Wrap-Up

Annotated  
Bibliography

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Apr 12-27

**EXAM PERIOD – NO CLASSES**

Final Project

# Academic Policies

## General UBC Policies

UBC provides resources to support student learning and to maintain healthy lifestyles but recognizes that sometimes crises arise and so there are additional resources to access including those for survivors of sexual violence. UBC values respect for the person and ideas of all members of the academic community. Harassment and discrimination are not tolerated nor is suppression of academic freedom. UBC provides appropriate accommodation for students with disabilities and for religious observances. UBC values academic honesty and students are expected to acknowledge the ideas generated by others and to uphold the highest academic standards in all of their actions.

Details of the policies and how to access support are available on [the UBC Senate website](#).

## Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

Academic honesty is essential to the continued functioning of the University of British Columbia as an institution of higher learning and research. All UBC students are expected to behave as honest and responsible members of an academic community. Breach of those expectations or failure to follow the appropriate policies, principles, rules, and guidelines of the University with respect to academic honesty may result in disciplinary action.

It is the student's obligation to inform themselves of the applicable standards for academic honesty. Students must be aware that standards at the University of British Columbia may be different from those in secondary schools or at other institutions. If a student is in any doubt as to the standard of academic honesty in a particular course or assignment, then the student must consult with the instructor as soon

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as possible, and in no case should a student submit an assignment if the student is not clear on the relevant standard of academic honesty.

If an allegation is made against a student, the Registrar may place the student on academic hold until the President has made his or her final decision. When a student is placed on academic hold, the student is blocked from all activity in the Student Service Centre.

A list of guidelines and expectations can be found in the [Academic Calendar](#).

To specifically discuss plagiarism: This is the use of someone else's work without giving proper credit and/or passing off someone else's work as you own. Plagiarism is a serious offence and will result in a **grade of zero** on the assignment. If multiple instances of plagiarism are submitted, it will result in an **"F" for the course as a whole**. If you are unsure what constitutes plagiarism, consult the UBC Guidelines in the [Academic Calendar](#).

### Academic Citations

There is no specific citation method for this course. Please feel free to use whichever citation or referencing style you are most comfortable with so long as you are consistent throughout your assignment. If you are unsure of how to cite or reference, here is [UBC's Guide](#).

### Academic Concession

If you experience unanticipated events or circumstances that interfere with your ability to accomplish your academic coursework, you may be eligible for academic concession. Full details about academic concession can be found on the [Student Services Enrolment webpage](#) and the [Faculty of Arts webpage](#).

If you are already registered with the [Centre for Accessibility](#) and your concession is related to your registered medical condition or disability, contact your Accessibility Advisor.

If your situation is related to an experience of sexual violence, you have the option of contacting UBC's [Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Office \(SVPRO\)](#) (604 822 1588) who can assist you with your academic concession.

If you need immediate emotional, mental, or physical support, find a [UBC health and wellness resource](#) to help you.

You may be eligible for academic concession when one or more of the conditions listed below unexpectedly hinders your ability to complete an assignment or participate in classes or an examination:

- [Medical circumstances](#)
- [Compassionate grounds](#)
- [Conflicting responsibilities](#)
- Technology issues

In all cases, your request for academic concession should be made as early as reasonably possible to your instructor or [Arts Academic Advising](#). If you are not an Arts student, you should consult with your home faculty for your concession.



## Accessibility and Accommodation

The University of British Columbia recognizes its moral and legal duty to provide academic accommodation. The University must remove barriers and provide opportunities to students with a disability, enabling them to access university services, programs, and facilities and to be welcomed as participating members of the University community. The University's goal is to ensure fair and consistent treatment of all students, including students with a disability, in accordance with their distinct needs and in a manner consistent with academic principles.

The University will provide academic accommodation to students with disabilities in accordance with the British Columbia Human Rights Code, R.S.B.C. 1996, c. 210 and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Part I of the Constitution Act, 1982, being Schedule B to the Canada Act 1982 (U.K.), 1982, c. 11. Provision of academic accommodation shall not lower the academic standards of the University. Academic accommodation shall not remove the need for evaluation and the need to meet essential learning outcomes.

Students with a disability who wish to have an academic accommodation should contact [Centre for Accessibility](#) without delay (see [UBC Policy LR7](#)).

## Student Support and Resources

UBC has many supports and resources dedicated to assisting students in times of need or who have questions. This includes: academics, money, immigration, health, career, and sexual assault support. These resources can be found on the [Student Services Supports Page](#).

## Conflicting Responsibilities

UBC recognizes that students may occasionally have conflicting responsibilities that affect their ability to attend class or examinations. These may include: representing the University, the province or the country in a competition or performance; serving in the Canadian military; or observing a religious rite. They may also include a change in a student's situation that unexpectedly requires that student to work or take responsibility for the care of a family member, if these were not pre-existing situations at the start of term.

Students with conflicting responsibilities have a duty to arrange their course schedules so as to avoid, as much as possible, any conflicts with course requirements. As soon as conflicting responsibilities arise, students must notify either their instructor(s) or their Faculty Advising Office (e.g. Arts Academic Advising), and can request academic concession. Instructors may not be able to comply with all such requests if the academic standards and integrity of the course or program would be compromised.

Varsity student-athletes should discuss any anticipated and unavoidable regular-season absences with the instructor at the start of term, and provide notice of playoff or championship absences in writing as soon as dates are confirmed.

Religious observance may preclude attending classes or examinations at certain times. In accordance with the UBC Policy on Religious Holidays, students who wish to be accommodated for religious reasons must notify their instructors in writing at least two weeks in advance. Instructors provide opportunity for such students to make up work or examinations missed without penalty.

## Late Assignment Policy

Late submissions are accepted for most assignments. All late assignments will be penalized at the rate of **one grade increment** per day late, weekends included. This means an assignment that would have been an A will become an A- if one day late, a B+ if two days late, etc.

Due to the nature of the **course preference survey** and **the first reaction questions and comments**, I will not be able to accept any late submissions for these.

## Copyright

Instructor-generated course material (e.g., handouts, outlines, summaries, exam questions, etc.), including material posted on *Canvas* are protected by law and may not be copied or distributed in any form or in any medium without explicit permission of the instructor.

This instructor checks the various resource websites for material from their course and will issue take-down orders if any material is identified. Disciplinary action may be taken against students distributing material in this manner.

# Potential Topics/Readings for Units 2, 3, and 4

### End of life decisions (LTC, Assisted Living, MAiD)

- (1) Li et al. (2017). “Medical assistance in dying – Implementing a hospital-based program in Canada”.
- (2) Spinal Cord Injury Organization of BC. (2013). “Supporting Sexual Health and Intimacy in Care Facilities: a pocket reference guide”.
- (3) Chase. (2020). “Caring for Frail Older Adults During COVID-19: integrating public health ethics into clinical practice”.
- (4) Buturovic. (2020). “Procedural safeguards cannot disentangle MAiD from organ donation decisions”.
- (5) Department of Justice. (2021). “Canada’s new medical assistance in dying (MAiD) law”.

### Beginning of life decisions (genetic engineering, abortion, moral status of fetus, parental discretion)

- (1) Savulescu. (2001). “Procreative beneficence: why we should select the best children”.
- (2) Spike. (2014). “Pregnancy, Brain Death, and Posthumous Motherhood: A Provisional Policy Proposal”.
- (3) Yurkiewicz, Korf, and Kehmann. (2014). “Prenatal Whole-Genome Sequencing: Is the Quest to Know a Fetus’s Future Ethics?”
- (4) Blyth and Farrad. (2005). “Reproductive Tourism – a price worth paying for reproductive autonomy?”
- (5) Diekema. (2011). “Parental refusals of recommended medical interventions”.
- (6) Gillam. (2015). “The zone of parental discretion: An ethical tool for dealing with disagreement between parents and doctors about medical treatment for a child”.

**Bias in healthcare (racism, sexism, homophobia, ableism, ageism, etc.)**

- (1) Danis, Wilson, and White. (2016). “Bioethicists Can and Should Contribute to Addressing Racism”
- (2) Braddock III (2021). “Racism and Bioethics: The Myth of Color Blindness”.
- (3) Foster. (2016). “Aboriginal Health Care: The Seven Grandfathers Trump the Four Principles”.
- (4) Young and Everett. (2018). “When patients choose to live at risk: What is an ethical approach to intervention?”
- (5) Albrecht and Devlieger. (1999). “The disability paradox: high quality of life against all odds”.
- (6) Rubin. (2015). “Minimizing Health disparities Among LGBT Patients”.

**Ethics and mental health (eating disorders, medicalization, etc.)**

- (1) McNeil et al. (2014). “Hospitals as a risk environment: an ethno-epidemiological study of voluntary and involuntary discharge from hospital against medical advice among people who inject drugs”.
- (2) Chase. (2020). “The Ethics of Compulsory Treatment of Addictions Under Canadian Legislation: restricting freedom to promote long-term autonomy?”
- (3) Young and Everett. (2015). “Cause of death: Schizophrenia?”
- (4) Hung, McNeil, and Binder. (2012). “Covert Medication in Psychiatric Emergencies: Is It Ever Ethically Permissible?”
- (5) d’Agincourt-Canning, Kunkel, and Dixon. (2014). “Patient and Family-Centred Care: Critical Partnerships when Treating Adolescent Anorexia Nervosa”.

**Technology and AI in healthcare**

- (1) Vogel. (2017). “Plan needed to capitalize on robots, AI in health care.”
- (2) Keane & Topol. (2018). “With an eye to AI and autonomous diagnosis.”
- (3) Nundy, Montgomery, & Wachter. (2019). “Promoting Trust Between Patients and Physicians in the Era of Artificial Intelligence.”
- (4) Khalid. (2020, January). “Google’s AI for mammograms doesn’t account for racial differences.”
- (5) American Academy of Pediatrics Policy Statement. (2017). “Responsible Innovation in Children’s Surgical Care”.
- (6) Kramer, Mitchell, and Brock. (2012). “Deactivation of pacemakers and implantable cardioverter-defibrillators”.