

# BIOMEDICAL ETHICS

Fall 2016      Mondays 2:00PM-4:50PM      Schlegel 120

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## Course Description

Is a physician morally obligated to tell a terminally ill patient that he or she is dying? What are the primary theological notions that are critical to inform a Christian perspective on bioethics? Do ethnoracial bioethical perspectives hold significance for the discipline of medical ethics? This course is designed to introduce students to the study of decision-making, moral principles, and the role of culture in the field of biomedical ethics. Students will evaluate a philosophical approach, a religious approach, and an ethnoracial approach to the morality of selected acts and practices in medicine and medical research. Using case studies to unpack the complex issues involved in medical treatment and research, students will discuss the obligations of professional conduct and defend their recommendations for due care. Public policy concerns will also occupy our attention.

## Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

- Evaluate multiple approaches to the study of biomedical ethics
- Discuss and assess the core principles of biomedical ethics
- Reflect theologically on a variety of topics in biomedical ethics including medical technology, the personhood and autonomy of the patient, and death
- Argue a position on a justice issue about which you are passionate in the field of biomedical ethics.
- Evaluate the role of culture in biomedical ethics.

## Requirements

1. Class participation (25%):
  - Regular attendance
  - Informed participation in class discussions

- Write approximately one half page of commentary on a case in the Veatch text, for 10 specified class sessions. Your writing should integrate concepts/questions from the reading materials with a case of your choice. Late papers will not be accepted. These papers will not receive a grade.
- 2. Midterm (25%): A take-home exam will be distributed on October 10. It is due on October 24. The exam should be typed in 12-point font and double-spaced.
- 3. Group Project (30%): You will meet weekly (during class time) with a small group that is tasked to complete two assignments that comprise the project:
  - To write a group Letter to the Editor of the Courier-Journal taking a stand on a public health issue in Louisville. The letters will be distributed electronically to the class on November 28.
  - To discuss the issue that your group selected, group process and research that was necessary to produce the letter in a 20-minute group oral report on December 5. Good projects will be not only descriptive, but also persuasive.
- 4. Final Essay (20%): Students will write a 10-page essay on one of the issues in biomedical ethics that is discussed in class. Essays will be due on the Monday following the last day of class. Students may use their research for the group project as the basis for their final essay.

### Required Texts

- ***Case Studies in Biomedical Ethics: Decision-Making, Principles, and Cases***, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Robert Veatch, Amy Haddad, and Dan English (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).
- ***Bioethics: A Christian Approach in a Pluralistic Age***, Scott Rae, and Paul Cox (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999).
- ***African American Bioethics: Culture, Race, and Identity***, Lawrence Prograis, and Edmund Pellegrino, editors (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2007).

### Calendar of Topics

**\*[Readings should be completed before the date under which they appear]\***

**September 12**

**Approaches to biomedical ethics**

Veatch, Introduction, chapters 1 & 2

Rae, pages 1-20

Prograis, Introduction

(total 75 pages of reading for 9/12)

[Don't forget your 100-125 word commentary on either case 1-1, 2-1, 2-2, 2-3, or 2-4. For example, you might ask of case 1-1 (pages 20-21) whether race or religion can inform the primary ethical problem in the case].

<b>September 19</b>	<b>Ethical Principles, Religious Approaches, and Ethnoracial Issues</b>
	Veatch, chapters 3 & 4
	Rae, pages 20-53
	Prograis, chapter 1 (total 81 pages of reading for 9/19)
<b>September 26</b>	<b>Justice, and the Moral Weight of Culture</b>
	Veatch, chapters 5 & 6
	Rae, chapter 2
	Prograis, chapter 2 (total 87 pages of reading for 9/26)
<b>October 3</b>	<b>Technology, Honesty, Fidelity, and Lies</b>
	Veatch, chapter 7 & 8
	Rae, chapter 3
	Prograis, chapter 3 (total 89 pages of reading for 10/3)
<b>October 10</b>	<b>The Sacredness of Human Life, Authenticity, and Letting Die</b>
	Veatch, chapter 9
	Rae, chapter 4
	Prograis, chapter 8 (total 70 pages of reading for 10/10)





related to academic honesty can find help from the staff in the Academic Support Center. For more information, see the Policy for Academic Honesty in the Student Handbook.

### **Special Accommodations**

Students requiring accommodations for a documented physical or learning disability should be in contact with the Director of the Academic Support Center during the first two weeks of a semester (or before the semester begins) and should speak with the instructor as soon as possible to arrange appropriate adjustments. Students with environmental or other sensitivities that may affect their learning are also encouraged to speak with the instructor.

### **Citation Policy**

Citations in your papers should follow Seminary standards, which are based on these guides:

American Psychological Association. *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. 6th ed. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2010.

Turabian, Kate L., Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*. 8th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013.

*The Chicago Manual of Style*. 16th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010.

Copies of these guides are available at the library and in the Academic Support Center.

### **Attendance Policy**

According to the Seminary catalog, students are expected to attend class meetings regularly. In case of illness or emergency, students are asked to notify the instructor of their planned absence from class, either prior to the session or within 24 hours of the class session. Six or more absences (1/4 of the course) may result in a low or failing grade in the course.