Fall 2012
Bio 370 – Bioethics
Introduction and Syllabus

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 2:30-3:30 155 WIDB (or by appointment)

Textbook: iClicker required
There’s no textbook for this class, but there are required weekly readings on our class website: http://byubioethics.weebly.com (Password: deontology)

Prerequisites: Introductory biology course.

TAs: Note: All TAs hold office hours in 140 WIDB.
Sariah Cottrell
sariahac@gmail.com
Sections 3 & 7 (T & Th 2:30-3:50)
Office Hours: Wed, 10-12

John McMullin
john.b.mcmullin@gmail.com
Sections 4 & 8 (W & F 1-2:20)
Office Hours: Fri, 12-1

Jeff Patterson
mhoram73@gmail.com
Sections 2 & 6 (T & Th 9:30-10:45)
Office Hours: Thu 2:30-3:30

Andrea Rane
raneandrea@gmail.com
Section 5 (W, 2:30-3:50)
Office Hours: Tue, 1-2

Learning Objectives
Bioethics will likely be the most unusual class you have ever taken. We will be exploring the tools needed to make ethical decisions. We will not be exploring much whether a particular action is the ‘right’ action as much as developing strategies for approaching the question. This means that we will be covering controversial topics from multiple perspectives. We will understand why people might think contrary to what we do. This is challenging to many students. Moreover, learning to think critically is one of the most important skills that a student can learn in an undergraduate education. This includes gaining the ability to think rationally, to weigh evidence carefully, and to express conclusions in clear writing. Learning the vocabulary of a discipline is important, as well as is becoming familiar with its facts and theories, but these are secondary to learning how to think. I have three objectives for this class:

1) To learn the terminology, vocabulary, and objectives of bioethics.
2) To understand the ethical and philosophical underpinnings of bioethics and to develop ethical intuitions on bioethical issues.
3) To understand the tools and approaches needed to make a bioethical decision and to communicate that decision in rationally informed ways.

The lectures will introduce the concepts and case studies that will form the backbone of the class. The discussion lab sections will be an opportunity to apply these concepts through informed discussion. For this class, you must be signed up for the lecture section on Mondays and one of the lab sections.
**The TAs and Lab Sections**

Your TAs for this class are not bioethicists; they are students like yourselves who have had bioethics and have been trained in assessing writing and facilitation. You may know more about bioethics than they do (or more than I do!) but they are the leaders of the lab sections and they are to be respected at all times. They are there to facilitate discussion, keep things orderly, and track your progress.

Sharing your ideas verbally is a vital part of this class. You are expected to boldly share your own ideas as well as respect the ideas of your peers. During the lab sections you will be given a certain number of glass beads. Each time you make a comment you will hand in a bead. Once your beads are gone, you will be silent until everyone has used their beads. Moreover, you must use all your beads. This is to ensure that everyone gets a say. After the beads are gone the discussion may proceed naturally.

Here are some rules that will help the lab sections:

1. TAs are to be obeyed. If they are not obeyed, your grade may/will suffer.
2. Come to your section having read the material. If you have not, there is no point in being there.
3. You are likely to have differing opinions with others in the class, so remember to be respectful at all times.
4. If you have a problem with the TA, see me (but know that I will likely be on his/her side).
5. I am responsible for these sections even though I may not be there. I have picked the readings, I have discussed with the TAs about which issues I think need to be brought up, and I will meet with them afterwards to discuss how things went. If these sessions go badly, blame me – not them. But do tell me if you have a problem so we can work to improve things.

**Grading**

Letter grades are assigned on a typical scale (for example, B- is 80-82, B is 83-86, B+ is 87-89, A- is 90-94, A is >94). The percentage that you obtain in each grading area is what determines your grade in this class. Here is the breakdown of each area and its part of the whole grade:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lab Section Participation</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Quizzes</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weekly Responses</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Movie Review</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>22%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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**Lab Section Participation (5%)**

This assessment will be made by your TA based on how often and appropriately you comment, how well prepared you come to lab section, and your respect for others’ comments.

**Readings and Reading Quizzes (15%)**

The readings are found under “Readings”, on the left side of the class website: [http://byubioethics.weebly.com](http://byubioethics.weebly.com) To log into the website, the password is: deontology

At the beginning of every lab section you will be given a short quiz on the reading. If you have done the reading you will find this quiz trivially easy. If you have not read, or if you just skimmed it, it is unlikely that you will be able to answer the questions. **Please do the readings.** They are essential to getting
anything out of this class. The final question on every reading quiz is: “True or False: I attended the Bioethics lecture this week”. The lowest quiz score of the semester will be dropped.

Weekly Responses (15%)
A one-page response responding to that week’s readings is due in every lab/quiz section. (This starts the second week of classes.) These responses must be: one full page, double-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, and 1” margins. Do not spend space summarizing the readings – I know what the readings say. This is your space to analyze and apply what you learned from the readings. Consider the following questions: What did I take from these readings? In what ways did these papers make me change my mind or help me consider other perspectives? How do the ethical theories we’ve discussed in class apply to the topics of these readings?

These essays will be graded by your TA, and they are pass/fail. In order to receive a passing grade, the essay must be at an 80% level or above. The purpose of these essays is to help you structure your thoughts for the lab discussion and to practice effectively communicating your thoughts about bioethical issues. There is a Weekly Response Rubric on the Syllabus page of the class website to clarify expectations for these responses. One weekly response will be dropped from your final grade (note: the dropped response may not be from the last week of labs).

Movie Review (15%)
You are required to watch one movie related to some aspect of bioethics and write a two-page bioethical review of that movie. If you have seen the film already, you must watch it again during this semester! Your review should contain a clear explanation and understanding of the bioethical issues at stake as well as a clear analysis of the film in terms of one or more of the bioethical theories we discuss in class. You should come to some conclusion on the issue and decide in which way(s) the characters acted ethically and in which way(s) they acted unethically. Finally, give your own judgment on the matter. At the top of the first page, put the date you watched the film in bold. This paper must be exactly 2 pages long and be formatted as follows: double-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, 1” margins, with page numbers centered in the bottom of the page, your name at the top right of the page along with the date you watched the film (the date must be in bold).

On the Syllabus page of the class website is a list of approved movies; if you would like to watch a different one, you must get it approved by me. This page also provides a grading rubric. Due: Sep 24th, before lecture, on turnitin.com. The website will stop accepting submissions after 2:00 pm on this day! More information about using this website will be emailed later.

Research Paper (22%)
You will write a five-page research paper on a bioethical topic of your choice. You must research this topic thoroughly (providing at least 10 sources) and you will incorporate one or more case studies. A case study is a real-life experiment/situation/report/publication in which the issue was actually at stake. (For instance, a case study about animal cloning would be the case of Dolly the Sheep.) Approximately half of the paper should be research and case studies while the other half will be your analysis of the issues using the ethical theories discussed in class. You should come to a conclusion as to what course of action should be taken and why. This paper must be in APA format. Refer to this website for guidance with APA: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/ Note: While you must have a title page for your paper, you do not have to provide an abstract for your paper! Refer to the class website Syllabus page for the grading rubric. You are expected to have this paper reviewed by both the Writing Center and your TA. These reviews are mandated to help make your paper a good one, but ultimately it is up to
you to write a quality paper. This means if I find problems that the Writing Center or TAs did not, this is not their fault. You are fully responsible for the paper. The due dates are as follows:

Writing Center Draft – a draft must have already been reviewed by the Writing Center by Mon, Oct 29, by 5:00 pm. Refer to the Class Helps page on the website for help with topics, research, citations, and information about the Writing Center.

TA Draft – due in lecture on Mon, Nov. 5. TAs will have them completed by the next lecture, Nov. 12.

Final Draft – due at turnitin.com on Mon, Nov. 19 by 5:00 pm. This is the Monday before Thanksgiving. The website will stop accepting submissions at 5:00 pm!

Midterm (3%)
The midterm will be given at the testing center around Oct 16-Oct 19 (check calendar on website for exact dates) and will consist of approximately 35-50 multiple choice questions. The midterm is worth 3% of your grade, and is graded on a pass/fail basis, meaning that if you take it, you get 100% on it regardless of how you score. The point of the midterm is to let you experience the types of questions you will see on the final exam (which will be similar) and to see how you would have scored if it were the final exam. The questions on the midterm and final exam expect you to understand topics discussed in lecture as well as the topics from your readings. When you encounter a question about an ethical issue on the exams, you will be given certain assumptions and theories on which to base your decision.

Final (25%)
The final will be given in the testing center during finals week and will be similar in format to the midterm. Lab sections during the last week of classes will be, at least in part, reviews for the final.

Important Dates: See class website for full calendar.

Other Important matters:
1. Late Work Policy:
Assignments turned in late will be penalized 10% a day. I impose this penalty to be fair to all students. Too much leniency encourages mediocrity, excuse-making, and the unfair mixing of excellent work with lesser quality work.

Generally speaking, I do not accept excuses for late work, simply because they do not hold up in situations where planning and foresight are expected. These include anything to do with computer and printer difficulties. Plan on them and work them into your schedule. Also, anything to do with family excursions, family reunions, weddings, trips to the airport, school activities, obligations to other classes or organizations, and a sudden (but predictable) increase in workload due to end-of-the-semester commitments. No doubt these are all important activities but they should not be the basis for getting exemptions on deadlines. Just work harder and earlier to meet the deadline. Excuses we do accept are those normally accepted in the workplace: verifiable illness or accident, death in the family, etc.

2. Preventing Sexual Harassment:
Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination against any participant in an educational program or activity that receives federal funds. Title IX covers discrimination in programs, admissions, activities, and student-to-student sexual harassment.
ByU’s policy against sexual harassment extends not only to employees of the university but to students as well. If you encounter unlawful sexual harassment or gender-based discrimination, please talk to your
professor; contact the Equal Employment Office at 378-5895 or 367-5689 (24 hours); or contact the
Honor code Office at 378-2847.

3. Students with Disabilities:
BYU is committed to providing a working and learning atmosphere that reasonably accommodates
qualified persons with disabilities. If you have any disability that may impair your ability to complete this
course successfully, please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities Office (378-2767).
Reasonable academic accommodations are reviewed for all students who have qualified documented
disabilities. Services are coordinated with the student and instructor by the SSD Office. If you need
assistance or if you feel you have been unlawfully discriminated against based on disability, you may
seek resolution through established grievance policy and procedures. You should contact the Equal
Employment Office at 378-5895, D-282 ASB.

4. Honor Code; Cheating, etc.:
It is expected that students will abide by the BYU Code of Honor. It is a serious violation of the
Honor Code for a student to represent someone else's work as her or his own. It is also a serious
violation for anyone to help others in dishonest behavior such as copying another's work and
presenting it as their own. Cheating on exams will likewise not be condoned. Those who cheat in
any way or who plagiarize the work of another will be given a failing grade for the course, and a
formal report will be submitted to the Standards Office.