

**PHIL 3843**  
**Bioethics 生物倫理學**

**Course Outline**

<b>Time: T 4:30pm-6:15pm</b>	<b>Location: ERB 408</b>
<b>Tut: TBA</b>	<b>Location: TBA</b>

**Course overview (as shown on CUSIS)**

Bioethics can be defined as the study of ethical issues broadly relating to the lives and well-being of both humans and non-human animals, issues that often arise as a result of advances in medical technology. This course will offer an introduction to the field of bioethics. We will begin by examining the relationship between bioethics and ethical theories like consequentialism or deontology, and discussing the challenge from ethical relativism to the validity of the normative conclusions defended by bioethicists. With that theoretical basis in place, we will then proceed to discuss some central issues in bioethics, from the ethics of abortion to the genetic selection of future children, via a close reading of influential texts in the field.

Advisory to Majors: to be taken in year 2 or above.

**Learning outcomes (as shown on CUSIS)**

1. Gain familiarity with the major issues and prominent positions in contemporary bioethics.
2. Understand the key concepts used in philosophical discussions of those issues.
3. Critically discuss and evaluate the main arguments and positions on the issues discussed in the course.
4. Demonstrate the ability to clearly articulate one's own arguments and views on bioethical issues, both in oral discussion and in writing.

**Topics**

1. Ethical theory and bioethics
2. The challenge from ethical relativism
3. Abortion
4. Disability and reproduction
5. Genetic enhancement
6. Euthanasia and assisted suicide
7. Placebos in clinical trials

**Learning activities**

1. Lecture: one 2-hour session every week
2. Tutorials: one 2-hour session six times over the term (active participation will be expected)
3. Reading: one paper or two short papers per week (as required reading)
4. Assignments: active participation in discussion and in-class (including tutorial) activities, one term paper, one take-home test

## Assessment scheme

<i>Task nature</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Weight</i>
Participation	Participation in tutorial (and lecture) activities and discussion	20%
Test or quizzes	To be discussed	40%
Term paper	2000-2500 words (in English)	40%

### Remarks on Assessment Scheme (if any)

This assessment scheme is tentative. Details will be discussed in the first lecture.

### Required Reading

All required reading (as indicated in the course schedule below) will be posted to Blackboard.

### Additional (recommended) learning resources

#### 1. Ethical theory and bioethics

- Flynn, Jennifer (2022). Theory and bioethics. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2022 Edition), Edward N. Zalta & Uri Nodelman (eds.), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2022/entries/theory-bioethics/>.

#### 2. The challenge from ethical relativism

- Harman, Gilbert (1975). Moral relativism defended. *Philosophical Review* 84 (1), pp. 3-22.

#### 3. Abortion

- Ch. 2, §III-§IV of: Steinbock, Bonnie (2011) *Life Before Birth: The Moral and Legal Status of Embryos and Fetuses*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Thomson, Judith Jarvis (1971). A defense of abortion. *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 1 (1), pp. 47-66.

#### 4. Disability and reproduction

- Baily, Mary Ann (2000). "Why I Had Amniocentesis. In Erik Parens & Adrienne Asch (eds.), *Prenatal Testing and Disability Rights*, Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press. pp. 64-71.
- Johnson, Harriet McBryde (2003). Unconscionable Conversations. *The New York Times* (Feb. 16, 2003).

#### 5. Genetic enhancement

- Buchanan, Allen (2008). Enhancement and the ethics of development, *Kennedy Institute of Ethics Journal* 18 (1), pp. 1-34.
- Kamm, Frances M. (2005). Is there a problem with enhancement? *American Journal of Bioethics* 5 (3), pp. 5-14.
- Kass, Leon (2000). The wisdom of repugnance. In Glenn McGree ed., *The Human Cloning Debate*, 2nd edition, Berkeley, CA: Berkeley Hills Books. pp. 68-106.
- Savulescu, Julian (2001). Procreative beneficence: Why we should select the best children. *Bioethics* 15 (5-6), pp. 413-26.

#### 6. Euthanasia and assisted suicide

- Callahan, Daniel (2013). A case against euthanasia. In Andrew I. Cohen & Christopher Heath Wellman (eds.), *Contemporary Debates in Applied Ethics*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 82-92.
- Rachels, James (1975). Active and passive euthanasia. *New England Journal of Medicine* 292 (2), pp. 78-80.

## 7. Placebos in clinical trials

- Freedman, B.; Weijer, C.; & Glass, K.C. (1996). Placebo orthodoxy in clinical research. I. Empirical and methodological myths. *J Law Med Ethics* 24, pp. 243-51.
- Freedman, B.; Weijer, C.; & Glass, K.C. (1996). Placebo orthodoxy in clinical research. II. Ethical, legal, and regulatory myths. *J Law Med Ethics* 24, pp. 252-9.

### Course schedule\*

<i>Week</i>	<i>Topics</i>	<i>Required reading</i>	<i>Tutorials</i>
<b>1</b> 5 Sep	Introduction Ethical theory and bioethics	Tom L. Beauchamp and James F. Childress, <i>Principles of Biomedical Ethics</i> , Ch. 9: Moral Theories	
<b>2</b> 12 Sep	Ethical theory and bioethics (continued)	No new reading (continued discussion of Beauchamp and Childress)	
<b>3</b> 19 Sep	The challenge from ethical relativism	Russ Shafer-Landau, <i>Whatever Happened to Good and Evil</i> , Part II	
<b>4</b> 26 Sep	Abortion	Mary Anne Warren, "On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion"	Tutorial 1
<b>5</b> 3 Oct	Abortion (continued)	Don Marquis, "Why Abortion is Immoral"	Tutorial 2: Abortion
<b>6</b> 10 Oct	Disability and reproduction	Erik Parens and Adrienne Asch, "The Disability Rights Critique of Prenatal Genetic Testing"	
<b>7</b> 17 Oct	Disability and reproduction (continued)	Jonathan Glover, "Disability and Genetic Choice"	Tutorial 3: Disability and reproduction
<b>8</b> 24 Oct	Genetic enhancement	Michael Sandel, "The Case against Perfection"	
<b>9</b> 31 Oct	Genetic enhancement (continued)	Allen Buchanan, "Human Nature and Enhancement"	Tutorial 4: Genetic enhancement
<b>10</b> 7 Nov	Euthanasia and assisted suicide	Michael Tooley, "In Defense of Voluntary Active Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide"	
<b>11</b> 14 Nov	Euthanasia and assisted suicide (continued)	David Velleman, "Against the Right to Die"	Tutorial 5: Term paper workshop
<b>12</b> 21 Nov	Placebos in clinical trials	Kenneth J. Rothman and Karin B. Michels, "The Continuing Unethical Use of Placebo Controls" Benjamin Freedman, "Placebo-Controlled Trials and the Logic of Clinical Purpose"	
<b>13</b> 28 Nov	Placebos in clinical trials (continued)	Robert Temple and Susan S. Ellenberg, "Placebo-Controlled Trials and Active-Control Trials in the Evaluation of New Treatments" Ezekiel J. Emanuel and Franklin G. Miller, "The Ethics of Placebo-Controlled Trials—A Middle Ground"	Tutorial 6: Placebos in clinical trials

\*This schedule is tentative. The schedule will be discussed in the first lecture.

### Details of course website

We will use Blackboard.

### Contact details for teacher(s) or TA(s)

Teacher	
Name:	Rimell, Nicholas
Office location:	Room 416, Fung King Hey Building
Telephone:	3943 7139
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TA	TBA
Name:	
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### Academic honesty and plagiarism

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>

With each assignment, students will be required to submit a signed declaration that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures. For group projects, all students of the same group should be asked to sign the declaration.

For assignments in the form of a computer-generated document that is principally text-based and submitted via VeriGuide, the statement, in the form of a receipt, will be issued by the system upon students' uploading of the soft copy of the assignment. Assignments without the receipt will not be graded by teachers. Only the final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide.