

PHIL 335
Fall 2020

MEDICAL ETHICS
Science, Medicine & Social Justice

MW 2:15-3:45 PST

REMOTE **SYNCHRONOUS** MEETINGS

DR. CAMISHA RUSSELL

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OFFICE HOURS: Mondays & Wednesdays 3:50-4:50 or by appointment

DISCUSSION SECTIONS:

FRIDAY 2:00-3:00 PST

FRIDAY 3:30-4:30 PST

REMOTE **SYNCHRONOUS**

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MARY MCLEVEY

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VALÉRIE SIMON

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

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 term.

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.

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 and final papers**. 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

REQUIRED TEXTS

- Clare, Eli. *Brilliant imperfection: Grappling with cure*. Duke University Press, 2017.
- Other required readings will be made available through CANVAS.

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.
- **Research and 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 8-12 hours on research activities and their group presentation, depending on their ease with research and the grade they are trying to achieve. For their writing activities and final papers, 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

- **Reading Quizzes:** Each student will must complete a multiple-choice quiz for each of eight weekly readings (Weeks 2-9). Both the readings and the quizzes are posted on Canvas. Quizzes are 15 questions long, last for 20 minutes, and must be completed in one sitting by Monday at noon. The two lowest quiz scores will be thrown out.
- **Brilliant Imperfection Journal:** Each student will write eight journal entries for *Brilliant Imperfection*, due on Wednesdays (Weeks 2-9) at noon. Each journal will be written in the “3-2-1” format: First, indicate what you consider the **three** most important points of the reading and why; then indicate **two** parts of the reading about which you are confused or have questions. For the **one**, you may choose to (a) offer **one** way you can connect an idea from the reading to another idea in the course, (b) provide **one** example that supports or challenges an idea in the text, **or** (c) indicate **one** way you can apply something from the reading to a different context (daily life, professional situation, etc.).
- **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. Each Monday and Wednesday activity during Weeks 2-9 is worth two points for a possible total of 32 points. However, only 28 points are required for full credit. **Thus, you may miss two activities without making them up without penalty.** 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 and there is no limit on how many classes you can make up for credit. (You may earn more than 100% on this part of your grade by completing or making up all 16 activities.)
- **Research Activities:** Students will practice research skills by searching for articles on their topic, writing up most promising articles, and reading the write-ups of their groupmates.
- **Group Presentation:** Students will be placed in research groups of up to 5 peers within their section based on topic preferences. Each research group will prepare a 10-minute video on their topic, which must include audio and visual components. It should be clear that all group members and their research are represented in the video. Presentations will be viewed by the rest of the section during Week 8 section meetings.
- **Writing Activities:** Students will practice writing skills by creating abstracts for their intended papers, completing rough drafts of their papers, and providing peer reviews for the drafts of two other students. abstracts should indicate the thesis, primary sources, and key arguments of the paper. Students will receive one point for each page of their rough draft, up to five pages. Each student will complete a peer review form for two other rough drafts.

- **Final Paper:** Each student will write a 5-7 page (1500-2100 word) paper on a bioethical issue relevant to their presentation topic. The paper will include not only empirical research (facts), but also bioethical theories (concepts or explanations).
- **Extra credit:** Students can earn up to 3 percentage points of extra credit on their final grade in two ways
 - **Attendance bonus:** For Weeks 2-10, class consists of 27 total meetings (3 per week). If you attend:
 - 22 or more synchronous meetings, you earn 3% extra credit
 - 19 or more synchronous meetings, you earn 2% extra credit
 - 16 or more synchronous meetings, you earn 1% extra credit
 - **Video + infographic:** Alternatively, you may make up to three infographics of the following for 1% extra credit each
 - Any episode of *Unnatural Causes: Is Inequality Making Us Sick?* (all episodes are available on Kanopy through the UO Libraries – even though it says UO doesn't have them, it does and they will play: <https://uoregon.kanopy.com/node/62852/preview>)
 - The mission and activities of any local health advocacy organization/resource (Eugene/Portland/Wherever you are)
 - *You may also mix and match attendance and infographics, but you max out at 3%.*

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 discuss it with me or your section leader.

Component	% of Final Grade
Brilliant Imperfection Journal	10
Reading Quizzes	15
In-Class Activities	15
Research Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Searching for articles • Writing up articles • Read others' write-ups 	15
Group Presentation	15
Writing Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abstract • Rough draft • Peer review 	15
Final Draft of Final Paper	15

COURSE POLICIES

ATTENDANCE

Though we are learning remotely this term, this class is designed to facilitate real-time discussion and reflection on course materials and themes. I believe you will benefit from attending synchronous course meetings. That said, I understand that, especially during our turbulent times, circumstances beyond a student's control can make attendance difficult. Any absence can be made up by participating in a pre-set Canvas discussion. 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—without 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). 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 confidentially (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.

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 uaec@uoregon.edu.

OFFICE HOURS & COMMUNICATION

My virtual 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. Because I have a young child, you should not expect to receive responses to emails on evenings or weekends, but I will do my best to respond to any communication within one business day.

COURSE CALENDAR

Wk	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
1		9/30 <i>Course Introduction & Syllabus Review</i>	10/2
2	10/5 Reading: Excerpts from <i>A Short History of Medical Ethics</i> DUE: Reading Quiz at Noon Research Topic Survey (due Tu @ noon)	10/7 Reading: <i>Brilliant Imperfection</i> , Introduction & Chapter 1 DUE: Journal entry at Noon	10/9
3	10/12 Reading: "Privatization and Punishment" DUE: Reading Quiz at Noon	10/14 Reading: <i>Brilliant Imperfection</i> , Chapter 2 DUE: Journal entry at Noon	10/16 DUE: Online search assignment at Noon
4	10/19 Reading: "Disability, Bioethics, and Human Rights" DUE: Reading Quiz at Noon	10/21 Reading: <i>Brilliant Imperfection</i> , Chapters 3 & 4 DUE: Journal entry at Noon	10/23
5	10/26 Reading: "Racial Disparities in Health Care and Cultural Competency" DUE: Reading Quiz at Noon	10/28 Reading: <i>Brilliant Imperfection</i> , Chapter 5 DUE: Journal entry at Noon	10/30 DUE: Article summaries at Noon
6	11/2 Reading: "Social Responsibilities of the Global Pharmaceutical Companies" DUE: Reading Quiz at Noon	11/4 Reading: <i>Brilliant Imperfection</i> , Chapter 6 DUE: Journal entry at Noon	11/6 DUE: Reading others' summaries assignment at Noon
7	11/9 Reading: Preface to <i>The Protest Psychosis</i> DUE: Reading Quiz at Noon	11/11 Reading: <i>Brilliant Imperfection</i> , Chapter 7 DUE: Journal entry at Noon	11/13 DUE: Paper abstract at Noon

8	11/16 Reading: “In Their Best Interests” DUE: Reading Quiz at Noon	11/18 Reading: <i>Brilliant Imperfection</i> , Chapters 8 & 9 DUE: Journal entry at Noon	11/20 DUE: Group Presentation video at Noon
9	11/23 Reading: “The Case Against Perfection” ‘ DUE: Reading Quiz at Noon	11/25 Reading: <i>Brilliant Imperfection</i> , Chapter 10 DUE: Journal entry at Noon	11/27 NO MEETING THANKSGIVING BREAK
10	11/30 VIDEO: <i>Fixed: The Science/Fiction of Human Enhancement</i>	12/2 <i>Peer Review/Course Wrap-Up</i> DUE: Rough Draft of Final Paper at Noon	12/4 DUE: Peer reviews at Noon
FINAL PAPER DUE: Tuesday, December 8 @ 10:00 p.m.			