

Phil 163: Biomedical Ethics Winter 2025

Instructor:

Reuven Brandt

Class time and location: Tue & Thr 12:30-1:50, Centre Hall 119

Office Hours: M, W. 11:30AM-12:30PM Arts and Humanities Building 0497

Email: rabrandt@ucsd.edu put 'PHIL 163' in subject

Teaching Assistants:

Huadian Liu Office: RWAC 0461 Office Hours: Wed 4-6PM (Zoom) hul010@ucsd.edu	Sam Ridge Office: RWAC 0446 Office Hours: Wed 2-3, Thr 5-6. siridge@ucsd.edu	Ahmed Siddiqi Office: RWAC 0461 Office Hours: Wed 1-2, Wed 2-3 (zoom) ahsiddiq@ucsd.edu	Noam Tiran Office: 0439 Office Hours: Mon 10-11, Fri 9-10. ntiran@ucsd.edu
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Course description:

In this course we will be examining various questions that arise in biomedical ethics. The purpose of the course is to provide an overview of ongoing debates in contemporary biomedical ethics, while at the same time developing students' critical thinking and analytic skills. We will start by examining the use of moral principles in biomedical ethics as foundation for thinking about ethical dilemmas. Over the quarter we will examine ethical questions in reproductive ethics, including enhancement, and abortion. We will also look at questions about autonomy, human agency, and the intentional ending of life. We will then look at ethical problems raised by the current pandemic such as the allocation of scarce resources, and the role of precautionary thinking

Readings (All available on the course website)

	Tuesday	Thursday
Week 1	Jan 7th Introduction (no readings)	Jan 9th "A Defense of Universal Principles in Biomedical Ethics", Beauchamp
Week 2	Jan 14th "The moral obligation to create children with the best chance of the best life" Savulescu and Kahane" The fallacy of the principle of procreative beneficence", Bennett	Jan 16th Hofmann, Bjørn. "You are inferior!' Revisiting the expressivist argument." Bioethics 31.7 Kittay, Eva Feder, 'The Ethics of Prenatal Testing and Selection', Learning from My Daughter: The Value and Care of Disabled Minds (New York, 2019; online edn, Oxford Academic, 17 Apr. 2019)
Week 3	Jan 21st	Jan 23rd

	Catchup / Review	Midterm I
Week 4	Jan 28 th "Markets and the needy: Organ sales or aid?" Zutlevics "Autonomy, constraining options, and organ sales" Taylor	Jan 30 th "XIV—The Moral Limits of Markets: The Case of Human Kidneys" Satz "An ethical market in human organs" Erin and Harris
Week 5	Feb 4 th "Active and Passive Euthanasia" Rachels Euthanasia, Ethics and Public Policy: An Argument Against Legalization (excerpt), Keown	Feb 6 th "The Logical Slippery Slope is Neither Slippery Nor Logical", Brandt Are Canadians being driven to assisted suicide by poverty or healthcare crisis?", Cecceo
Week 6	Feb 11 th Against autonomy : Justifying Coercive Paternalism, ch.1 Conly Against autonomy : Justifying Coercive Paternalism, Ch 2. Conly	Feb 13 th "Informed consent and relational conceptions of autonomy" Stoljar <i>Midterm II questions assigned</i>
Week 7	Feb 18 th Catchup / review	Feb 20 th Midterm II
Week 8	Feb 25 th "A defense of abortion", Thompson "Why abortion is immoral", Marquis	Feb 27 th "On the legal and moral status of abortion", Warren
Week 9	March 4 th Principles of Justice in Healthcare Rationing" Cookson & Dolan Moral Principles for Allocating Scarce Medical Resources in an Influenza Pandemic" Verweij	March 6 th Godfrey-Smith, Peter. "Covid heterodoxy in three layers." Monash Bioethics Review 40.1 (2022): 17-39.
Week 10	March 11 th Open Topic!	March 13 th "Individual autonomy and state involvement in health care" Thomas Rice US healthcare outcomes

Assessments:

Section: 5% attendance, 5% participation

Midterm I: 20% (Jan 23rd)

Midterm II: 30% (Feb 20th)

Final Exam: 40% (March 18th, 11:30-2:30)

Participation Grade:

Students are expected to attend all discussion sections and regularly participate. Half the participation grade is from section attendance, the other half is based on active participation. For full marks for active participation students must make contributions to the weekly discussion section **5** times over the course of the quarter. Contributions can be made through participating in discussion or sending thoughtful comments/questions to your TA at least 24 hours prior to discussion section. **Students are permitted one unexcused absence without penalty.**

Grade Disputes:

If you wish to appeal your grade first raise the matter with your TA. Your appeal should include some justification for why you think your grade was incorrect – a good way to do this is to respond to comments made by your TA on your paper. If you are unable to reach a satisfactory resolution with your TA you can request a regrade from the instructor. Note that the regrade may result in a lower grade.

General Policies:

- Readings are subject to minor adjustments.
- If you require any form of accommodation on the grounds of disability please make sure you have registered with the Office for Students with Disabilities and have followed their guidelines for alerting instructors to your particular needs. The university's policy on the accommodation of disability can be found here: <https://senate.ucsd.edu/Operating-Procedures/Senate-Manual/Appendices/3> Students requesting accommodations for this course due to a disability must provide a current Authorization for Accommodation (AFA) letter issued by the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) which is located in University Center 202 behind Center Hall. Students are required to present their AFA letters to Faculty (please make arrangements to contact me privately) and to the OSD Liaison in the department in advance so that accommodations may be arranged. 858.534.4382 (phone) | osd@ucsd.edu (email) | <http://disabilities.ucsd.edu> (website)
- If you require any accommodation on religious grounds, please alert me in writing as soon as possible. The university's policy on religious accommodation can be found

here: <https://senate.ucsd.edu/operating-procedures/educational-policies/courses/epc-policies-on-courses/policy-exams-including-midterms-final-exams-and-religious-accommodations-for-exams/>

- All instances of academic offences including plagiarism, cheating on exams, and multiple submission of work, will be handled in accordance with official UCSD policy, which can be found here: <http://senate.ucsd.edu/Operating-Procedures/Senate-Manual/Appendices/2>. Please read the policy and ensure that you understand it.

Integrity Statement:

"Academic Integrity is expected of everyone at UC San Diego. This means that you must be honest, fair, responsible, respectful, and trustworthy in all of your actions. Lying, cheating or any other forms of dishonesty will not be tolerated because they undermine learning and the University's ability to certify students' knowledge and abilities. Thus, any attempt to get, or help another get, a grade by cheating, lying or dishonesty will be reported to the Academic Integrity Office and will result sanctions. Sanctions can include an F in this class and suspension or dismissal from the University. So, think carefully before you act by asking yourself: a) is what I'm about to do or submit for credit an honest, fair, respectful, responsible & trustworthy representation of my knowledge and abilities at this time and, b) would my instructor approve of my action? You are ultimately the only person responsible for your behavior. So, if you are unsure, don't ask a friend—ask your instructor, instructional assistant, or the Academic Integrity Office. You can learn more about academic integrity at academicintegrity.ucsd.edu" (Source: Academic Integrity Office, 2018)

Percentage to Letter Grade Conversion Chart

Letter Grade	From	To
A+	97	100
A	93	96.99999
A-	90	92.99999
B+	87	89.99999
B	83	86.99999
B-	80	82.99999
C+	77	79.99999
C	73	76.99999
C-	70	72.99999
D	55	69.99999
F	0	54.99999