

PHIL 270: Biomedical Ethics  
Spring 2021, Purdue University  
Lectures: W/F 4:30-5:20p (CL50 224)

**Dr. Morganna Lambeth**, [mlambeth@purdue.edu](mailto:mlambeth@purdue.edu)

Office Hours: Tuesdays 3-4pm or by appointment

Office Hour URL: <https://purdue.webex.com/meet/mlambeth>

Access Code: 611 033 735

Recitations Leaders:

**Duncan Cordry** ([dcordry@purdue.edu](mailto:dcordry@purdue.edu))

Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:30-2:30pm or by appointment

Office Hour URL: <https://purdue-student.webex.com/purdue-student/j.php?MTID=me1cf6dbbd04fee2542211cc81bde32ef>

Meeting Number (Access Code): 180 884 6338

Meeting Password: CMdT3wK2pd3

**Sam Pell** ([pell0@purdue.edu](mailto:pell0@purdue.edu))

Office Hours: Wednesdays 3-4pm or by appointment

Office Hour URL: <https://purdue-edu.zoom.us/j/92265201406>

Meeting ID: 922 6520 1406

Course Description

This course is an introduction to biomedical ethics. We will consider the major issues dominating the field, the primary philosophical theories for evaluating those issues, and concrete cases that help us think through those issues. Ethical issues will include: the doctor-patient relationship, gene editing, abortion, euthanasia, and the distribution of limited medical resources during a pandemic. We will consider these topics by engaging with several kinds of sources, including philosophical treatises, case studies, blog posts, and movies.

Objectives

1. Students will learn about biomedical ethics, including leading philosophical approaches to the field and major issues under consideration.
2. Students will learn how to apply philosophical approaches to specific cases.
3. Students will learn to read complex texts carefully and critically.
4. Students will learn to express themselves clearly and convincingly in writing.

Required Text

You are required to get this precise edition of the textbook (available at the campus book store):

Bioethics: Principles, Issues, and Cases, by Lewis Vaughn. Fourth Edition, Oxford University Press. ISBN 978-1-19-090326-6.

### Evaluation

Assignments will be graded on a numerical scale. Your final grade will be calculated according to the following letter grades:

A+ 99-100	C 73-77.9
A 94-98.9	C- 70-72.9
A- 90-93.9	D+ 68-69.9
B+ 88-89.9	D 63-67.9
B 83-87.9	D- 60-62.9
B- 80-82.9	F 59.9 and below
C+ 78-79.9	

### Breakdown of Final Grade

10% Attendance  
 10% Participation  
 20% First Paper  
 20% Second Paper  
 20% Third Paper  
 20% Final Exam

### A Note on Attendance and Participation

It is imperative that you follow Purdue's health guidelines, including staying home when you feel sick. Class lectures will be made available to absent students using Boilercast, and students who must stay home for public health reasons will have the opportunity to get full credit for attendance and participation by taking attendance quizzes and attending office hours. However, outside of these extenuating circumstances (as well as scheduling conflicts due to religious holidays or bereavement), students are expected to attend class. Attending class is, indeed, the easiest and most straightforward way to get attendance and participation credit, and the most effective way to learn course material.

### Attendance

Your attendance grade is determined by your performance on attendance quizzes. You will complete the quiz on Brightspace, and it is due by 11:59pm on lecture days (i.e. every Wednesday and Friday). We will go over the quiz answers together at the end of class; if you are not in class, you must work on your own to complete the quiz. You will be allowed five attempts to improve your score on each quiz. I will drop your four lowest quiz grades.

### Participation

You are expected to be an alert, engaged, and prepared participant in this course. You will be graded both on the amount and quality of your participation in recitation sessions, where high quality participation substantively responds to the assigned readings. Your participation grade can be supplemented by participating in class discussions during lecture and attending office hours with Dr. Lambeth or your RA.

### Papers

You are required to write three papers that are 700-900 words long. You must upload your paper by the paper deadline via Brightspace.<sup>1</sup> Late papers may be penalized 1/3 of a letter grade for each day late.

### Final Exam

The final exam will focus on new material from the Healthcare unit, as well as review authors, definitions, and examples from the previous three modules. It will be a multiple choice exam, and you will have 120 minutes to complete it.

### Course Schedule

This schedule reflects required readings (**to be completed before class**), as well as due dates for major assignments. The schedule of readings may be subject to change, in which case students will be notified via email. Check your email regularly.

January 20: Course Overview

January 22: Crash Course in Ethical Theories

Reading: pp.8-13 (from “Moral Principles in Bioethics” to “Ethical Relativism”)

pp.35-41 (from “Influential Moral Theories” to “Natural Law Theory”)

pp.44-46 (from “Virtue Ethics” to “The Ethics of Care”)

### Unit 1: The Doctor-Patient Relationship

January 26: Paternalism and Patient Autonomy

Reading: pp.97-106 (stop at “Applying Major Theories”)

January 28: In Focus: Mill’s Utilitarianism

Reading: pp.55-57

pp.106-108 (stop at “Cases for Evaluation”)

February 3: Truth-telling and Confidentiality

Reading: pp.176-183 (stop at “Summary”)

February 5: Informed Consent, and Human Research

Reading: pp.228-235; pp.271-279 (stop at “Research on the Vulnerable”)

February 10: Watch *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* 1

February 12: Watch *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* 2

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<sup>1</sup> Papers will be electronically screened for plagiarism. Students ought to familiarize themselves with Purdue’s standards of academic integrity (<https://www.purdue.edu/odos/osrr/academic-integrity/index.html>), and the Purdue Honors Pledge (<https://www.purdue.edu/provost/teachinglearning/honor-pledge.html>). All papers are submitted through SafeAssign, a software program that checks papers for originality. Violations of academic integrity are grounds for failing the course and will be reported to the Office of the Dean of Students.

## Unit 2: Reproductive Technology and Gene Editing

February 17: NO CLASS – READING DAY

February 19: Reproductive Technology

Reading: pp.440-456 (stop at “Cases for Evaluation”)

**\*\*First Paper due February 22 at 5pm\*\***

February 24: In focus: Kantian Deontology

Reading: pp.58-63

February 26: “Is Women’s Labor a Commodity?” by Elizabeth Anderson

Reading: pp.514-523

March 3: Genetic Choices

Reading: pp.562-579 (stop at “Cases for Evaluation”)

March 5: Genetic Enhancement and Justice

Reading: pp.622-627 (“Genetic Enhancement” by Walter Glannon)  
pp. 43-44 (from “Rawls’ Contract Theory” to “Virtue Ethics”)

March 10: Watch *Gattaca* 1

March 12: Watch *Gattaca* 2

March 17: “Genetic Intervention and the Ethics of Enhancement of Human Beings” by Julian Savulescu

Reading: pp.627-636

## Unit 3: Virtue Ethics and Bioethical Issues at Birth and Death

March 19: Abortion

Reading: pp. 349-353 (stop at “Cases for Evaluation”)

**\*\*Second Paper Due March 22 at 5pm\*\***

March 24: “A Defense of Abortion” by Judith-Jarvis Thomson

Reading: pp.357-367 (stop at “Why Abortion is Immoral”)

March 26: “Why Abortion is Immoral” by Don Marquis

Reading: pp.367-379 (stop at “An Almost Absolute Value in History”)

March 31: In focus: Aristotle’s Virtue Ethics

Reading: pp.63-74

April 2: “Virtue Theory and Abortion” by Rosalind Hursthouse \*Guest lecture by Sam Pell\*

Reading: pp.394-407

April 7: The Ethics of Euthanasia

Reading: pp.648-661 (stop at “Cases for Evaluation”)

April 9: “Death and Dignity” by Timothy M. Quill

Reading: pp.666-669

#### Module 4: Healthcare and Covid-19

April 14: Dividing up Healthcare Resources

Reading: 743-752 (stop at “A Right to Healthcare”)

April 16: NO CLASS

#### **\*\*Third Paper due April 19 at 5pm\*\***

April 21: Triage and Biases: Obesity

Reading: [https://blog.apaonline.org/2020/07/15/fatphobia-women-and-covid-19/?fbclid=IwAR2CvfrHzl29Ww\\_MTWBJXrFt3dpLI5CdwTny-MsTT-q7hqCUgBJdr9vDaN8](https://blog.apaonline.org/2020/07/15/fatphobia-women-and-covid-19/?fbclid=IwAR2CvfrHzl29Ww_MTWBJXrFt3dpLI5CdwTny-MsTT-q7hqCUgBJdr9vDaN8) (“Fatphobia, Women, and Covid-19” by Madeline Ward)

April 23: Triage and Biases: Ableism

Reading: <https://www.thehastingscenter.org/confronting-disability-discrimination-during-the-pandemic/> (“Confronting Disability Discrimination During the Pandemic” by Katie Savin and Laura Guidry-Grimes)

April 28: Healthcare: do we have a right to universal healthcare?

Reading: pp.752-759 (stop at “Cases for Evaluation”)

April 30: Healthcare Disparities and Covid-19

#### **Final Exam: TBA (two-hour time limit)**

#### Resources

- **Writing Center**: Purdue University has a world-renowned writing center (<https://owl.purdue.edu>) that can provide assistance on your papers. You are also welcome to meet with me about your writing questions.
- **Disability Resource Center**: To receive accommodations for physical or academic barriers based on disability, register with the DRC ([drc@purdue.edu](mailto:drc@purdue.edu) or 765-494-1247) and provide me with your accommodation letter.
- **CAPS**: *“Purdue University is committed to advancing the mental health and well-being of its students. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, services are available. For help, such individuals should contact Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at (765)494-6995 and <http://www.purdue.edu/caps/> during and after hours, on weekends and holidays, or by going to the CAPS office of the second floor of the Purdue University Student Health Center (PUSH) during business hours.”*

### Protect Purdue: Classroom Etiquette

*"The [Protect Purdue Plan](#), which includes the [Protect Purdue Pledge](#), is campus policy and as such all members of the Purdue community must comply with the required health and safety guidelines. Required behaviors in this class include: staying home and contacting the Protect Purdue Health Center (496-INFO) if you feel ill or know you have been exposed to the virus, wearing a mask [in classrooms and campus building](#), at all times (e.g., no eating/drinking in the classroom), disinfecting desk/workspace prior to and after use, maintaining proper social distancing with peers and instructors (including when entering/exiting classrooms), refraining from moving furniture, avoiding shared use of personal items, maintaining robust hygiene (e.g., handwashing, disposal of tissues) prior to, during and after class, and following all safety directions from the instructor.*

*Students who are not engaging in these behaviors (e.g., wearing a mask) will be offered the opportunity to comply. If non-compliance continues, possible results include instructors asking the student to leave class and instructors dismissing the whole class. Students who do not comply with the required health behaviors are violating the University Code of Conduct and will be reported to the Dean of Students Office with sanctions ranging from educational requirements to dismissal from the university.*

*Any student who has substantial reason to believe that another person in a campus room (e.g., classroom) is threatening the safety of others by not complying (e.g., not wearing a mask) may leave the room without consequence. The student is encouraged to report the behavior to and discuss next steps with their instructor. Students also have the option of reporting the behavior to the [Office of the Student Rights and Responsibilities](#). See also [Purdue University Bill of Student Rights](#)."*

### Protect Purdue: Quarantine/Isolation Resources

*"If you become quarantined or isolated at any point in time during the semester, in addition to support from the Protect Purdue Health Center, you will also have access to an Academic Case Manager who can provide you academic support during this time. Your Academic Case Manager can be reached at [acmq@purdue.edu](mailto:acmq@purdue.edu) and will provide you with general guidelines/resources around communicating with your instructors, be available for academic support, and offer suggestions for how to be successful when learning remotely. Importantly, if you find yourself too sick to progress in the course, notify your academic case manager and notify me via email or Brightspace. We will make arrangements based on your particular situation. The Office of the Dean of Students ([odos@purdue.edu](mailto:odos@purdue.edu)) is also available to support you should this situation occur."*