Advances in medicine and biology occur at a rapid pace and have a profound impact upon our lives. In the west, we now live longer, reproduce later, and have smaller and planned families. New technologies have also raised novel possibilities in both medical therapy and biological enhancement. It is now possible to sustain a person’s life indefinitely, to detect disorders before their symptoms appear, and to screen and select embryos according to our preferences. These developments raise both novel as well as perennial ethical questions of us as citizens, of our society, and of our medical practitioners. In “Biomedical Ethics” we shall consider just a few of the most pressing of these and their histories: the patient/doctor relationship, medical research on humans and animals, reproductive rights and technologies, genetics, medical decisions at the end of life, and the allocation of scarce medical resources. This will give us important insights into the relationship between science, medicine and society.

COURSE TEXTS


Other readings will be made available through D2L
Course Formalities and Expectations

Attendance and Participation:
Attendance in class is mandatory. If you have good cause to miss class, it is imperative that you discuss this with your instructor BEFOREHAND. **Note:** Any student who misses ten or more classes without documented and justifiable cause may receive a failing grade irrespective of any written work submitted.

OU policies on reasonable accommodation, and codes of behaviour:

Reasonable Accommodation Policy
Any student in this course who has a documented disability that may prevent him or her from fully demonstrating his or her abilities should contact me personally as soon as possible so we can discuss accommodations necessary to ensure full participation and facilitate your educational opportunities.

OU operates an equal opportunities policy. For information on Disability Resources and Policy see: The Disability Resource Centre web site: [http://drc.ou.edu/](http://drc.ou.edu/)

Codes and Policies of Behaviour
Each student should acquaint his or her self with the University's codes, policies, and procedures involving academic misconduct, grievances, sexual, racial and ethnic harassment, and discrimination based on physical handicap.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism:
Plagiarism is the unacknowledged appropriation of someone else’s words, ideas, or work, which is then represented as your own. It will not be tolerated and carries significant and serious penalties. At a minimum you will receive 0% for the assignment, and your name put on record. It is possible that you might receive 0% for the course, and in extreme cases may be expelled from the University. You are therefore strongly recommended to educate yourself regarding what plagiarism is and how to avoid it. Your instructor and/or teaching assistants will be happy to advise you on this matter if you are in any doubt.

We will talk more about academic conventions, referencing the authors you write about and what constitutes adequate citation in class. All written work for this class will be expected to meet these basic standards of academic integrity.

**NB:** Be aware that ignorance of what constitutes plagiarism will not be accepted as an excuse for it. If at any time you are unsure of how to cite material, your instructor or writing centre staff will be happy to advise you.

YOU SHOULD CHECK THIS LINK
[http://libraries.ou.edu/help/tutorials/academicintegrity/player.html](http://libraries.ou.edu/help/tutorials/academicintegrity/player.html)

OU Policy regarding religious holidays:
It is the policy of the University to excuse absences of students that result from religious observances and to provide without penalty for the rescheduling of examinations and additional required class work that may fall on religious holidays.
ASSESSMENT

➢ First written assessment: [3%]

➢ Students will write five summary reports: [50%]
  Each will be worth 10% of the overall grade for the class. These will be no more than four pages in length (double-spaced, 12 pt, Times New Roman). *The aim of these exercises is to show that you can identify and understand the main issues at stake and current approaches to the topic under discussion.*
  [Notice: seven reports are assigned, your best five will count.]

➢ In class quizzes: [15%]
  Five short in-class quizzes will be assigned throughout the semester in which you will be asked to respond to an ethical issue that we have read about. Each will be worth up to 3% of the total grade.

➢ Term paper: [20%]
  Students will write a six-page research paper using material from a topic or topics we will have discussed as a starting point.

➢ Final Examination:
  Contextual review of Huxley’s *Brave New World* [12%]
  Students will write a review of the use of Huxley’s *Brave New World* (1932) as a point of reference in relation to current debates about biotechnologies.

TOTAL [100%]

*****************************************************
Due dates for written work are highlighted in yellow in the class schedule below, but see D2L for up-to-date deadlines, as those posted here may change in the event of unforeseen circumstances.

*****************************************************
CLASS SCHEDULE

Please ensure you print a copy of the reading for each class and bring it to class with you.

PART ONE

What makes a good answer to a difficult question…

Week One:
Tuesday 20th August: Defining the good.
• Questions to think about:
  What makes an ethical act ethical?

Thursday 22nd August: Individual rights and ethical duties
Reading:
➢ Take home essay due in class Tuesday:
  “What are the main issues at stake in the case that Parker describes in his essay “The Best Possible Child?” What do you believe to be ethically right in this case?”

Week Two:
Tuesday 27th August: Theories of ethics: deontology and consequentialism.
[Parker essay due]
Reading:

Thursday 29th August: The eugenics movement in the United States
Reading:

Week Three:
Tuesday 3rd September: beyond coercion? The debated merits of liberal eugenics.
Reading:

PART TWO

The Patient/Doctor Relationship

Thursday 5th September: First I will… obtain consent
Reading:
Week Four:
Tuesday 10th September:

Thursday 12th September: “Confidentiality”
Reading:

Week Five:
Tuesday 17th September: “Where confidentiality ends”
[summary report #1 on informed consent due today]
Reading:
California Supreme Court. Tarasoff v. Regents of the University of California, 131 California Reporter 14, Decided July 1, 1976.

PART THREE
Medical Research on Animals and Humans
(Walter Glannon, Biomedical Ethics, pp.47-70)

Reading:

Week Six:
Tuesday 24th September: Race in American medicine: the Tuskegee syphilis experiment.
[summary report #2 on confidentiality due today]
Reading/research:
An NPR feature on the Tuskegee study is available here:

Thursday 26th September: Jay Katz: Revisiting Ethics and Clinical Research.
Reading:

Week Seven:
Tuesday 1st October: Thinking about institutional context.
Reading:

Thursday 3rd October: Taking lessons from Stanley Milgram’s ‘Obedience to Authority’ experiments: Physician autonomy – an under-considered issue.
Reading:
Week Eight:
Tuesday 8th October: *On being morally considerable – a history of the study of experimental medicine*  
[Summary report #3 on human subject research due Tuesday]
Reading: 

Thursday 10th October: *More recent arguments about the moral status of animals* (lecture)  
Reading: 

Week Nine:
Tuesday 15th October: *Reflections of sentience and the human/animal boundary*  
Reading: 
Recent essays in *Science* on sentience in animals and the implications for the use of animals in research.  
Other current literature will be used to supplement these readings, see D2L.

**PART FOUR**
*On Being Morally Considerable and the Ethics of Reproductive Rights and Technologies*  
(Walter Glannon, *Biomedical Ethics*, pp.71-94)

Thursday 17th October: “*Rights, autonomy and the philosophy behind Roe vs Wade*”  
Reading: 

Week Ten:
Tuesday 22nd October: *On being the subject of a life*  
[Summary report #4 on the ethical treatment of animals in science due today.
Reading: 

Thursday 24th October: “*Whose View of Life? A history of the embryo.*”  
Reading: 

*Genetics*  
(Walter Glannon, *Biomedical Ethics*, pp.95-118)  
(You will also be expected to have read Huxley’s *Brave New World* before class starts this week)

Week Eleven:
Tuesday 29th October: *A Brave New World? The Ethics of Human Cloning*  
[Summary report #5 on “moral considerability and the ethics of abortion” due today.]
Reading:

**Thursday 31st October: In fear of a post-human future?**
Reading:

**Week Twelve:**
**Tuesday 5th November: Reflections on agency and the ‘new eugenics’**
Reading:

**Thursday 7th November: Biotechnology and the Pursuit of Happiness.**
Reading:

**Week Thirteen:**
**Tuesday 12th November: Biotechnology and the Pursuit of Happiness.**
Reading:

**Thursday 14th November: A Brave New World?**
Reading:
Discussion of Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World* in the context of the debate about bioethics.

**PART FIVE**
*Medical Decisions at the End of Life*
(Walter Glannon, *Biomedical Ethics*, pp.119-142)

**Week Fourteen:**
**Tuesday 19th November:**
*[summary report #6 on the ethics of genetic technologies is due today.]*
Reading:
Thursday 21st November: *Dax’s Case*.  
Documentary screening and discussion.  
Reading:  
Follow this link to the Oregon Public Health page for more information on the Oregon Death with Dignity Act:  

Week Fifteen:  
Tuesday 26th November:  
Reading:  

PART SIX  
*Allocating Scarce Medical Resources*  
(Walter Glannon, *Biomedical Ethics*, pp.143-166)

Thursday 28th November: American Thanksgiving break, no class.

Week Sixteen:  
Tuesday 3rd December: *Allocating Scarce healthcare resources*.  
Reading:  

Thursday 5th December: Film Screening: “Wit” (Emma Thompson).  
[summary report #7 on a right to die is due today]  
Reading:  
No set reading for this class.

Exam Week: Tuesday 9th December – Friday 13th December  
Exam: 1:30-3:30, Thursday 11th December.
GRADING PRACTICES AND STANDARDS

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<tr>
<th>Percent</th>
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<td>90-100</td>
<td>A exceptional</td>
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<td>87-89</td>
<td>B+ competent</td>
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<td>84-86</td>
<td>B competent</td>
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The following guidelines offer a characterisation of the type of work that might be associated with various ranges of grades. The intent here is to encourage general consistency across faculty and Graduate Teaching Assistants, and to give a guide to what is required in academic writing rather than to provide precise specifications.

90% to 100% (A)

“A” grade work is exceptional, showing strong evidence of original thinking and good organisation. The student will have shown a capacity to analyse and synthesize information, as well as a superior grasp of the subject matter in hand and an ability to make sound critical evaluations based upon an extensive knowledge base. Work of this standard should be well argued, well documented, and well written.

80% to 89% (B- to B+)

Work of this grade is competent, showing evidence of a reasonable-to-solid grasp of the subject matter. It should also show evidence of critical and analytical thinking. The work should also indicate a familiarity with the literature. It should be clearly written, accurate and coherent, including major points from the course material and an appreciation of their importance.
70% to 79% (C- to C+)

Work of this grade is of adequate performance, showing a fair understanding of the subject matter and an ability to develop solutions to simple problems in the material. It may include some errors and slight misconceptions, but should be indicative of a reasonable engagement with the course material. An acceptable although uninspired piece of work, it should not contain serious errors, but may lack style and vigour in its articulation.

60% to 69% (D- to D+)

Work of this grade is adequate, but poor. Poorly articulated and lacking in a coherent argument it may also lack sufficient documentation. Although it may provide some relevant information, it omits many important points and contains a number of substantial errors or misconceptions.

00% to 59% (F) Inadequate.

Work of this standard is inadequate, showing little or no understanding of the subject matter. Exhibiting little evidence of critical and analytic skills, this work contains only a limited or irrelevant use of the literature. Poorly articulated it is likely to lack coherence and be difficult to comprehend. Work of this grade is not of degree standard.