

GEORGIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
Spring 2022
BIOS 4651-A BIOETHICS
M, W 3:30- 4:45 PM; College of Computing 102

Instructors:

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Learning outcomes: After completing this class, you will be able to: (1) Describe 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, and environmental concerns. (4) Synthesize reading, discussion, and writing skills in order to assess bioethical issues. (5) Recognize the ways that culture shapes ethical views and critically evaluate those views. (6) Analyze a bioethical issue and engage in solving current ethical problems in research or health professions.

Class organization: This is a three-credit course intended for advanced undergraduates. Introductory BIOL/BIOS classes are prerequisites. This course includes reading assignments, exams, group activities, class discussion, and written reports. Reading, attending, and participating in class are fundamental to this course. We expect you to be courteous to your fellow students and to not disrupt class by entering and leaving the room, reading, talking, allowing cell phones to ring, etc.

Required textbook: Lewis Vaughn, “Bioethics: Principles, Issues and Cases” 4th Edition, Oxford University Press, New York, 2019. ISBN: 9780190903268.

Attendance & participation: *This class will be taught in a fully in-person mode. The class will not have a hybrid component and there will be no online recordings or transmission of the class.* Therefore, in-person attendance and class participation are required.

Communicate with the course instructor as soon as possible if you have to miss a class for any reason; written confirmation of a legitimate excuse, such as a severe illness, will be required for

excused absences. If you miss class without legitimate excuse, then you will receive no credit for that day's assignments. Arriving late will affect your participation score.

Class participation in the form of discussing issues, asking questions, and respectful listening will make up a substantial portion of your grade. *You will not be graded, nor will you be judged, on your specific beliefs.* Bioethical discussions often involve questions of values; such discussions can become personal, subjective, and emotional. However, it is essential to understand and develop skills in making rational decisions and arguments, and to remain respectful of others when they speak. ***Bioethical discussions 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.***

You will receive participation credit if it is clear that you have thought carefully about the subject matter, applied moral reasoning to the topic at hand, and contributed to the class in a respectful manner. A quality comment possesses one or more of the following properties:

- Offers a different, but relevant, perspective
- Contributes to moving the discussion and analysis forward
- Builds on other comments
- Considers evidence-based arguments rather than relying on "I feel" statements
- Demonstrates reflective thinking

Your in-class participation score will be assessed according to the following scale:

- 1 point (half credit): present but made no contribution or meaningful comment in discussion
- 2 points (full credit): offered appropriate, considered comment during discussion that met one or all of the criteria noted above
- 3 points (rare; extra credit): offered exceptional, highly insightful or otherwise noteworthy comment; this is the type of comment that others will remember after class is over

Team activities: Students will work in small groups to use moral theories, principles, and arguments to assess and evaluate case studies on bioethical topics. Group activities will be turned in at the end of class. Groups will change during the semester.

Co-facilitation: Students will cofacilitate peer discussion with another student at least once during the semester. Discussion facilitators are responsible for organizing a 5-10 minute presentation and a 15-20-minute discussion around the assigned reading for that day. Facilitators should seek instructor approval for their class plan before they lead class.

Writing assignments: Students will engage in various written activities which will include weekly Reading Responses and may include in-class short papers, and out-of-class short reports. Unless otherwise specified, all out-of-class writing assignments will be submitted via Canvas:

- Reading responses will be due via Canvas by noon the day of each class. The reading response should be a brief (~300-500 word) discussion of topics in the reading that you found interesting, confusing, or otherwise noteworthy. The reading response should *not* be

simply a summary of the reading, but rather evidence of your critical thinking about the ideas discussed in the reading.

- In-class short papers may ask you to consider and evaluate ethical positions related to class discussions or readings.
- Short reports will typically include comments on topics explored outside of class or as individual follow-up discussions on topics discussed in class.

Exams: There will be three midterm exams given during the semester. Exams will be based on the assigned readings and application of ethics principles and theories to bioethical case study analyses and are meant to test if you have thoroughly understood and followed the subject matter. The exams will also ask you to synthesize materials and test your ability to make coherent bioethical arguments. Exams will typically consist of short answer questions and free response.

Term Project: This semester, you will write a term paper on a bioethical topic. This project will represent a detailed, deep-dive investigation and discussion into a single bioethical issue. Your entire term project grade will consist of four different graded assignments. (1) a proposed topic and title, (2) an outline, (3) a draft term paper, and (4) the final term paper.

Late Assignments: In-class group activities are due at the end of class and will not be accepted late. Other assignments will be accepted with a one percent penalty per hour late. Assignments more than two days late will not be accepted. Extensions are typically not permitted but will be considered for exceptional circumstances. Please discuss such circumstances with the instructor outside of class as soon as possible.

Technology Usage Policy: Laptop and cell phone use will not be permitted unless necessary for a planned class activity. Classes may not be recorded by students without the express consent of the instructor unless it is pursuant to an accommodation granted by the Office of Disability services. Class recordings, lectures, presentations, and other materials posted on Canvas are for the sole purpose of educating the students currently enrolled in the course.

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. Plagiarizing is defined by Webster's as "to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own; use (another's production) without crediting the source." Plagiarism and other academic integrity violations will be dealt with according to the GT Academic Honor Code. Unless specifically identified as group work, all assignments are to be completed alone. Please ask for help if any part of this policy is unclear.

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>).

Additional academic support: Georgia Tech offers a variety of free learning and communications support options. Learn about tutoring resources at www.success.gatech.edu or at the Center for Academic Success’s tutoring desk in CULC 273. For assistance with written assignments, consult the Communications Center (CULC 447 or commmlab.gatech.edu). Communication Center: <http://www.communicationcenter.gatech.edu> provides individualized help with writing.

Information Related to Covid-19: Students are expected to be familiar with and abide by the Institute guidelines, information, and updates related to Covid-19. Find campus operational updates, Frequently Asked Questions, and details on campus surveillance testing and vaccine appointments on the Tech Moving Forward site at <https://health.gatech.edu/tech-moving-forward>.

Personal Support: In your time at Georgia Tech, you may find yourself in need of support. Below are some resources available on campus.

- The Office of the Dean of Students: <http://studentlife.gatech.edu/content/services>; 404-894-6367; Smithgall Student Services Building 2nd floor

You also may request assistance at:

- https://gatech-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report/index.php/pid383662?
- Counseling Center: <http://counseling.gatech.edu>; 404-894-2575; Smithgall Student Services Building 2nd floor.
 - Services include short-term individual counseling, group counseling, testing and assessment, referral services, and crisis intervention. Students in crisis may walk in during business hours or contact the counselor on call after hours at 404-894-2204.
- Students’ Temporary Assistance and Resources (STAR): <http://studentlife.gatech.edu/content/need-help> Can assist with interview clothing, food, and housing needs.
- Stamps Health Services: <https://health.gatech.edu>; 404-894-1420
 - Primary care, pharmacy, women’s health, psychiatry, immunization and allergy, health promotion, and nutrition
- OMED: Educational Services: <http://www.omed.gatech.edu>
- Women’s Resource Center: <http://www.womenscenter.gatech.edu>; 404-385-0230
- LGBTQIA Resource Center: <http://lgbtqia.gatech.edu/>; 404-385-2679
- Georgia Tech Police: 404-894-2500

Final Grade Calculation:

Assessment	Value
Co-facilitation	15%
Writing assignments (reading responses, short reports, and in-class short papers)	15%
Midterm exams (equally weighted)	45%
Term Project	20%
Participation	5%
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, 59 or less and F.

Tentative Schedule: This schedule is subject to change. We will have more specific details of the readings and assignments announced two-three weeks ahead of schedule. In addition to the assigned readings given below, some weeks will also include additional short readings on current case studies and other relevant topics.

Week	Date	Topic	Chapter	Instructor
1	10-Jan	Introduction and syllabus overview	N/A	MB and MG
	12-Jan	Moral reasoning in bioethics	1	MB
2	17-Jan	<i>MLK Day (Holiday)</i>		
	19-Jan	Bioethics and Moral Theories (Part I)	2	MB
3	24-Jan	Bioethics and Moral Theories (Part II)		MB
	26-Jan	Paternalism and Patient Autonomy (Part I)	3	MB
4	31-Jan	Paternalism and Patient Autonomy (Part II)		MB
	2-Feb	Truth telling and Patient Confidentiality (Part I)	4	MB
5	7-Feb	Truth telling and Patient Confidentiality (Part II)		MB
	9-Feb	Exam 1		MB
6	14-Feb	Informed Consent (Part I)	5	MB
	16-Feb	Informed Consent (Part II)		MB
7	21-Feb	Human Research (Part I)	6	MB
	23-Feb	Human Research (Part II)		MB
8	28-Feb	Abortion (Part I)	7	MG
	2-Mar	Abortion (Part II)		MG
9	7-Mar	Reproductive Technologies Part I	8	MG
	9-Mar	Reproductive Technologies Part II		MG
10	14-Mar	Exam 2		MG
	16-Mar	Genetics Choices Part I	9	MG
11	21-Mar	<i>Spring Break</i>		
	23-Mar	<i>Spring Break</i>		
12	28-Mar	Genetic Choices Part II		MG
	30-Mar	Euthanasia and physician assisted suicide Part I	10	MG
13	4-Apr	Euthanasia and physician assisted suicide Part II		MG
	6-Apr	Dividing up Health care resources Part I	11	MG
14	11-Apr	Dividing up Health care resources Part II		MG
	13-Apr	Exam 3		MG
15	18-Apr	Guest lecture on Patents		MG
	20-Apr	Guest Lecture on Animal Ethics		MB
16	25-Apr	Last instructional Day		MB