

WR 152 N4 | Spring 2020

Introduction to Bioethics

COURSE

T/Th 2:00-3:15
Room 332 - Yawkey Center
100 Bay State Road, Boston

INSTRUCTOR

Susan Kennedy
Ph.D Candidate, Philosophy Dept.
skenn@bu.edu

OFFICE HOURS

Thursday 12-2
School of Theology
745 Comm. Ave., Room 504

TOOLS & MATERIALS

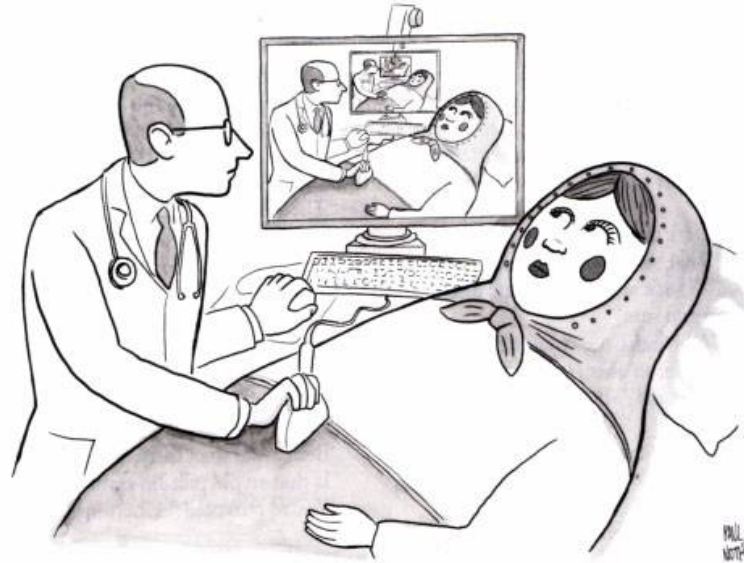
Blackboard

Our class has a Blackboard site that contains the syllabus, assignments, and other course-related materials. You can log in to our Blackboard page at: <http://learn.bu.edu>

Books

Purchase or rent the following, in print or electronic edition:

- Turabian, Kate L., Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. *Student's Guide to Writing College Papers*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 2010. *Required
- Ball, Cheryl E., Jennifer Sheppard, and Kristin L. Arola. *Writer/Designer: A Guide to Making Multimodal Projects*. 2nd Ed. Boston: Bedford St. Martin's, 2018. *Optional
- All other readings for this course will be provided on the Blackboard site.



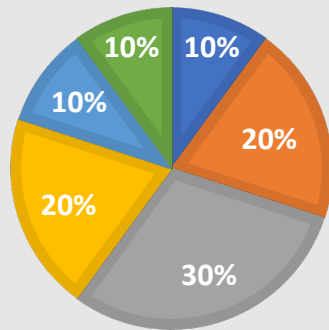
[Cartoon](#) by Paul Noth, published Oct. 4, 2010 in *The New Yorker*

Welcome to WR 152 N4

This course invites you to explore the tentacular field of bioethics. As human beings demonstrate an ever-increasing control over nature with biomedical innovation, we are confronted with urgent questions concerning individuals' rights, social justice, moral responsibility, and what it means to live a flourishing life. While combining perspectives from ethics, medicine, law, and feminist philosophy, you will pursue a research project that culminates in a simulated conference-style poster presentation at the end of the course. Readings will include works by Judith Jarvis Thomson, Dan Brock, Allen Buchanan, Barbara Katz Rothman, and Tsjalling Swierstra.

Building on WR 120 or its equivalent, this class will help you cultivate your writing and research skills through a range of assignments, including a scholarly research essay in which you will be responsible for identifying and refining a topic, devising research questions, and answering those questions by finding and using a range of scholarly and non-scholarly sources. As a course that earns a Hub Unit in Digital/Multimedia Expression, WR 152 will also give you an opportunity to analyze different media and modes, such as podcasts, websites, and artwork, and to compose them yourself as you translate your academic writing into different forms for different audiences.

GRADE SUMMARY



- Short Exercises: 10%
- Abstract & Annotated Bibliography: 20%
- Academic Research Essay: 30%
- Research Poster: 20%
- Oral Presentations: 10%
- Final Portfolio: 10%

Your final grade may be adjusted up or down 1/3 of a letter grade to account for participation. Each absence beyond two may lower your final grade by 1/3 of a letter grade.

SHORT EXERCISES

These are low-stakes assignments and activities that are designed to help you make progress on your graded, major assignments. They will not receive explicit grades, but you will receive credit for completing them on time.

COURSEWARE

- A laptop with at least 4 GB (gigabytes) of RAM (random access memory). Please check your laptop's RAM: here are [instructions](#). If you are financially unable to provide a laptop that meets the requirements for this section of WR 152, please let me know as soon as possible so we can make arrangements.
- Microsoft Office – See Blackboard for Instructions for a free download.

COURSE GOALS

- Strategically use sources in different modes and media and read them with understanding, appreciation, and critical judgment
- Express yourself orally and converse thoughtfully about complex ideas
- Engage a range of sources in order to address research questions and to communicate findings in the form of responsible, well-structured arguments using different medias and modes of expression
- Plan, draft, and revise efficiently and effectively; help your peers do the same by responding productively to their work
- Reflect on how research, reading, writing, and editing practices differ for varied audiences, genres, modes, media, and purposes

Assignments & Activities

- Short exercises and drafts (on time and complete)
- Abstract and Annotated Bibliography (500 words and approx. 1,000 words)
- Academic Research Essay (approx. 3,000 words)
- Research Poster
- Oral Presentation (5-7 minutes)
- Final Portfolio
- Participation in class activities and discussions

Policies

Format and Submission of Assignments

Assignments should be carefully proofed. Written assignments should be formatted according to Chicago Style. All assignments should be submitted on Blackboard.

Late and Missed Assignments

You are allotted a time bank of two days that can be used in 24-hour units to extend the deadline of one or two of your graded assignments. This eliminates the need to request extensions and allows flexibility in managing your workflow. After you use up your time bank, graded assignments will be penalized 1/3 of a letter grade each day they are late.

RESOURCES

CAS Writing Center

The [CAS Writing Center](#) (100 Bay State Road, 3rd floor, with a satellite location at Mugar Library) offers one-on-one consultations for students to discuss their work for WR courses with well-trained writing consultants. Whether you consider yourself a strong writer or a weak one, you can benefit from meeting with a consultant.

The CAS Center for Writing is open Monday through Friday. Hours for the current semester are posted on the website below. While the center accepts walk-in visits, you are strongly encouraged to reserve an appointment in advance. Because of the high demand for consultations, students are limited to one reservation per week. Reserve an appointment via the website or by calling 617-358-1500.

Accessibility

If there are circumstances that might affect your performance in this course, speak with me so we can develop a plan to satisfy both your learning needs and the course requirements. [Disability Services](#) is the office responsible for assisting students with disabilities (physical or mental). Whether or not you have a documented disability, many support services are available at BU.

Policies, cont'd

Attendance

You may miss two classes without penalty. Save your free absences for when you need them. Each absence beyond two may lower your final grade 1/3 of a letter grade (e.g., *B* becomes *B-*). Five or more absences will be grounds for an *F*. Habitual tardiness (more than three times) may also lower your grade one-third of a letter grade. If you have a special obligation that will require you to miss several classes, please talk with me at the beginning of the semester. Please note: missed conferences will be counted as absences.

Engagement

The success of this seminar depends on your participation. Come prepared to ask questions, offer ideas, and listen and respond to your fellow classmates productively and respectfully. Phones should not be used in class. Laptops may be used only for specified activities. If this policy presents problems with notetaking, let me know.

Chosen Name and Gender Pronouns

This course aims to be an inclusive learning community that supports students of all gender expressions and identities. While class rosters are provided to instructors with students' legal names, please let me know if you would like to be addressed by a different name than that listed on StudentLink. You are also invited to tell me early in the semester which set of pronouns (she/her/hers, he/him/his, they/their/theirs, etc.) you feel best fits your identity.

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism is the passing off of another's distinctive words or ideas as your own. Cases will be handled in accordance with BU's [Academic Conduct Code](#). ***Penalties can range from failing an assignment to expulsion from the university.*** In this class we will discuss conventions for using and citing sources. If you have any questions about plagiarism, please speak with me.

Course Schedule

Note: This schedule is subject to change based on the needs of the class. Changes will be announced in class and will be posted online.

Unit 1: COURSE FOUNDATIONS			
<p>In this unit we will begin to explore the topic of the course and focus on how research works within the bioethics community. By focusing on a particular issue, namely euthanasia, we will become acquainted with how the topic is analyzed (in law, medicine, and moral philosophy) and how findings and ideas are communicated with others.</p>			
Date	Class Focus	Readings Due	Assignments Due
Week 1			
T 1/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction to the Course Stereotype Threat Activity Assign Self-Assessment 		
Th 1/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principles of Bioethics Overview of Suggested Topics for the Research Project 	Selections from Vaughan <i>Bioethics</i> 8-13, 42-43	Self-Assessment
Week 2			
T 1/28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Legal Right to Die 	Philosophers Brief, Washington v. Glucksberg, & Vacco v Quill	
Th 1/30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Moral Right to Die 	Brock "Voluntary Active Euthanasia" & Rachels "Active and Passive Euthanasia"	
Unit 2: Research as Exploration			
<p>In this unit, we will continue to focus on research practices, including how to develop a research agenda, analyze data and sources, and communicate findings. You will conduct open-ended research to develop and shape questions that will drive your project. During this unit, you will propose, design and present on an executable research project that you will continue in Unit 3 of the course.</p>			
Week 3			
T 2/4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Science Library - 38 Cummington St. Mary Foppiani, Research Librarian on Effective Search Strategies Laws of Abortion 	Roe v Wade & Planned Parenthood v Casey	Worksheet: Mapping Library Search Terms
Th 2/6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Morality of Abortion Review Worksheet – Annotations for Dynamic Research 	Marquis "Why Abortion is Immoral" & Thomson "A Defense of Abortion"	Worksheet: Annotations
Week 4			
T 2/11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reproductive Ethics Biomedical Innovation – Developing a 'Timely' Research Question 	"Rush to Motherhood" Meyers & "Obstetric Ultrasound.." Verbeek	

Th 2/13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assisted-Reproductive Technologies – Ectogenesis How to Write an Abstract 	Rothman “Daddy Plants a Seed” & Cannold “Women, Ectogenesis and Ethical Theory”	Worksheet: Abstracts
Week 5			
T 2/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No class (Substitute Monday schedule for classes) 		
Th 2/20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peer Review Self-Reflection Writing Activity 		Draft: Abstract & Annotated Bibliography
Week 6			
T 2/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eugenics Old and New Outline Activity – Audience, Introduction, Thesis 	Buchanan et al C.2 & Harris “Is Gene Therapy a Form of Eugenics?”	
Th 2/27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Genetic Screening for Disability Outline Activity – Argument Procatalepsis Exercise 	Brock “Non-Identity Problem” & McMahan “Morality of Screening”	Abstract & Annotated Bibliography
Unit 3: Reaching an Academic Audience			
<p>In this unit, we will apply the best practices of writing and research—including planning, drafting, and revising—in order to communicate research with authority and precision to an academic audience. We will strive to practice revision not merely as polishing words on the page, but as continuing to rethink, research, and restructure our projects.</p>			
Week 7			
T 3/3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Treatment vs Enhancement Discuss Outlines in Small Groups 	Buchanan et al C4	Worksheet: Research Paper Outline
Th 3/5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Genetic Enhancement Case Analysis: CRISPR 	Sandel “The Case Against Perfection” and Kass “Wisdom of Repugnance”	
Week 8			
T 3/17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peer Review 		Draft 1 - Research Paper
Th 3/19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Genetic Enhancement and Designer Babies 	Sparrow “Enhancement and Obsolescence” & Savulescu “Procreative Beneficence”	
Unit 4: Gateway to Remediation – Introducing a New Genre			
<p>In this unit, we will further explore new genres and modes, perhaps with a new purpose and audience in mind, highlighted how different contexts call for different kinds of research and expression. In particular, we will discuss effective strategies for visual representations of data and how to create an academic research poster.</p>			
Date	Class Focus	Readings Due	Assignments Due
Week 9			
T 3/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concepts of Health and Disease Schedule Video Conferences 	Boorse “Health as a Theoretical Concept”, Ereshefsky “Defining Health and Disease”	Draft 2 – Research Paper (Due Sunday 3/22 by 8 pm)
Th 3/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disability and Vulnerability 	Wendall “Who is Disabled? Defining Disability” and Scully “Disability and Vulnerability”	
Week 10			

T 3/31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BU Walking Tour - Research Posters • Class Activity – Creating a Research Poster for WR 152 using PowerPoint 	Gundogan et al “How to Write an Academic Research Poster” Review Selected Poster Examples on Blackboard	Final – Research Paper
Th 4/2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregiving and Dependence • Case Analysis: Care Robots 	Kittay “The Ethics of Care, Dependence and Disability” and Tong “Long-term Care for the Elderly..”	
Unit 5: Remediation – Translating Your Research into a New Genre and Mode			
<p>In this unit, we will continue to practice composition and research while working in different genres and modes, exploring the affordances and challenges of digital/multimedia communication. After workshoping a draft of your poster in class, we will focus on developing an accompanying oral presentation.</p>			
Week 11			
T 4/7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying the Soft Impacts of Technology • Who is your Audience? Identifying and Engaging with a Range of Audiences 	Swierstra “Identifying the Normative Challenges Posed by Technology’s ‘Soft’ Impacts”	
Th 4/9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moral Nudges • Peer Review 	Saghai “The Concept of a Nudge” and Quigley “Nudging for Health”	Draft – Poster
Week 12			
T 4/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case Analysis – Nudges • Small Group Activity – Visual Representations of Data 	Engelen “Ethical Criteria of Health Promoting Nudges”	Worksheet: Oral Presentations
Th 4/16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conference Etiquette for Speakers and Audience Members - Handouts • Rhetoric and Composition for Oral Presentations 	Watch two videos from the list of recommended TED Talks on Blackboard	
Unit 6: Simulated Conference and Closing Reflections			
<p>In this unit, we will conduct our simulated conference-style presentations of your research posters. You will have the opportunity to practice effective strategies for oral communication, as well as engaging with the work of others as an active audience member. Outside of class, you will reflect on what you have learned in this course as you compile your final portfolio project. On the last day of class we will discuss how we can transfer our new knowledge to other areas of our academic and nonacademic lives.</p>			
Week 13			
T 4/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oral Presentations 		Final - Poster
Th 4/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oral Presentations 		
Week 14			
T 4/27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oral Presentations 		
Th 4/30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oral Presentations 		Final Portfolio