

MCDB 60
Fall 2022
Kaplan 169
MW 11a-12:15p

Paul Tulipana
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Hershey Hall 325
Office hours MW 9:45-10:45am, o.b.a.

Biomedical Ethics



Ethical topics in medicine and research in the biological and medical sciences. Is abortion morally permissible? Is physician-assisted suicide? Should parents be able to select for or against genetic traits in their children? May we use emergent gene-editing technologies to alter the set of genes available to future generations of human beings? When, if ever, is the use of animal and human subjects in biomedical research permissible?

Requirements

Reading, Lectures, and Discussion Sections

Carefully reading the assigned texts is important. The lectures may go beyond the content of the assigned readings. Students are expected to regularly attend both lecture and section. Attendance and participation at section counts for 10% of your grade.

If you anticipate logistical difficulties with regular attendance, let us know and we will try to work something out.

TA Contact Information

TA

Henrik Wang xx@ucla.edu
Rebecca Altshuler xx@ucla.edu

Office Hours

TW, 3-4pm
W 12:30-1:30p
F 11a-12p

Office

Boelter 4264/66
Hershey 316

Section Information

#	TA			Location
1A	Henrik	R	3pm-3:50pm	Mathematical Sciences 5217
1B	Henrik	R	4pm-4:50pm	Mathematical Sciences 5217
1C	Henrik	R	5pm-5:50pm	Mathematical Sciences 5217
1D	Rebecca	F	8am-8:50am	La Kretz 120
1E	Rebecca	F	9am-9:50am	La Kretz 120
1F	Rebecca	F	10am-10:50am	La Kretz 120

Short reflection papers

Over the course of the quarter, you'll write three short reflection papers. Each reflection paper should be less than a single page long and should present a philosophical comment or a question about something in one of the readings. Each reflection will be worth 5% of your final grade; the three reflections count for 15% of it in total.

Midterm

You'll write a take-home midterm exam sometime around week five. It will account for 30% of your final grade.

Final Exam

You'll write a take-home final exam during finals week. It will account for 45% of your final grade.

Late Assignments

Late writing assignments will be penalized one third of one letter grade (i.e., A- becomes B+) every 24 hours, starting ten minutes after the deadline. Exceptions to the lateness policy will be made only in cases we deem exceptional.

Accessible Education Information

Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations should submit their request for accommodations to the Center for Accessible Education (CAE) as soon as possible, as it may take up to two weeks for the CAE to review the request. If you are

already registered with the CAE, you can request a letter of accommodation on the Student Portal, otherwise please submit your request via the CAE website. Please note that the CAE does not send letters to instructors--you must request that I view the letter in the online Faculty Portal. Once you have requested your accommodations via the Student Portal, please notify me immediately so I can view your letter.

Texts

Everything is available online this quarter.

Schedule of Topics¹

1. *Introduction: Ethical considerations, general principles, and particular issues in biomedical ethics*

I. GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND PUZZLES

2. *Ethical considerations I: What would be for the best*
 - Lazari-Radek and Singer, selections from *Utilitarianism: A Very Short Introduction* (2017).
3. *Principles of nonmaleficence and beneficence*
 - Brueck & Sulmasy, "The Rule of Double Effect," (2020), <https://bioethics.hms.harvard.edu/journal/rule-double-effect>
 - Foot, "Killing and Letting Die," (1985), reprinted in *Moral Dilemmas* (2002).
4. *Ethical considerations II: Human dignity*
 - Kagan, Section 3.1, "Deontology," in *Normative Ethics* (1998).
 - Wood, "Humanity" in *Kantian Ethics* (2008).
5. *Autonomy, competence, consent, and paternalism*
 - Dworkin, "Autonomy and Behavior Control," *Hastings Center Report* (1976).
 - Beauchamp and Childress, excerpts from "Respect for Autonomy," in *Principles of Biomedical Ethics* (2013).
6. *Ethical considerations III: Virtue and vice*
 - Hursthouse, "Normative Virtue Ethics," in *How Should One Live?*, ed. Crisp (1996).

¹ Schedule is likely to change.

- Beauchamp and Childress, excerpts from “Moral Character” in *Principles of Biomedical Ethics* (2013).
- Higgs, “On Telling Patients the Truth,” in *Moral Dilemmas in Modern Medicine*, ed. Lockwood (1985).

7. “Moral Status”

- Warren, “The Concept of Moral Status” in *Moral Status: Obligations to Persons and Other Living Things* (1997).

II. TOPICS

8. Abortion

- Marquis, “Why Abortion is Immoral,” *The Journal of Philosophy* (1989).
- Thomson, “A Defense of Abortion,” *Philosophy and Public Affairs* (1971).
- Dworkin, “The Morality of Abortion,” from *Life’s Dominion* (1993).

9. The Biology of Stem Cells (11/7 Guest Lecture, Prof. April Pyle)

- The National Institutes of Health’s Primer on “Stem Cell Basics,” (2016). (optional)

10. Research involving Human Embryos and Human Embryonic Stem Cells

- Devolder, excerpts from *The Ethics of Embryonic Stem Cell Research* (2015).
- Hyun, et al. “Human Embryo Research Beyond the Primitive Streak,” *Science* (2021).
- Aach, et al. “Addressing the Ethical Issues Raised by Synthetic Human Entities with Embryo-Like Features,” *eLife Sciences Publications* (2017).

11. The Biology of Gene Editing (11/14 Guest Lecture, Prof. Melissa Spencer)

- The National Institutes of Health’s Primer on “Help Me Understand Genetics,” (2021). (optional)

12. Ethics of Reproduction: Genetic Selection

- Purdy, “Genetics and Reproductive Risk: Can Having Children Be Immoral?” in *Technology and Values: Essential Readings*, ed. Hanks (2010).
- Parens and Adrienne Asch, “The Disability Rights Critique of Prenatal Genetic Testing: Reflections and Recommendations,” *Hastings Center Report* (1999).
- Strange and Chadwick, “The Ethics of Non-Medical Sex Selection,” *Health Care Analysis* (2009).

- Savulescu and Kahane, “The Moral Obligation to Create Children with the Best Chance of the Best Life,” *Bioethics* (2009).

13. *Human and Non-Human Animal Subjects Research*

- Shah, et al. “Ethics of Human Controlled Infection to Address Covid-19,” *Science* (2020).
- Singer, “All Animals Are Equal,” in *Animal Rights and Human Obligations*, eds. Regan and Singer (1989).
- Anderson, “Animal Rights and the Values of Nonhuman Life,” in *Animal Rights: Current Debates and New Directions*, eds. Sunstein and Nussbaum (2005).

14. *Euthanasia and Physician-Assisted Suicide*

- Brock, “Voluntary Active Euthanasia,” *Hastings Center Report* (1992).
- Velleman, “Against the Right to Die,” *The Journal of Medicine and Philosophy* (1992).

Revised 31 October 2022