

Phil 321 Philosophy and Biomedical Ethics I

MWF 2:10-3:00 1132 Wilson Hall

Sanford Levy 994-5211 slevy@montana.edu Office Hours: M W F 1:10-2:00

Text: Kuhse and Singer eds. *Bioethics*

Save Your Work: Keep all your graded work till you see your official grade for the course. If any errors are made in recording or calculating final grades, they can be easily corrected if you keep all your work. They cannot be corrected if you do not keep all your work.

Academic Misconduct Policy: The university's academic misconduct policy can be found at www2.montana.edu/policy/student_conduct/cg600.html. The most common forms of academic misconduct in philosophy classes are plagiarism, cheating, and unauthorized collaboration.

- Plagiarism involves using another persons work without citing the source. Even unintentional appropriation of another persons work is plagiarism. It is not only plagiarism if you use another's *words* without citation, but also if you use another's *ideas* or *information* without proper citation. If you have questions about using and citing sources, ask for clarification.
- Cheating involves a number of actions including copying from another student's paper during exams, using unauthorized notes during an exam, and using electronic aids during an exam. If you have any questions as to what constitutes cheating, ask.
- Students may not collaborate on graded material, though obviously, it is good to talk about class material with other students and with people outside the class. If you have any questions about when this becomes collaboration, ask for clarification.

When I discover academic misconduct for an item of work, I usually give the student an "F" for that item and put a report in the student's permanent record. However, I may take more extreme measures. No student who has been found to commit academic misconduct may drop the class.

Contacting Me:

1. I pick up phone messages three times a week. I check my email every other day. If you contact me by voice mail or email, *please include your full name and the class you are in*. I will not respond to incomplete information.
2. Do not treat voice mail or email as "instant messaging." And do not assume that I am available to do things at a moments notice. However, if you send me an email, and I do not respond in a few days, send another. If an emergency happens, and you will miss a class deadline, contact me as soon as you can.
3. I will not accept assignments by email unless authorized. Also, do not send me email with attachments unless authorized. I will delete any unauthorized email with attachments without reading it or responding.

Desire2Learn: The university has a web "learning environment" called "Desire to Learn" which is reached through the main MSU page. I post handouts and other materials in the "files" section of D2L. You will be notified in class when something is posted. But it is your responsibility to periodically check, especially if you miss class. Failure to attend class or to check is no excuse.

D2L Gradebook: I use the D2L gradebook to record and calculate grades. The grades will be made available on D2L the last week of the class so that you can check accuracy

D2L Email: I will contact you through your D2L email. Sometimes there will be distributions to the

entire class, for example, I might distribute study guides for the readings. Sometimes I will contact you over individual matters. You are responsible to check your D2L email regularly. If you have some other email address you prefer, set your D2L email to forward to that other email. (I have my university email forwarded to my gmail account.)

PhilosophersToolkit.com: I have a website (www.philosopherstoolkit.com). I post materials relevant to taking a philosophy class. You should read the articles on reading and writing philosophy.

Late Work: If you know you will need to turn work in late, notify me in advance. In general, prior authorization is given for causes generally recognized by the university such as illness and participation in a university event. If something comes up fast and you cannot get prior authorization, I will need an official university excuse or a written medical excuse. If for some reason neither is possible, and if you do not wait too long, you can still turn in the work for partial credit.

General Expectations: Students must

- read the syllabus and to keep track of the requirements.
- regularly check D2L and their university email
- be prompt and regular in attending classes
- be well prepared for classes; this includes having read the material relevant to the day's class, including material we do not explicitly cover in class.
- turn in assignments when scheduled
- act in a respectful manner toward other students and the instructor and in a way that does not detract from the learning experience
- make and keep appointments when it is necessary to meet with the instructor.
- put in the amount of time required to do the work – there is no set amount of time students are expected to work outside of class. Some say it should be between one and two hours for each classroom hour. I prefer to say it is whatever is necessary.
- have decent writing and reading skills.
- participate in class discussion.

Grading Scale: Each item of work will be grade an a letter scale with pluses and minuses. However, for ease of grade computation, I convert each letter into a number according to the following pattern.

B+ = 8.7

B = 8.5

B- = 8.3

Note, I do not use some numbers, such as 8.2. Also “10” will be rare since it corresponds to an A+++! For items of work worth more than 10 points, I simply use multiples of these numbers.

Requirements: You are required to attend class, participate in class discussion, and do the assigned reading. Failure to attend class can hurt your grade. There are no exams, only papers. We will cover 9 and possibly 10 topics, depending on time. Each topic will have one or more readings. You will be given the following graded work.

- You will choose six topics to write short papers on. They will be due the day we start discussing a topic unless otherwise notified. Assignments will be given in advance. If you actually write on more than six topics, I will take your best six. (Together they are 50 percent of your grade.)
- There is a term paper of ten-12 pages (30 percent of your grade)

- There will be an indeterminate number of brief pop reading quizzes (10 percent of your grade – this will be calculated by taking the total number of quiz points, and assigning a quiz grade based on the percentage of the total that you have achieved.)
- Attendance and participation (10 percent of your grade). Note, I will regularly ask questions of the class, and of individual members of the class, say, about what is going on in the readings and what you think about it.

Turning in Papers. You are required to turn in a hard copy as well as submit an electronic copy to the relevant drop box on D2L. There will be a separate drop box for each assignment.

Course Objectives

1. You will be introduced to major discussions in with moral philosophy in general and biomedical ethics in particular. You will become conversant in these topics and will be able to explain the relevant issues, theories and arguments as well as to critically discuss them.
2. You will develop skills associated with reading and understanding philosophical texts and writing short philosophical essays.
3. You will come to understand how philosophers work and you will improve your ability to engage in philosophical argument and theory construction.

Reading the Material. You are expected to read all the assigned material and to understand that material well enough to explain it to others, to answer questions about it, and to critically discuss it. There is nothing to be gained by letting your eyes mindlessly drift across a page, even if you mindlessly sub-vocalize every word. See philosopherstoolkit.com for some guidance on what to take away from a philosophy paper. Often you will have to read the material several time. The idea is

- a) A first reading to get the basic idea
- b) A second reading to get the details and to begin to develop a critical stance with respect to the material

Note Taking: *There are a lot of readings for this class, though each one is short and the total number of pages is not large. It is important that you not only read these materials. You must understand them and keep track of them. The best way to do this is by note taking. Notes can be very detailed or just capture the basic ideas. I give some advice on note taking on www.philosopherstoolkit.com. At a minimum your notes should include*

1. clear explanations of main concepts such as *utilitarianism*, and how they differ from other concepts such as *Kantianism*,
2. clear statements of the positions of various authors, e.g., is Thomson permissive or restrictive with respect to abortion?
3. clear statements of the main arguments for various positions, e.g., why does Thomson take the position she takes on abortion? Pay attention not just to the particular arguments, buy the general *style* of argument being used.
4. clear statements of possible responses to those positions and arguments
5. some thoughts of your own, e.g., Thomson is right (or wrong) for the following reasons.
6. Some thoughts about how the various authors would respond to one another.

Capturing the Philosophical Dialogue. Do not treat the readings as isolated items. Our authors are in dialogue with each other. Sometimes this is explicit (they talk about each other) and sometimes it is implicit – we treat them as if they were actually talking to each other. So, for example, one author presents a position, P, and an argument for that position, A. Another author (with or without mentioning the first by name) explains why A is not a good reason to believe P. *Learn the Dialogue and not just individual articles!*

Key Dates:

- Jan 20: MLK Holiday
- Feb 17: Presidents Day
- March 10-14 Spring Break
- April 2: **Term Paper Topic Proposal** (Pass/fail – unless accepted you cannot go on with your term paper.)
- April 6: University Day
- April 14: **Annotated Bibliography is Due** (Pass/fail – unless accepted you cannot go on with your term paper.)
- April 28 : **Term paper** (20 points)

Topics and Readings. I do not know how fast we will cover this material. Every year is different based, in large part, on how much class discussion there is. Please read *all* the essays in each section for the first day of discussion. I will not necessarily talk about them all the first day, and will often talk about them one at a time. But reading them all helps you orient yourself to the debate.

Introductory Lectures: Jan 8, 10, 13, 15

- 1. Abortion.** Jan 17, 22, 24, 27
 - a) Finnis, 17ff
 - b) Tooley, 25ff
 - c) Thomson, 40ff
 - d) Marquis, 51ff
- 2. Killing/Letting Die.** Jan 29, 31, Feb 3, 5
 - a) Grisez and Boyle, 283ff
 - b) Rachels, 288ff
 - c) Nesbit, 292ff
 - d) Kuhse, 297ff
- 3. Voluntary Euthanasia and Medically Assisted Suicide**
 - a) Hill, 377ff
 - b) Callahan, 381ff
 - c) Lachs, 386ff
 - d) Admiraal, 391ff
- 4. Prenatal Screening**
 - a) Purdy, 115ff
 - b) Asch, 122ff
 - c) Chadwick and Levitt, 137ff
 - d) Savulescu, 145ff
- 5. Human Cloning**
 - a) Tooley, 162ff
- 6. Gene Therapy and Eugenics**
 - a) Glover, 187ff
 - b) Lappe, 198ff
 - c) Resnik, 209ff
 - d) Newson and Williamson, 219ff
- 7. Experimentation and Animals**
 - a) Kant, 564ff
 - b) Bentham, 566ff
 - c) Singer, 568
 - d) Frey and Paton, 578ff
8. The class will select final topics.