

BIOMEDICAL ETHICS
Philosophy 163
Winter 2011

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Teaching Assistants and Sections:

Eric Campbell

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Daniel Schwartz

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Course Description: In this course, we will explore four sets of hotly debated issues in biomedical ethics. We will begin with a set of questions concerning moral agency and autonomy that arise with the creation of advance directives and with research subject's consent. We will then turn to moral issues that concern the beginning of life, focusing on the ethics of abortion, stem cell research, and cloning, paying close attention to recent development in research methods. Our next topic will be genetic screening, performance enhancement, and perfection, and we will ask questions such as "to what extent, if at all, should we choose the traits of future children?" Finally, we will examine the challenging topic of justice in health care, both local and global.

Throughout the course, we will aim to focus on the practical issues before us, and also on the larger moral and political frameworks from which we can best approach our particular questions. Certain larger issues will emerge from the various more specific ones, including the role of autonomy in morality and the value and meaning of life. Our aims will be two-fold: (i) to gain an understanding of a variety of positions on each of the pressing ethical issues at hand, and to come to reasoned and well-informed views about them, and (ii) to hone our reasoning skills and knowledge of fundamental moral and political positions so that we will be in a good position to adjudicate all sorts of other debates within, and even beyond, bioethics.

Requirements:

- Section attendance and participation (10%)
- Brief **twice** weekly reading response questions, due by e-mail to your TA by noon on each lecture day (15%)
- Viewing of *Gattica* outside of class (class screening times TBA and DVD available for library use)
- 1 midterm exam (20%) Date: 2/3
- 1 medium paper (6-8 pages) (20%) Due: 3/1
- 1 final exam (cumulative) (35%) Date: 3/15, 11:30-2:30

Note: A hard copy of your paper must be turned in, and an electronic copy uploaded to turnitin.com. (This is very easy to do, and I'll give you instructions and a password for doing so.)

Note: All work must be completed in order to receive credit for the course.

Discussion Sections: Discussion sections meet once a week. Sections are designed to give you an opportunity to meet in smaller groups, to ask questions and have them answered by your TA, and to discuss the course material in greater depth than is possible in lecture. Attendance and participation contribute to 10% of your course grade, and twice weekly reading response questions, sent to your TA, contribute another 15% of your course grade.

Specific course topics and readings

Most readings may be found on library e-reserves (<http://reserves.ucsd.edu>), or via links from the course web page (CWP). I have also ordered two books which you can find at the bookstore: Dworkin's *Life's Dominion* (LD), and Buchanan, Brock, Daniels and Winkler's *From Choice to Chance* (CC).

I. Autonomy and Value: Advance Directives

1/4: Introduction

1/6: Vaughn, "Moral Reasoning in Bioethics" (L) and Campo-Flores, "The Legacy of Terry Schiavo" (CWP), Dworkin, "Life Past Reason" (LD)

1/11: Dresser, "Dworkin on Dementia: Elegant Theory, Questionable Policy" (L); Jaworska, "Respecting the Margins of Agency" pp. 105-125 (L)

1/13: Jaworska, "Respecting the Margins of Agency", pp. 125-138 (L)

II. Autonomy and Value: Research Subjects and Consent

1/18: Faden and Beauchamp, "The Concept of Informed Consent" (L) and Savulescu and Momeyer, "Should Informed Consent be Based on Rational Beliefs?" (L)

1/20: Marquis, "How to Resolve an Ethical Dilemma Concerning Randomized Clinical Trials" (L) and Lemmons and Elliot, "Guinea Pigs on the Payroll: The Ethics of Paying Research Subjects" (L)

III. Beginning of Life: Abortion, Stem Cell Research and Cloning

1/25: Fienberg, "Abortion" (L)

1/27: Marquis, "Why Abortion is Immoral," and Thomson, "A Defense of Abortion" (L)

2/1: Current NIH Guidelines on Stem Cell Research (CWP) and Fitzpatrick, “Surplus Embryos, Nonreproductive Cloning and the Intend/Foresee Distinction” (L)

2/3: MIDTERM

2/8: Brock, “Cloning Human Beings: An Assessment of the Ethical Issues Pro and Con” (L)

2/10: Dworkin, “What is Sacred?” (LD)

IV. Genetic Screening, Performance Enhancement, and Perfection

2/15: Kaplan, “Prenatal Screening and its Impact on Persons with Disabilities”, Glover, “Future People, Disability, and Screening” (L)

2/17: Buchanan, Brock, Daniels and Wikler, *From Choice to Chance* (CP, chapter 4)

2/22: Buchanan, Brock, Daniels and Wikler (CP, chapter 5), Sandel, “The Case Against Perfection” (L)

2/24 Sandel, “The Case Against Perfection” (L)

V. Justice in Health Care

3/1: Lamont and Favor, “Distributive Justice” (CWP) and Summary of US Affordable Care Act (CWP) **Paper Due**

3/3: Daniels, “Is There a Right to Health Care and, if So, What Does It Encompass?” (L)

3/8: Engelhardt “Rights to Health Care, Social Justice, and Fairness in Health Care Allocations: Frustrations in the Face of Finitude” (L)

3/10: Harris, “QALYfying the Value of Life” (L)

Notes

- 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.
- ***Laptops and other electronic devices may not be used in class, except for lecture note-taking.***
- Please note that the policies and readings described above are subject to minor change.