

Biology 813: Issues in Bioethics Spring 2024

Instructor: Dr. Austin Nuxoll

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Office hours: MWF 1:30pm – 2:30pm CST or by appointment

Course Materials:

- Required Texts: *Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Bioethical Issues*. 18th Edition. Gregory E. Kaebnick. ISBN: 9781260488333
- Announcements, quizzes, test, discussion boards, and position papers: All information for this class will be available on Canvas.
- E-mail: All students must use their UNK email account so that I can reach them.

Course Description: Bioethics is the study of ethical controversies in both biology and medicine. Science has progressed significantly in the last century and with this progress has come ethical questions. The intent of this course is to focus on a variety of issues that have arisen, including, but not limited to, assisted reproductive technologies, sex selection, cloning, and stem cell research to name a few. Offered online, Spring only.

Course Objectives:

1. To gain a broad background in biology and ethics.
2. To be able to make an informed analysis of bioethical issues.
3. To critically discuss bioethical issues in a group setting.

Students will achieve these objectives through quizzes, discussion board, and writing a critical overview.

Expectations:

Grades are based on participation and quality of discussion, weekly quizzes, a final comprehensive exam, and one writing assignment. There are no taped lectures for this course. Students must participate online for all discussion topics. The week runs from the Monday through the Sunday listed in the syllabus.

Grading Scheme:

	Points	Due Date
Discussion Board (15 chpt @ 10 pts each)	150	Bi-weekly
Quizzes (14 @ 10 pts each + 10 pts Intro)	150	Weekly (includes Introductions)
Position Paper (1 @ 100 pts each)	100	Monday, March 4 th by 11:59 pm CST
Comprehensive Final	100	Monday March 18 th at 11:59 pm CST
Total Points	500	

Grade assignment: Grades will be assigned using the standard grading scale for the Department of Biology, as follows: A (93-100%), A- (90-92%), B+ (88-89%), B (83-87%), B- (80-82%), C+ (78-79%), C (73-77%), C- (70-72%), D+ (68-69%), D (63-67%), D- (60-62%), and F (below 60%).

Week	Chapter	Quiz
#1a 1/22-1/29	Introduction: Biology, Medicine, and Ethics	Introductions
#1b 1/22-1/29	May Surrogate Decision Makers Terminate Care for a Person in a Persistent Vegetative State?	Timed quiz #1 over Chapter #1
#2a 1/29-2/5	Should Physician-Assisted Death Be Legalized?	Timed quiz #2 over Chapter #2
#2b 1/29-2/5	Should Embryos Produced During IVF Be Considered Children?	Timed quiz #3 over Chapter #3
#3a 2/5-2/12	Should a Pregnant Woman Be Punished for Exposing Her Fetus to Risk	Timed quiz #4 over Chapter #4
#3b 2/5-2/12	Should Pharmacists Be Allowed to Deny Prescriptions on Grounds of Conscience?	Timed quiz #5 over Chapter #5
#4a 2/12-2/19	Is Human Germline Gene Editing Morally and Socially Acceptable?	Timed quiz #6 over Chapter #6
#4b 2/12-2/19	Is the Use of Medical Tools to Enhance Human Beings Morally Troubling?	Timed quiz #7 over Chapter #7
#5a 2/19-2/26	Should Scientists Create Artificial Living Things?	Timed quiz #8 over Chapter #8
#5b 2/19-2/26	Could Conservation of Wild Species be Improved through the Use of De-extinction Tools?	Timed quiz #9 over Chapter #9
#6a 2/26-3/4	Position Paper due (3/4 at 11:59 pm CST)	
#6b 2/26-3/4	Does Government Overreach by Mandating Health Insurance?	Timed quiz #10 over Chapter #10
#7a 3/4-3/11	Is There an Ethical Duty to Provide Health Care to Undocumented Immigrants?	Timed quiz #11 over Chapter #11
#7b 3/4-3/11	Should Terminally Ill Patients Be Able to Gain Access to Experimental Treatments?	Timed quiz #12 over Chapter #12
#8a 3/11-3/18	Should HPV Vaccination Be Mandated?	Timed quiz #13 over Chapter #13
#8b 3/11-3/18	Is it Moral to Buy and Sell Human Organs?	Timed quiz #14 over Chapter #14
	Class will officially end at 11:59 CST Monday, March 18 th The comprehensive test will be removed at this time.	Timed on-line comprehensive test over all chapters

Discussion Board: You are posting as part of a **discussion**, not just for points. Each chapter/week discussion will be scored out of 10 points for a total of 150 points. You need to post during the week and weekend. You will be graded not on the number of posts per week (two is the minimum to get a score of any type for **each** question, it does NOT guarantee you will earn all the points possible), but on the **quality** of posts. **At least one post per discussion board** must have a peer-reviewed **science (not ethics or bioethics)** reference attached to it. Your other post(s) can have a Bioethics or ethics reference if you wish. This is a good practice in having an **informed** opinion. The score for your posts will be based upon critical thinking (a post rich in content and full of insight), connection with issue and real-life situations, uniqueness (new ideas and new connections), depth and detail of posts, respect for

classmates, and **discussion with classmates** (if you wait until Saturday and Sunday and are discussing with yourself or one other person, you get 0 points). As you can tell, I do not want people simply agreeing with each other or posting for points. You should be prepared to discuss the questions! The week runs from the Monday through the Sunday as listed above.

Quizzes: Throughout the semester, you will be given 14 timed quizzes worth 10 points each. In addition, the first week introductions will be counted as a quiz score. The quizzes will cover the book material. You will be allotted 5 minutes to answer 5 multiple choice, short answer, or true/false questions. If you run out of time while taking the quiz, you will NOT be given extra time. If you have a problem while taking your quiz, send me an email and I will deal with it as soon as possible. The computer displays a message that tells me what kind of problem you had, whether you took too much time or there was a computer problem. Everyone is expected to take all of the quizzes. The dates for the quizzes are listed on the schedule and will be made available at 8:00 am CST on Monday. You have until 11:59 pm CST on Monday of the week listed to take the quiz. For example, the first quiz will be put on blackboard at 8:00 am CST on Monday, January 29th and you have until 11:59 pm CST Monday, February 5th to take the quiz. The purpose of these quizzes is to make sure that you are keeping up with the course material.

Position Paper: Students will have one formal writing assignment, which is a position paper on “When does life begin” or “How should individual liberties and public health imperatives be balanced during a pandemic”. Specific details on this writing assignment will be provided for you on Canvas. For every day the report is late, your grade will be dropped one letter grade. FYI, late day grading starts at midnight on March 4th (i.e., as of this time, your paper is already a day late, even though it is only one minute late). Yes, you can hand these in early.

Final Exam: There is only one exam given and it is a comprehensive exam over the entire semester. The material on the exam will cover the book material. The exam will be composed of multiple choice, short answer, or true/false questions and is taken on-line. You will be given 80 minutes to answer 50 questions. Everyone is expected to take the exam.

UNK Library

The library is a good resource when looking for articles that may not be available online. The following links are especially usefully to distance students.

<https://guides.library.unk.edu/distance>

<https://unk.illiad.oclc.org/illiad/>

Academic Integrity Policy

All students at the University of Nebraska at Kearney are expected to conduct their academic affairs in an honest and responsible manner. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in academic work shall be subject to disciplinary actions. Acts of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to:

- plagiarism, i.e., the intentional appropriation of the work, be it ideas or phrasing of words, of another without crediting the source.
- cheating, i.e., unauthorized collaboration or use of external information during examinations;
- assisting fellow students in committing an act of cheating;
- falsely obtaining, distributing, using or receiving test materials or academic research materials;
- submitting examinations, themes, reports, drawings, laboratory notes, research papers or other work as one's own when such work has been prepared by another person or copied from another person (by placing his/her own name on a paper, the student is certifying that it is his/her own work);
- improperly altering and/or inducing another to improperly alter any academic record.

Additionally, graduate students are more likely to assume roles as active scholars. With these roles come added responsibilities for academic honesty. For such individuals academic honesty requires an active pursuit of truth, not just an avoidance of falsehood. This pursuit includes but is not limited to:

- providing a full and a complete representation of any scholarly findings, be it experimental data or information retrieved from archives;
- taking care that the resources of the University (e.g., library materials, computer, or laboratory equipment) are used for their intended academic purposes and that they are used in a manner that minimizes the likelihood of damage or unnecessary wear;
- assuring that one's co-workers are given due credit for their contributions to any scholarly endeavor;
- respecting a diversity of opinion and defending one's colleagues as well as one's own academic freedom;
- respecting the rights of other students who may come under the tutelage of the graduate student and being fair and impartial in grading and other forms of evaluation; and
- seeking permission from an instructor when submitting work that has been used in other courses.

In cases of alleged academic dishonesty, the instructor shall attempt to discuss the matter with the student and explain the sanction(s) which he/she plans to impose. In the event that the student challenges the allegation of academic dishonesty, or is not satisfied with the sanction(s) imposed by the instructor, the student may file an appeal according to the approved appeal policies of the University of Nebraska Graduate College.

Withdraw (W)

Students in full-semester courses in Fall and Spring semesters may withdraw from one or more courses from their schedule until the end of the twelfth week of the semester. A grade of "W" will automatically be noted on the transcript for these courses. For courses of duration other than full semester and all Summer term courses, students may withdraw and receive a "W" after the first day of the class through the three-fourths point of the class meeting duration. The last day to withdraw from a full semester course can be found on the [academic calendar](#).

Students who withdraw from one or more courses after the 100% refund period will be obligated to UNK for that portion of tuition and fees that is indicated on the [refund schedule](#).

A student may not withdraw from a course after the course, or the semester/session has ended.

Incomplete (I)

The mark of "I" (Incomplete) is reserved for conditions in which the student is unable to complete the course by the end of the term due to highly unusual circumstances beyond their control (e.g., serious illness, etc). Under these circumstances, the instructor should be notified as soon as possible, during the semester. In such cases, the instructor may award the student an "I" (incomplete) instead of a final grade at the end of the semester. The "I" is recorded on the student's grade report and transcript.

Unless an extension of time is granted, by the Registrar's Office, an incomplete must be removed within twelve calendar months from the end of the semester in which the "I" was recorded by completion of course requirements established by the instructor. If the coursework is not completed and a change of grade is not filed with the Registrar's Office within twelve calendar months from the time it was awarded, or an extension has not been granted by the Registrar's office, the "I" will convert to a grade of "F" on the student's transcript. Some courses are eligible to be repeated, in which case the "F" will be marked as a repeated course on the student's transcript.

Student Accommodations

Students with Disabilities

It is the policy of the University of Nebraska at Kearney to provide flexible and individualized reasonable accommodation to students with documented disabilities. To receive accommodation services for a disability, students must be registered with the UNK Disabilities Services for Students (DSS) office, 175 Memorial Student Affairs Building, 308-865-8214 or by email unkdso@unk.edu

UNK Statement of Diversity & Inclusion:

UNK stands in solidarity and unity with our students of color, our Latinx and international students, our LGBTQIA+ students and students from other marginalized groups in opposition to racism and prejudice in any form, wherever it may exist. It is the job of institutions of higher education, indeed their duty, to provide a haven for the safe and meaningful exchange of ideas and to support peaceful disagreement and discussion. In our classes, we strive to maintain a positive learning environment based upon open communication and mutual respect. UNK does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, religion, sex, gender, sexual orientation, disability or political affiliation. Respect for the diversity of our backgrounds and varied life experiences is essential to learning from our similarities as well as our differences. The following link provides resources and other information regarding D&I:

<https://www.unk.edu/about/equity-access-diversity.php>

Students Who are Pregnant

It is the policy of the University of Nebraska at Kearney to provide flexible and individualized reasonable accommodation to students who are pregnant. To receive accommodation services due to pregnancy, students must contact the Student Health office at 308.865.8218. The following links provide information for students and faculty regarding pregnancy rights. <https://thepregnantscholar.org/title-ix-basics/>

<https://nwlc.org/resource/faq-pregnant-and-parenting-college-graduate-students-rights/>

Reporting Student Sexual Harassment, Sexual Violence or Sexual Assault

Reporting allegations of rape, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, sexual harassment, and stalking enables the University to promptly provide support to the impacted student(s), and to take appropriate action to prevent a recurrence of such sexual misconduct and protect the campus community. Confidentiality will be respected to the greatest degree possible. Any student who believes she or he may be the victim of sexual misconduct is encouraged to report to one or more of the following resources:

- **Local Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault Advocacy Agency** 308-237-2599
- **Campus Police (or Security)** 308-865-8911
- **Title IX Coordinator** 308-865-8655

Retaliation against the student making the report, whether by students or University employees, will not be tolerated.

Mental Wellness

The UNK Counseling Center provides mental health services to support the academic success of students. The Counseling Center provides a full range of short-term professional mental health services.

Getting help is a smart and courageous thing to do. Contact the UNK Counseling Center at 308-865-8248 or visit their website for more

information: https://www.unk.edu/offices/counseling_healthcare/counseling_care/index.php

Military and Veteran Services

Military and Veteran Services assist veterans, service members, and their dependents with education benefits and academic and supporting resources. They serve as a liaison between students and the Veterans Administration and branches of the military. Contact the UNK Military and Veteran Services office at 308-865-8677 or visit their website for more

information: https://www.unk.edu/offices/financial_aid/veterans_services/index.php

Technical Support

LoperTECH Service Desk Phone: 308-865-8363 Email: support@nebraska.edu

If you are having problems or technical issues with Canvas, please contact ITS.

Course Policies**Contact and Response**

I will try to respond to your emails as quickly as possible (within 2 business days). There may be instances in which I do not respond until the next business day (e.g., if you email me on a Friday night I may not email back until Monday).

Please check your UNK email account and Canvas announcements on a regular basis. I will only use your official UNK email address for communication, so it is your responsibility to ensure you are receiving emails regarding this course.

When sending emails, treat the message as if you were sending it in a professional situation (e.g., to a boss or supervisor).

Course Conduct

Be considerate to your fellow students. In this class, I encourage comments and questions. As such, I ask that you are respectful and courteous towards one another.

Late Policy

You are responsible for following the course schedule and completing tasks by their due dates. Late assignments may not be accepted (this is at the discretion of the instructor). Technology issues are NOT an excuse for late submissions. This includes: corrupted files, spotty WiFi, hard drive failures, and other computer problems.

Copyright

During this course, you are prohibited from selling notes to or being paid for taking notes by any person or commercial firm without the express written permission of the professor teaching this course.

Finals Week Policy

The final exam will be administered in the time period scheduled during finals week in accordance with University policy ([Final Exam Schedule](#)).