

Barry University, School of Arts and Sciences
Department of Theology and Philosophy
COURSE SYLLABUS

Title and Course Number: THE 353: Bioethics

Instructor: Mary Jo Iozzio, PhD

Upper level undergraduate course, 42 hours, average enrollment 25 students, offered regularly

Pedagogical reflections: Considering an agenda that seeks to expose both ordinary and extreme cases that arise in healthcare practice, a general hermeneutic of disability invites students to think outside of the media-driven and celebrity causes on bioethics. Rather than the celebrity causes for Multiple Sclerosis, Alzheimer's, Diabetes, etc, students look at the ordinary and often unjust discriminations, prejudices, and failures on the part of healthcare to listen to vulnerable persons who stand before them in need. Students are often awakened to new ways of thinking about disability, gender, and race and the systems that prohibit access to healthcare on the basis of an outdated norm.

I have highlighted the parts of the syllabus that concern persons with disabilities.

Course Description: A study of the foundations of ethical-decision-making from theological perspectives that arise in health care practice.

Topics: This course will examine the variety of ethical systems in use today in healthcare settings, the theological and philosophical nature of a variety of issues confronting healthcare practices, and the specific concerns of the contemporary issues of abortion, euthanasia, disability, reproductive technologies, HIV/AIDS, poverty and access to healthcare among others.

Relationship of course to university mission: This course advances the university's mission of quality education, religious dimension, community service and caring environment through an exploration of the conditions required for making appropriate decisions in healthcare practice according to standards of ethical reflection, the gift of life, the development and exercise of right moral character, always under the divine command to be.

Attendance Policy:

The School of Arts & Sciences adheres to the following attendance policy: A total of 6 class hours of absence will result in withdrawal with W, WP, or WF if within the designated withdrawal period, or with an automatic F if not. It is the student's responsibility to initiate the withdrawal during the designated withdrawal period. Otherwise, an F will be issued at the end of the term.

Academic Dishonesty Policy: Cheating and Plagiarism

a. Cheating is defined as the attempt, successful or not, to give or obtain and/or information by illicit means in meeting any academic requirements, including examinations.

b. Plagiarism is defined as the use, without proper acknowledgment, of the ideas, phrases, sentences, or larger units of discourse from another writer or speaker.

Students are expected to know and abide by the policy as stated in the University catalog and student handbook.

Disability Recognition:

Students with documented special learning needs or other disabilities that may interfere with attendance and/or assignments may want to inform the instructor so that accommodations may be made, or contact the Barry Office of Services for Students with Disabilities 305-899-3489.

Student Behavior:

All Barry University students are expected to behave according to accepted norms that ensure a climate wherein all can exercise their right to learn. Such norms are set forth in the undergraduate catalogue, under School of Arts and Sciences, **Guidelines for Student Conduct and Academic Responsibility**. Please be sure that you have read and understood that section. No faculty member will tolerate classroom behavior that violates these norms. Such behavior will be grounds for withdrawal from the class, judicial proceedings, or failure of the course. If warranted, students engaging in such behavior will be removed from class by security personnel and may be required to undergo counseling.

Writing Across the Curriculum component: During the course of the semester a number of writing assignments will reflect a variety of writing styles. Students must submit papers that demonstrate data summaries, reflection, reaction, and investigative research essays.

Skills component: The writing component in particular will increase the development of study skills by emphasizing clarity in writing and critical thinking in learning and composition.

Course Objectives: To have the means of evaluating ethical decision-making within those relationships that arise in the practice of healthcare sciences. To have knowledge of a variety of ethical theories in order to adopt and apply any one of them to the specific topics related to the healthcare industries.

Distribution/General Education Learning Outcome: This course is designed to meet both general education and distribution requirements in the School of Arts and Sciences and the Department of Theology and Philosophy (UG catalog, "Distribution": explore diverse modes of religious experience and expression with emphasis on Judeo-Christian tradition; "Competencies": (9) explore and understand concepts pertaining to the human experience of God . . . in order to gain a perspective of the spiritual and transcendent dimension of human life and culture [and to] (11) understand essential concepts and values in the human search for meaning in order to develop a reasonable and comprehensive world and life view and to make ethical judgments and commitments). This course provides the ability to apply critical evaluation of decisionmaking and acting through object analysis based upon a Christian appropriation of ethical theories. A specific assignment will be given to assess the degree of awareness, understanding, and application of the following: theological reflection *on the human experience of God*, standard ethical theories *that reflect the concepts and values of the human search for meaning*, and moral vision *to guide a reasonable and comprehensive worldview*.

Learning Methods: Classes will consist of lectures and questions specific to the special topics of Christian morality and decision-making in healthcare. Students are expected to read all assigned materials and to be prepared for discussion of the theses presented in the readings. Students will learn to think critically especially through writing exercises and the application of standard ethical theories to contemporary health concerns.

Course Requirements: 1) reading assignments must be completed according to the syllabus time schedule (unless otherwise amended) and proven by eight (8) essay assignments of 350-500 words on the subject of the readings (7.5% each, totaling 60%); 2) one critical review of 500-750 words based on one of the film presentations (10%); 3) a mid-term and a final exam (10% + 20%, totaling 30%); 4) class participation. All written assignments are to be submitted with double-spaced plain 12-point font. The writing requirements of this course fulfill the Gordon Rule relative to 6000 written words.

Grading: A=100-93 A-=92-90 B+=89-87 B=86-83 B-=82-80 C+=79-77 C=76-70 D=69-60 F = <59

Texts:

Cates, Diana Fritz and Lauritzen, Paul, eds. *Medicine and the Ethics of Care*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2001.

Pellegrino, Edmund D. and Faden, Alan I. *Jewish and Catholic Bioethics*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1999.

Walker, Margaret Urban, ed. *Mother Time*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1999.

List of Readings, Assignments and Exam Dates: papers are due every Monday beginning September 14, the critical review is due November 29, final original creative presentations will be assigned during the final week of class and during the exam period.

Aug 30-Sept 1-3: introduction to the study of bioethics and its relation to ethical theories and the Christian moral traditions. Film presentation, “Aristotle’s Ethics.” Reading Assignment – Cates and Lauritzen, *Medicine and the Ethics of Care* (henceforth MEC), Introduction; Pellegrino and Faden, *Jewish and Catholic Bioethics* (henceforth JCB), Introduction; Walker, *Mother Time* (henceforth Mother), Introduction.

Sept 8–10 (no class Sept 6): primary features and historical overview of the development of bioethics. Reading – JCB, section one and two.

September 10, 5pm, Cor Jesu Chapel, Yves Congar Award for Theological Excellence and lecture, attendance required: Gustavo Gutiérrez, OP

Sep 13-15-17: what does the consideration of persons add to the context of healthcare and what would a liberation of healthcare look like in the United States (following the lead of the Congar Award recipient). Reading – MEC, chapters 1-2 (Reeder and Andolsen articles)

Sep 22–24 (no class Sept 20): an ethics of care. Reading – MEC, chapter 3 (Gudorf).

Sep 27-29-Oct 1: character, psychological needs and development, abortion. Reading – MEC, chapters 4-6 (Vacek, Callahan, Cates).

Oct 4-6-8: suffering and religious voices of meaning. Reading – JCB, section three; MEC, chapters 7 and 9 (Connors and Franke, Zoloth).

Oct 11-13 (no class Oct 15 – fall holiday): healing and what it means to be healed – principle of double effect, not euthanasia. Reading – handout on PDE; JCB, section four; MEC, chapters 8 and 10 (Camenisch, Smith).

Oct 18–20 (no class Oct 22): reproductive technologies, genetic manipulations, and stem cell research; what are the implications of genetic perfection? Is it possible? Is it desirable? Are people with genetic imperfections anomalies?. Reading – handout news and media clips on recent genetic science breakthroughs, surgical repair of physical disabilities (cochlear implant, repair of cleft lip). See video/film on library reserve: “Gattaca”

Oct 25-27–29: aging women and their aging bodies, coming to terms. Reading – Mother, chapters 1-4 (Furman, Meyers, Ruddick, Bartky).

Nov 1-3–5: getting by or flourishing, are the rules different for women than for men; are the rules different for people with disabilities and the non-disabled? Reading – Mother, chapters 5-7 (H. Nelson, Walker, J. Nelson).

Nov 8-10 (no class Nov 12): not in control and not able to change it –disabilities and menopause, are they diseases? Reading – Mother, chapters 8-9 (Wendell, J. Callahan).

Nov 15-17–19: ageism and/or sexism and women at healthcare risk. Reading – Mother, chapters 10-11 (DesAutels, D. Callahan)

Nov 22-24 (no class meetings this week, Nov 26 Thanksgiving): see video/film on library reserve: choose between “Cider House Rules,” “Children of a Lesser God” or another film pre-approved by the professor; consider the implications of aborting a fetus with a disability or the presumptions surrounding persons who are deaf or who are hearing impaired.

Nov 29–Dec 1-3: the justice or injustice of US healthcare systems. Critical review of film due. Reading –

Mother, chapters 12-13 (Sivers, Holstein).

Dec 6-8-10: alternative ways of preparing appropriately for the future needs of an aging society. Reading – Mother, chapters 14-15 (Fiore, Tronto).

Dec 13: final exam

Bibliography/Reserve Reading: Students have the opportunity to increase their working knowledge of our library's reference resources and periodical literature that will reveal the current state of scholarship in the field.

This syllabus is subject to change.