

GEORGIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
BIOETHICS-BIOS 4651-A
Full Summer Semester 2020-Asynchronous

Learning outcomes: After completing this class, students will be able to: (1) Contrast basic ethical theories and principles. (2) Apply ethical thinking to issues in biology and medicine. (3) Describe and evaluate the ethical challenges and complexity of issues involved in medicine, biological research, and public policy. (4) Synthesize reading, discussion, and writing skills in order to assess bioethical issues.

Instructor: Dr. Michael Goodisman; Associate Professor of Biological Sciences, Georgia Tech; michael.goodisman@biology.gatech.edu; Office hours by appointment. Virtual ‘in-person’ meetings available.

Teaching Assistants: Ms. Roshni Patel; rpatel378@gatech.edu; Mr. Carl Dyson; cdyson3@gatech.edu. Office hours by appointment. Virtual ‘in-person’ meetings available.

Class organization: This is a three credit course intended for advanced undergraduates. BIOL 1510 or 1511 is a prerequisite. Class this semester will be a unique experience. The cessation of in person classes at Georgia Tech has necessitated a move to online instruction. Class will thus be held asynchronously, meaning that there will be no a priori set class times. *The unprecedented nature of the ongoing pandemic and our current learning circumstances means that you should expect changes to class structure, topics, and activities.* This course includes reading assignments, group activities, discussions, video presentations, posters, written essays, and reports. This is a rigorous course and you will be spending 5-10 hours each week engaged in class activities.

Required textbook: Bioethics: Principles, Issues, and Cases. Fourth Edition. Lewis Vaughn. Oxford University Press, New York. Publication Date - June 2019. ISBN: 9780190903268. This textbook is available both in hardcopy and as an e-book. *Note that the third edition of this textbook, ISBN 9780190250102, will also be acceptable for this course.* This is an excellent general textbook, which covers a wide range of important bioethical topics. *In addition, the class will incorporate readings related to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19).* The global pandemic touches on a great number of important bioethical issues. We will attempt to examine these issues in our class.

Required technology: Students will need to have a computer, internet access, and standard audio and visual computer equipment (e.g., a webcam) to participate in class as described at <https://sco.gatech.edu/documents/>. The class will meet in online groups. Students will need to be able to interact in these e-groups using standard audio and visual technologies. All class material will be uploaded to the Canvas website, and Canvas will be used to collect and distribute assignments and information.

Assessments: Course grade will be determined by your performance in a variety of learning activities. Students will produce various written products including reading responses, short papers, or reports. There will also be group discussion of various types throughout the semester.

Attendance and participation in these discussions is required. The times for these discussion sections will vary and depend on individual schedules. Students will also produce videos associated with the class experience. Finally, the class will incorporate a semester long term project.

Bioethical analyses often involve questions of values; such topics can become personal, subjective, and emotional. *However, you will not be graded, nor will you be judged, on your specific beliefs.* It is essential to understand and develop skills in making rational decisions and arguments, and to remain respectful of others when they speak. Bioethical analyses in this course are not meant to lead to decisions regarding particular issues. *Rather, they should result in understanding and evaluating the perspectives, ideas, and arguments both for and against different viewpoints.*

The various assignments in this course will be classified into three different categories based on their effort. *Brief Activities* will typically be short assignments consisting of, for example, class participation, brief summaries of readings, or simple video presentations. *General Evaluations* will be more involved assignments consisting of, for example, analysis of essays, in depth investigations of bioethical issues, or detailed video presentations. Finally, each student will complete a *Term Project*, which will involve an in-depth, comprehensive investigation of a bioethical topic.

Due dates for assessments will be provided as the semester proceeds. Assignments will typically carry substantial penalties if they are handed in late. However, accommodations will be provided for legitimate excuses. Communicate with the course instructor as soon as possible if you have issues affecting your ability to complete an assessment for any reason; written confirmation of a legitimate excuse, such as a severe illness, will generally be required. If you miss an assignment without legitimate excuse, then you will receive no credit for that assignment. There are no make-up assignments. If you are excused from an assignment, your grade will be calculated from the remaining graded assignments. The percentage makeup of these three different assessment categories will be:

Assessment	Percentage
Brief Activities	30%
General Evaluations	50%
Term Project	20%
Total	100%

The most stringent scale used will be 90-100% an A, 80-89% a B, 70-79% a C, 60-69% a D, and 59% or less an F. This scale is subject to adjustment at the discretion of the instructor.

Academic Integrity: Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in any form. This includes cheating, lying about course matters, plagiarism, stealing classroom materials, or helping others commit a violation of the Honor Code. Students are reminded of the obligations and expectations associated with the Georgia Tech Academic Honor Code and Student Code of Conduct, available online at www.honor.gatech.edu. *The circumstances of this course*

necessitate more than ever that we do our best to abide by the Honor Code. The class instructors will be monitoring class assignments carefully to catch and eliminate violations of the Honor Code, in general, and plagiarism, in particular. This is a class in *bioethics*. Please treat it appropriately.

Learning Accommodations: If needed, we will make classroom accommodations for students with disabilities. These accommodations must be arranged in advance and in accordance with the Office of Disability Services (<http://www.disabilityservices.gatech.edu>).

Tentative Schedule: *This schedule will change!* We are living in a highly dynamic time and the content of class will change in response. Students will be informed when they should read particular chapters from the textbook or other assignments as the semester progresses.

Week	Date	Chapter	Topic
1	11-May	1, 2	Moral reasoning in bioethics, Bioethics and moral theories
2	18-May	3	Paternalism and Patient Autonomy
3	25-May	4	Truth-Telling and Confidentiality
4	1-Jun	5	Informed Consent
5	8-Jun	6	Human Research
6	15-Jun	7	Abortion
7	22-Jun	8	Reproductive Technology
8	29-Jun	9	Genetic Choices
9	6-Jul	10	Euthanasia and Physician-Assisted Suicide
10	13-Jul	11	Dividing up Health Care Resources
11	20-Jul		Class wrap up