

MW 2:00-3:20 PM

105 ESL (ESSLINGER HALL)

**DR. CAMISHA RUSSELL****E-MAIL:** camishar@uoregon.edu**OFFICE:** 233 SUSAN CAMPBELL HALL**OFFICE HOURS:** Wednesdays 10:30-12:30 or by appointment**DISCUSSION SECTIONS:**

FRIDAY 2:00-2:50

253 STB (STRAUB HALL)

FRIDAY 3:00-3:50

253 STB (STRAUB HALL)

**TALI BITTON****E-MAIL:** tbitton@uoregon.edu**OFFICE:** 11 SUSAN CAMPBELL HALL**OFFICE HOURS:** Wednesdays 12-1:50 or by appointment**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

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Medical Ethics (or, more broadly, Bioethics) is the branch of ethics that studies moral values in the biomedical sciences, and can include a very large range of issues, the majority of which we will not be able to cover in a single semester. While I do not claim that the topics we will discuss represent all or even all the most important issues in medical ethics, I do hope that they offer an interesting sampling of the ideas and practices that can be considered and examined in this area.

Some approaches to medical ethics focus primarily on applying ethical theories or methodologies to the questions of clinical practice, medical research and biotechnologies. They seek to elaborate and apply ethical rules and principles according to which various actions and practices in the realm of the biomedical sciences can be deemed ethically permissible, impermissible, obligatory or neutral. In the case of what might be called 'liberal bioethics,' the rights and freedom of individuals are taken to be of paramount importance. Here, it is not the development and use of new procedures or technologies that must be rigorously justified, but rather any restrictions to be placed on individuals' uses of available procedures and technologies. In other words, liberal bioethicists often argue that people should be free to pursue and utilize any biomedical 'advance' for which they have a desire and to which they have access until such a time as that 'advance' can be *proven* harmful.

While the question of whether any particular action or practice is right or wrong, good or bad, permissible or impermissible is certainly an important one for practical purposes, in this course, I will advocate for a somewhat different approach. This approach is centered on the critical philosophical examination of the various assumptions, values, and socio-political forces underlying clinical, research and biotechnological systems and practices. We will ask not only, "What are good or poor systems and practices and why?" but also, "What are the conceptual frameworks available for, assumed by or perpetuated through this system or practice?" and **"What are the effects of this system or practice on people, on their lives, on possibilities for democracy/equality, and on potentials for injustice?"**

During our short time together, I will focus on five major themes: **Principles, Inequality, Normativity, Disability, and Enhancement.** You will also have the opportunity to address your particular interests and **shape the content of the course through your class presentations, which are based in case studies and can either follow the themes or take their own direction.** Despite our large class size, **this course is**

**intended to facilitate active student participation and lively discussion.** Bioethics is a field in which differences of opinion (both popular and professional) are many and easy answers are few. Thus the most valuable skills that can be acquired in bioethics are those that aid in critical thinking. **Keep in mind that you will not be able to acquire critical thinking skills without your own active engagement in the learning process.**

I hope that this course will increase your awareness of the importance of sociohistorical factors and questions of social justice in the practice and critical evaluation of the biomedical sciences. I hope it will **challenge some of your assumptions** and put you in the habit of questioning both your own assumptions and those of others as you enter your professional lives. Most of all, I hope this course will leave you better able to approach ethical dilemmas in your future work not only with a reason and intelligence, but with **sympathy and respect for human difference and an eye toward justice.**

## COURSE OVERVIEW

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### REQUIRED TEXTS

- Clare, Eli. *Brilliant imperfection: Grappling with cure*. Duke University Press, 2017.
- Other required readings will be made available through CANVAS.
- **Please be sure not only to read them, but to have them available in class.**

### EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES

- **Introduction to Medical Ethics:** Students will be introduced to the field of medical ethics and to a variety of specific issues within that field, with a focus on questions of social context and social justice.
- **Critical Thinking:** Students will learn to identify and critically examine the beliefs and assumptions underlying their own thought and the thought of others.
- **Theory and Practice:** Students will learn to read and examine philosophical arguments and theories and apply them to contemporary issues and their own experiences.
- **Basic Writing Skills:** Students will learn how to summarize the main ideas of a text and how to lead a reader through a critical examination of a concrete issue.
- **Dialogue:** Students will engage in rigorous and respectful conversations with classmates and the instructor, consider others' views with an open mind, and learn how to present their own views with a greater degree of clarity.

### ESTIMATED STUDENT WORKLOAD

Students can expect to spend 2-3 hours per week on readings and participation assignments. Students should expect to spend 3-5 hours on presentations, depending on their ease with research and the grade they are trying to achieve. Students should expect to spend an 3-5 hours on their case study analysis, depending on their ease with writing and the grade they are trying to achieve. For their final paper assignments, students should expect to spend 10-14 hours, again dependent on the above factors. There are no exams, so no additional study time is required.

### COURSE WORK

- **Attendance/In-Class Activities:** Each class meeting will involve collaborative learning activities designed to help you engage with course themes and materials. Therefore, class meetings are mandatory and an important part of your learning. Excluding the first class meeting and including both large class meetings and section meetings, this class comprises **28 class sessions**. You may miss **two** of these with no penalty and no make-up work required. Your attendance score (which counts for 20 percent of your final grade), will therefore be the number of class you attend ( $n$ ) divided by 26 ( $n/26$ ). You can score extra credit by attending more than 26 classes. You may make-up any missed class by completing the designated makeup assignment online within one week of the missed session. You are not required to give the reason for your absence.

- **Reading Questions:** Each student will answer a set of three questions on the week's reading due on Wednesdays (Weeks 2-8) before the start of class. Each answer should be around 200 words. This can be turned in electronically (via Canvas) before the class meeting or on paper at the class meeting.
- **Brilliant Imperfection Journal:** Each student will write a journal entry for each of the 10 chapters of *Brilliant Imperfection*, due on Mondays (Weeks 2-10, with two entries due Monday of Week 2) before the start of class. Each journal entry should include 200 words of reflection on/response to the chapter, along with two questions either about or sparked by the reading. This can be turned in electronically (via Canvas) before the class meeting or on paper at the class meeting.
- **Grouped Presentations:** Each student will give 5-minute presentation (I will run a stopwatch) on one aspect of a bioethical case study, coordinated with the presentations of up to four other students working on the same case study. Coordination will include a share slide presentation (to avoid time consuming technology transitions). Failure to coordinate with these other students to create a single presentation file or prevent topic overlap may result in grade deductions.
- **Post-Presentation Case Analysis:** Each student will write a 2-3 page (600-900 word) paper reflecting on her case study, due within one week of the presentation. The analysis should address what the student feels is important, interesting, or difficult in the case study after having presented, heard other presentations, and participated in class discussion, along with a proposal for how medical professionals might approach the case.
- **Final paper:** Work for your final paper will be divided into four components:
  - **Paper Abstract:** Each student will write an abstract for her intended paper. This abstract should indicate the thesis, primary sources, and key arguments of the paper.
  - **Rough Draft/Peer Review:** Each student will complete a rough draft of her paper and participate in a peer review process designed to identify important revisions to be completed before turning in the final paper. Students will receive one point for each page of their draft up to five pages.
  - **Final draft:** Each student will write a 5-7 page (1500-2100 word) paper on a bioethical issue relevant to his or her professional interests/aspirations. The paper will include a discussion of bioethics as a discipline and of different possible approaches to the issue at hand, as well as an argument for a particular approach.
- **Extra credit:** Extra credit can be earned by attending and turning in a summary/response for up to three relevant on-campus lectures (subject to my advance approval). Each summary/response will be worth up to 1 percentage point on your final grade.

## GRADING

Please keep in mind that A grades will not be awarded for work that merely satisfies the minimum requirements of a particular assignment. If you are seeking an A, you should strive to complete the assignment not merely adequately, but exceptionally. If, for any given assignment, it is not clear to you how to do so, please feel free to come and discuss it with me.

<b>Component</b>	<b>% of Final Grade</b>
<b>Participation</b>	<b>50</b>
Brilliant Imperfection Journal	10
Reading Questions	20
Attendance/In-Class Activities	20
<b>Grouped Presentations</b>	<b>20</b>
Individual Presentation	10
Case Study Analysis	10
<b>Final Paper</b>	<b>30</b>
Abstract	2
Rough Draft of Final Paper	5
Peer Review	3
Final Draft of Final Paper	20

## COURSE POLICIES

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### ATTENDANCE

Because the objectives of this course require active participation, your learning will be impaired if you do not attend class. Indeed, you can learn a lot in life simply by showing up. That said, I understand that sometimes circumstances beyond a student's control can make attendance difficult. Any absence can be made up by completing a pre-set online makeup assignment. There is no need to contact anyone about such an absence. Non-attendance assignments missed due to an excused absence may be made up or turned in late. In this case, you must contact your section leader. You may choose to contact the professor if the reasons for the delay are sensitive in nature.

### HONOR CODE

Using the ideas of another person—be it a professional writer, speaker, or a classmate or friend—with proper acknowledgment constitutes plagiarism. Even when it is unintended, plagiarism carries significant disciplinary action. Do not take this issue lightly. You are responsible for reading, understanding, and adhering to the guidelines for acknowledging the work of others as outlined on the UO website: <http://researchguides.uoregon.edu/citing-plagiarism>. Ignorance of the guidelines is not an acceptable excuse for student misconduct.

### DISCRIMINATION

The University of Oregon affirms and actively promotes the right of all individuals to equal opportunity in education and employment without regard to any protected basis, including race, color, sex, national origin, age, religion, marital status, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression or any other consideration not directly and substantively related to effective performance.

The university is committed to providing a respectful environment for all members of the campus community. Prohibited discrimination and discriminatory harassment, including any form of sexual harassment, which subvert the mission of the university and jeopardize the educational or employment experience of students, faculty, and staff, will not be tolerated. If you have a concern of any sort, contact the Office of Affirmative Action & Equal Opportunity: <https://aaeo.uoregon.edu/content/raise-concern>.

Resources for people experiencing hate and discrimination can be found also on the following website: RESPECT.uoregon.edu and by calling 541-346-5555.

I support all students regardless of immigration status or country of origin. For more information and resources please visit our Dreamers page (<https://blogs.uoregon.edu/dreamers/>) and the Immigration FAQs page ([http://international.uoregon.edu/immigration\\_faq](http://international.uoregon.edu/immigration_faq)). Students, remember, when interacting with faculty, staff, and offices around campus you are never required to reveal your status.

### SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The UO is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic and dating violence and gender-based stalking. UO has staff members trained to support survivors in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more. Our goal is to make sure you are aware of the range of options available to you and have access to the resources you need.

According to the new Title IX policy (<https://titleix.uoregon.edu/employee-reporting-responsibilities-policy-overview>) only some UO employees are required reporters and they have to state this explicitly to you. Most regular faculty members as well as GEs are classified as “student-directed employees,” i.e. they are not mandatory reporters, which means that you can speak with them confidentially about issues of sexual harassment, although they may be required to give testimony in case of litigations. If you wish to speak to someone who can keep strict confidentiality (also in case of litigations), you can call 541-346-SAFE, UO’s 24-hour hotline, to be connected to a confidential counselor to discuss your options. You can also visit the SAFE website at [safe.uoregon.edu](http://safe.uoregon.edu).

## ACCESSIBILITY

The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation. You are also encouraged to contact the Accessible Education Center in 164 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or uoaec@uoregon.edu.

## OFFICE HOURS

My office hours are listed at the top of the syllabus and I will also be available at a variety of times by appointment. Please come and see me any time you are experiencing difficulty with the class material, would like more information about the texts we are reading, or have other more general questions about philosophy or your college education.

## COURSE CALENDAR

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Wk	Monday	Wednesday
1		<b>10/2</b> <i>Syllabus Introduction</i>  <b>VIDEO: Unnatural Causes: In Sickness and in Wealth</b>
2	<b>10/7</b> <i>Introductions/Course Warmups</i>  Readings due: <i>Brilliant Imperfection</i> 1 & 2	<b>10/9</b> <i>History of Medical Ethics</i>  Readings due: "A Chronicle of Ethical Events" & "Conclusion"
3	<b>10/14</b> <i>Principles of Medical Ethics I</i>  <b>VIDEO: Unnatural Causes: Bad Sugar</b>  Readings due: <i>Brilliant Imperfection</i> 3; "Ethics, Professional Ethics, and Health Care Ethics"	<b>10/16</b>  <i>Principles of Medical Ethics II</i>  Reading due: "Principles of Autonomy and Informed Consent"
4	<b>10/21</b> <i>Principles of Medical Ethics III</i>  <b>PRESENTATIONS:</b> Cases 1 & 2  Readings due: <i>Brilliant Imperfection</i> 4; "Principles of Beneficence and Nonmaleficence"	<b>10/23</b>  <i>Inequality</i>  Readings due: "The American Janus of Medicine and Race"
5	<b>10/28</b> <i>Inequality</i>  <b>PRESENTATIONS:</b> Cases 3 & 4  Readings due: <i>Brilliant Imperfection</i> 5; "The Compatibility of Universal Morality..."	<b>10/30</b>  <i>Inequality</i>  Reading due: "Racial Disparities in Health Care and Cultural Competency"

6  11/4  <i>Normativity</i>  <b>PRESENTATIONS:</b> Cases 5 & 6  Readings due: <i>Brilliant Imperfection</i> 6; “In Their Best Interests”	11/6  <i>Normativity</i>  Reading due: “Dueling Dualisms”
7  11/11  <b>PRESENTATIONS:</b> Cases 7 & 8  Readings due: <i>Brilliant Imperfection</i> 7; Articles on straw bans and ableism	11/13  (Disability)  Reading due: “Disability, Bioethics, and Human Rights”
8  11/18  <b>PRESENTATIONS:</b> Cases 9 & 10  <b>DUE: Final Paper Abstract</b>  Readings due: <i>Brilliant Imperfection</i> 8; “Eugenics”	11/20  <i>Enhancement</i>  Reading due: “The Case Against Perfection”
9  11/25  <b>PRESENTATIONS:</b> Cases 11 & 12  Reading due: <i>Brilliant Imperfection</i> 9	11/27  <b>VIDEO: <i>Fixed: The Science/Fiction of Human Enhancement</i></b>
10  12/2  Reading due: <i>Brilliant Imperfection</i> 10	12/4  Peer Review/Course Wrap-Up  <b>DUE: Rough Draft of Final Paper</b>
<b>FINAL PAPER DUE: Tuesday, December 10 @ 5:00 p.m.</b>	