



DEPARTMENT OF NEAR EASTERN LANGUAGE & CIVILIZATION

## **BIOETHICS: SECULAR & JEWISH PERSPECTIVES**

Tuesdays & Thursdays 12:30 am – 1:50 pm

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Office hours: by appointment

### **Course Description**

Religion plays an important role in shaping and directing bioethics perspectives. When patients and health-professionals are faced with life and death issues, such as abortion, euthanasia and stem cell research, their religious views may have crucial bearing on their decision making and behaviors. This course will explore legal, ethical and Jewish-religious perspectives on contemporary biomedical practices. Legal and civil rights of women, people with disabilities, minors and minority or marginalized groups. Key differences between secular and Biblical/Rabbinic approaches in interpretation, analysis and application of bioethics, doctor-patient relationships; reproductive methods; abortion; euthanasia; and stem cell research. While the legitimacy of Jewish ethics is embedded in the acceptance of God and Torah, the core of secular ethics is largely in human rational and moral intuition.

In reviewing ethical frameworks, the students will examine and discuss relevant Jewish laws, rabbinic literature, contemporary scholarship, and U.S. and Israeli laws that address issues in bioethics.

### **Objectives**

In this course the students will:

1. Understand the secular and Jewish-religious legal and ethical frameworks of contemporary medical and research practices;
2. Identify, interpret and debate the ethical issues arising from various case studies in bioethics and apply different ethical approaches.

The goal of this class is not to solve fundamental ethical dilemmas, but rather to help to critically grasp the increasing challenges of modern medical technologies for law and ethics.

In winter 2021, we will have **virtual meeting class space via Zoom video conferencing**.

## **Course Information & Online Resources**

The plan is to meet at the scheduled hours (T/Th 12:30-1:50, Seattle time) via Zoom Video Conferencing. You are required to have access to our course Canvas web-page, and to our virtual meeting space which will be conducted via Zoom Video Conferencing <https://washington.zoom.us/>.

I will be distributing a conference ID which will allow you to join our online session. Access to both Canvas and Zoom is necessary for completing readings and homework assignments and for earning participation points.

## **Types of Communication**

In an online course, our communication will be visible to all. For private communication, we will use individual email and Zoom office hours.

## **Online Course Policies**

Expectations of students:

- Come to class fully prepared.
- Attend all online sessions and actively participate in the forum.
- Complete assignments on time. If difficulties turn up (such as illness, caring for others who are ill, technological problems, working from home where children need attention, etc.), let me know. We will figure out what to do to keep your learning on track.
- Abide by the standards of academic honesty and student code of conduct.
- Seek help. I will do my best to help you succeed in this class.
- Have access to a camera and audio. The expectation is that you will be visible/audible to me and to your classmates, but you can control those options. If you are not feeling well and want to listen in but not speak up or be seen, we will accommodate those circumstances. And, if the servers/processors/whatever are overburdened and the video is slowing down or disrupting our communication, we will adapt as necessary to those circumstances.
- I do not plan to record Zoom sessions.

## **Course Etiquette**

- Get to class on time. Test your camera and audio prior to class time.
- In general, it is good policy to "mute" yourself during a Zoom meeting, until you are ready to speak to the entire group. Keep phones and other devices from making background noise or disruption.
- Respect each other.

## **Class Website & Required Textbook**

There will be a course website on Canvas. This website will include the required assignments, updates and the weekly schedule. Students will be required to purchase the class' course-pack, which will include the reading materials for each class.

### **Recommended Texts**

1. *Biomedical Ethics & Jewish Law*, Fred Rosner, Ktav Publishing House Inc. 2001
2. *Jewish Biomedical Law: Legal & Extra-Legal Dimensions*, Daniel Sinclair, Oxford University Press 2003.
3. *Principles of Biomedical Ethics*, 7<sup>th</sup> Ed., Tom Beauchamp and James F. Childress, Oxford University Press.
4. *Bioethics: Principles, Issues & Cases*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed., Lewis Vaughn, Oxford University Press 2013.
5. *Matters of Life & Death: A Jewish Approach to Modern Medical Ethics*, Elliot Dorff, the Jewish Publishing Society 2003.
6. *Contemporary Biomedical Ethical Issues and Jewish Law*, Fred Rosner, Ktav Publishing House 2007.
7. *Clinical Ethics: A Practical Approach to Ethical in Clinical Medicine*, 8<sup>th</sup> ed., A Jonsen, M. Siegler & W. Winslade, McGraw-Hill Education 2015.
8. *Medical Ethics*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Robert M. Veatch.
9. *Bioethics: Introduction to History, Methods and Practice*, Nancy S. Jecker and Albert R. Jonsen, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Jones & Bartlett Publishers 2007.
10. *Encyclopedia of Jewish Medical Ethics*, Avraham Steinberg, Feldheim Publishers 1998.
11. *The Silent World of Doctor and Patient*, Jay Katz and Alexander Morgan Capron, The John Hopkins University Press 1984.
12. *Jewish Bioethics: Rabbinic Law and Technology in Their Social and Historical Contexts*, Dr. Yechiel Michael Barilan, Cambridge University Press 2014.

### **Assignment & Grading**

The final grade will be 30% midterm exam, 45% final paper, 10% participation and 15% homework.

1. Midterm exam (30%) will cover the material reviewed in the first half of the class and will include scenarios where students will need to examine the ethical issues presented.
2. Final paper (45%) will focus on the material explored in the second half of the class, as well as some issues discussed in the first half. Students will be expected to analyze and debate various case studies raising ethical dilemmas, as well as present in class their main conclusions.
3. Participation (10%) will include in-class assignments such as debate, group work, short responses to class discussion and more. Class participation is critical as the goal of this class is to promote discussion and debate; some of what we cover and review in class will not be in the reading material. The midterm and paper will include questions on material covered in class.

4. Homework (15%) will be assigned in each class. Students are responsible for daily preparation of readings and exercises. Class time will be spent primarily on the discussion of texts and case studies.

### **Other Student Responsibilities**

Due to the sensitive nature of the ethical issues discussed in this class, the students are expected to uphold the utmost respect and courtesy to their peers, to allow open and informed dialogue. A student being disruptive and disrespectful toward other students in class, will reflect poorly on his/her participation grade.

Students who miss the midterm or other in-class assignment due to documented illness or other emergency, will need to provide the instructor with a note from a medical caregiver or other information. The make-up midterm or assignment will be designated by the instructor.

Frequent unexpected or unjustifiable absences may result in failing this course, or in reduction of the participation grade.

Students are expected to arrive in class on time.

Students are required to turn off all electronic devices unless they are advised otherwise by the instructor.

If you would like to request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact Disabled Student Services, 448 Schmitz, 543-8924 (V/TDD). If you have a letter from Disabled Student Services indicating you have a disability that requires academic accommodations, please present the letter to the instructor and discuss the accommodations you might need for the class.

It is understood that some students will not attend class on religious holidays. Students who miss class for observance of religious holidays will be allowed to make up missed work and work with the instructor to create a plan to accomplish that. For more information on academic integrity, disability accommodations, safety, religious accommodations, and more UW policies, please see the following link:

[https://registrar.washington.edu/staffandfaculty/syllabi-guidelines/?mkt\\_tok=eyJpIjoiTjJKall6bGtPRGhsWldZeSIsInQiOiJ2RGNGRHpKWGdTVEpdkxuS1lyTkp2NlZmTnhqeHVDMkZ2N2EzbTZuNG5EK1FHdTJKOVNCTTBnQUV2aHM4NVdcL1IPVEc5MFYrTlo0c1p1YINLMOXyJlVXaWUydnZSNTdZNHBUazYwcmFRM1dcL0JkVVczRWVBOWxwamQ4QjVHanlqIn0%3D](https://registrar.washington.edu/staffandfaculty/syllabi-guidelines/?mkt_tok=eyJpIjoiTjJKall6bGtPRGhsWldZeSIsInQiOiJ2RGNGRHpKWGdTVEpdkxuS1lyTkp2NlZmTnhqeHVDMkZ2N2EzbTZuNG5EK1FHdTJKOVNCTTBnQUV2aHM4NVdcL1IPVEc5MFYrTlo0c1p1YINLMOXyJlVXaWUydnZSNTdZNHBUazYwcmFRM1dcL0JkVVczRWVBOWxwamQ4QjVHanlqIn0%3D)

Students should keep a copy of each graded assignment. This is very useful if for any reason an instructor's records get lost or damaged, or if students have a question about calculation of grades.

In cases of academic misconduct, such as plagiarism, copying someone's homework, or cheating on the exam or final paper, the offending student will be penalized in accordance with the policy of the College of Arts and Sciences.

By enrolling in this class students make a commitment to regular attendance and class participation. Continued enrollment signifies that students have received a copy of this syllabus and that they have been notified of the requirements and grading policies for the course.

If you have any concerns about a course offered by the Department of Near Eastern Language & Civilization or about the lecturer, please see that instructor about these concerns as soon as possible. If you are not comfortable talking with that instructor or not satisfied with the response you receive, you may contact the Chair of NLEC Prof. Selim Kuru at selims@uw.edu.

### **Tentative Class Weekly Plan**

The following topics will be discussed in this class:

1. Weeks 1 & 2: What constitutes bioethics, and what are the moral and social values it seeks to protect? Introduction of the Jewish law (Halacha), relevant Jewish sources for matters of medical ethics, main differences between the secular and Jewish-religious approach to bioethical issues. Case study: refusal for a lifesaving treatment.
2. Week 3: What are the secular and Jewish perspectives on physician-patient relationship, the role of healthcare providers and the Jewish verse "He who saves a life is as if he saved a whole world".
3. Week 4: Clinical research conducted on human subjects, including the use of healthy volunteers, research conducted on vulnerable populations such as African Americans, military personal, prisoners and economically disadvantage people.
4. Weeks 5 - 6: The beginning of life, including the following topics: reproductive methods, abortion, women reproductive rights, and genetic engineering.
5. Weeks 7: Review and analysis of case and then midterm.
6. Week 8: Scarce resource through the lenses of issues relating to organ transplantation and infectious diseases.
7. Week 9: Key issues related to the end of life, including assisted suicide – including for terminally ill and mentally disabled patients, and euthanasia.
8. Week 10: as part of their final paper, the students will be expected to present, analyze and debate various case studies raising ethical dilemmas.