Instructor: Michael Reno
Office: 506 South Kedzie Hall
Office Hours: TBA
Contact: renomich@msu.edu

TA: Daniel Beck
Office: 527 South Kedzie Hall
Office Hours: TBA
Contact: beckdan2@msu.edu

Course Description: Bioethics

The standard approach to Bioethics, exemplified by your course text *The Oxford Handbook of Bioethics*, comes out of methods of the analytic tradition in Western philosophy. We are going to get clear about some of the key debates in this tradition: Methods of doing Bioethics, Justice and Health Care Policy, Bodies and Enhancements, Death, and Research Ethics.

But, in addition to learning how mainstream bioethicists address these issues, we will also be asking after the implications of other philosophical positions on these issues. For example, we will begin with some thinking about how we are even to do this thing called bioethics. This question, however, is also a question about what reason is, what thinking is, and what thinking has to do with morality. So, we will also read a general piece on thinking itself. Now, here’s the hard part. We’ve got to do the work of actually thinking through what some approach to thinking in general means for thinking about bioethical issues. In other words, we have to do philosophy. We will follow a similar approach with each unit. We will attempt to get clear about some disputes in mainstream bioethics and then to reflect upon those disputes’ assumptions through more general philosophical readings.

Don’t be alarmed. What I expect you to do in here will be clear on the assignments and will always involve some concrete issue. But, make no mistake, you will be expected to do philosophy; you will be expected to think through assumptions, implications, meanings, and alternatives in relation to bioethical problems, ways of formulating problems, and supposed solutions.

Required text:  

Other required readings will be posted on D2L.
Important things to note that are covered elsewhere in the syllabus or in assignments, but that I'm going to say here anyway:

1. This is a philosophy class. That means you 1. You will have to spend significant time on the material outside of class. 2. The readings will require close attention and re-reading, hence 1. 3. You need to come to class. If you don’t, you’ll find yourself wondering what is going on when you return. 4. Your written and oral assignments will be argumentative. That is, you will be making a claim and attempting to defend that claim.

2. Don’t be rude. Examples of rude behavior (List of sh*t that annoys me): 1. Missing class and then emailing me or Dan to ask what you missed. 2. Texting, playing on facebook, twitter, youtube etc., studying for another class, or listening to music in class. 3. Complaining about your grade in a manner that shows you think you’re owed a particular grade because a. your record in other courses, b. mere effort, or c. you (or your parents) paid for the course. 4. Not pulling your weight with your group. 5. Arriving late. 6. Leaving early. 7. Plagiarism.

3. There’s a group component to this course. In fact, the group component is half of your grade.

4. A bunch of the readings are online. They are just as important as the readings in the text. Either way, you should always have the reading that has been assigned for that day with you to class in some form or another.

5. We’re trying to have a discussion here. That means that you’ve got to have something to discuss. Do the readings. I’m not going to stand at the front and talk at you (well sometimes, I will, even if you’ve done the reading). Take control of your education.

Assignments and Grading
Your grade will be based on a combination of team work and individual assignments. Your overall grade will be determined on the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grading Scale</th>
<th>4.0</th>
<th>3.5</th>
<th>3.0</th>
<th>2.5</th>
<th>2.0</th>
<th>1.5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>93 - 100</td>
<td></td>
<td>88 - 92</td>
<td>83 - 87</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88 - 92</td>
<td>78 - 82</td>
<td>73 - 77</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83 - 87</td>
<td>73 - 77</td>
<td>68 - 72</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Team Assignments: I will assign you to teams in the first weeks of the course.

Team Reading Responses (25%): At least 8 times during the semester, I will post questions about the readings for the coming week. At least 6 times during the semester your team will turn in a reading response. You may turn in 7 and drop your lowest score. Here you will choose 1 question over the readings for that week and write about a page on that question. This is a team assignment, so you will want to meet with your team early on in order to figure out how you will do these. There will be a dropbox on d2l for each of these reading response assignments.
Team Presentation (25%): In the last few weeks of the course, you will give a presentation with the rest of your group. I will post a detailed assignment sheet regarding these after the first few weeks. It will involve researching and summarizing arguments from peer reviewed articles, making claims, defending those claims with reasons, and delivering these things to the class in some manner. Besides the class presentation, your group will submit a written summary of around 5 pages.

Individual Assignments:

Midterm Paper (32% total: 26% final draft, 6% rough draft): I will post specific questions and instructions at least two weeks before the paper is due. You will write a paper of about 2500 words on one of the questions. You will also be responsible for a rough draft, which will be worth 6% of your total grade. There will be separate dropboxes for the rough draft and final draft of the paper. You will be given feedback on the rough draft of your paper.

Presentation Write-ups (12%): As individuals you will be responsible for 4 presentation write-ups. Here you will write about a page, in which you will summarize the main points of the presentation, offer one constructive criticism of the ideas in the presentation, and ask one philosophical question about the presentation. One presentation write-up may be submitted for each day there are presentations. In other words, you must attend 4 out of the last 5 days of class in order to do these write-ups.

Quizzes (6%) An undetermined number of times during the semester, I will give you a short quiz. These quizzes will not be difficult. They will usually be over material just covered during that class period. But, you must be present to take the quiz. There are no make-up quizzes. And there are no exceptions to the no make-up quizzes rule.

Guidelines for Classroom Behavior

Treat others with respect. This is a philosophy class, so disagreement is expected. But, disagreement does not require shouting or personal attacks. Rather, in engaging with others' views, we address the underlying evidence and reasoning.

Now this assumes that you are here and interested. There are lots of ways of showing disrespect that primarily result from lack of interest. TURN OFF YOUR PHONE OR SET IT TO SILENT. Texting. Don't do it. I don't take attendance (except for the peer review), so if you'd rather write notes to your roommate about where you are going for lunch, just don't come to class. Social Networking/Browsing the web/checking your email. Again, if you want to do this, stay home and do it. Having a private conversation. Talk to everyone or no one. Studying for another class. If you're trying to learn about how to determine the hybridization state of a carbon atom in an unstable compound, you're probably not going to get much out of a class conversation about autonomy. Class room
behavior comes to this: you should come to class prepared and interested. If you can’t
manage that and still end up in class for some reason, you should try to learn from others.

**Academic Honesty**
All students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty. Any
violations of university policies will be dealt with directly and severely. At a minimum,
students caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive a 0 on the assignment in question and
be reported to the university; this will go down on your permanent record. In cases of
particularly egregious violations the instructor reserves the right to fail the student for the
course. For information regarding university policies see:
https://www.msu.edu/unit/ombud/academic-integrity/plagiarism-policy.html

**Rough Schedule**
The schedule may be changed by in-class and/or D2L announcement.

**Part I Methods in Bioethics**
WK1
Monday, January 7th: Introduction to the course,

WK2
Monday, January 14th: Arras, “The Way We Reason Now: Reflective Equilibrium in
Bioethics,” (S) pp. 46-69.
Wednesday, January 16th: Jennings, “Autonomy,” (S) pp. 72-89.

WK3
Monday, January 21st: NO CLASS. MLK Service Day.
90-113, and Adorno, #46 from *Minima Moralia*, “On the morality of thinking,” D2L.

**Part II Bodies and Bodily Parts and Enhancement**
WK4
Wednesday, January 30th: Frye, “Oppression,” D2L. McLeod, “For Dignity or Money:
Feminists on the Commodification of Women’s Reproductive Labor” (S) pp. 258-281.

WK5
Wednesday, February 6th: Savulescu, “Genetic Interventions and the Ethics of
Enhancement of Human Beings” (S) 516-535.

WK6
Wednesday, February 13th: Fredrik Svenaeus, “The Body as Gift, Resource or Commodity?
Heidegger and the Ethics of Organ Transplantation,” D2L.

**Part III Justice and Policy**

WK7
Wednesday, February 20th: Daniels, cont.

WK8
Wednesday, February 27th: Buchanan, cont.

March 4\(^{th}\)-8\(^{th}\) Spring Break

**Part IV Death**

WK9
Wednesday, March 13\(^{th}\): Jeff McMahan, “An Alternative to Brain Death,” D2L.

WK10

**Part V Research Ethics**

WK11
Monday, March 25\(^{th}\): Susan Reverby, “Bioethics, History, and the Study as Gospel,” D2L.
Wednesday, April 3\(^{rd}\): Luna, “Research in Developing Countries” (S) pp. 621-647.

WK12
Monday, April 8\(^{th}\): Catch-up Day.

**Part V Team Presentations**

Wednesday, April 10\(^{th}\): Teams 1, 2, 3

WK13
Monday, April 15\(^{th}\): Teams 4, 5, 6
Wednesday, April 17\(^{th}\): Teams 7, 8, 9

WK14
Monday, April 22\(^{nd}\): Teams 10, 11, 12
Wednesday, April 24\(^{th}\): Teams 13, 14, 15

Final exam is scheduled for Thursday, May 2\(^{nd}\) from 10am until noon.