

Biology 813: Issues in Bioethics

Spring 2023

Instructor: Dr. Yipeng Sui
E-mail: suiy@unk.edu

Office: Bruner Hall of Science 201E
Office Hours: by appointment

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.

COURSE MATERIALS

- Required Texts: *Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Bioethical Issues*. 18th Edition. Gregory E. Kaebnick. ISBN: 9781260488333
- Announcements, assignments, exams, and quizzes will be available on Canvas. Students should check Canvas regularly.
- All students MUST use their UNK email account to communicate with the instructor. You should check your email at least once per day.
- Respondus Lockdown Browser is **REQUIRED/MANDATORY** for all quizzes and exams! Here is the link to download: <https://download.respondus.com/lockdown/download.php?id=477439341%20>. More information is on Canvas. This will NOT work on a Chromebook or Linux computer.

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. Make sure you don't miss any due dates. The quality of the discussion is exhibited by the contribution of original ideas, respect for differing opinions, and evidence of knowledge on the subject matter. Students are required to maintain a professional and cordial mannerism when communicating with the instructor and other students. Students are encouraged to communicate with the instructor by Zoom or email about their questions and concerns. I will check my email Mondays to Fridays between 9 am and 5 pm CST. I do not check email after 5 pm CST and rarely on weekends. I will respond to your emails within 24 hours.

NOTICE ON USE OF COPYRIGHT MATERIAL

The materials on the course Canvas site and given in lecture are only for the use of students enrolled in this course for purposes associated with this course and may not be retained or further disseminated. The materials on the course Canvas site and in class may be protected by copyright, and any further use or dissemination of this material may be in violation of Federal copyright law and University sanctions including failure in the course.

GRADE SCALE

Grades will be assigned using the standard grading scale for the Department of Biology, as follows: A+ (98.0-100%), A (92.0-97.9%), A- (90.0-91.9%), B+ (88.0-89.9%), B (82.0-87.9%), B- (80.0-81.9%), C+ (78.0-79.9%), C (72.0-77.9%), C- (70.0-71.9%), D+ (68.0-69.9%), D (62.0-67.9%), D- (60.0-61.9%), and F (below 60%). Grade assignments are final unless there is a calculation error.

GRADING SCHEME

Changes may be made at the discretion of the instructor.

Activities	Points	Due date
Discussion Board (14 @ 10 pts each)	140	Weekly Sunday by 11:59 pm CST
Quizzes (13 @ 10 pts each + 10 pts Intro)	140	Weekly Sunday by 11:59 pm CST
Position Paper (1 @ 100 pts each)	100	March 17th Friday by 11:59 pm CST
Comprehensive Final Exam	100	March 19th Sunday by 11:59 pm CST
Total Points	480	

DISCUSSION BOARD: There are **two** discussion boards each week. You are posting as part of a **discussion**, not just for points. Each discussion board will be scored out of 10 points. You need to post during the week and weekend. You will be graded not on the number of posts per discussion board (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. For each discussion board, at least **one post** 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. You are to be prepared to discuss the questions, instead of simply agreeing with each other! The week runs from the Monday through the Sunday as listed above.

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
- Discussion with classmates** (if you wait until Saturday & Sunday and are discussing with yourself or one other person, you get 0 points!)

QUIZZES: Throughout the semester, you will be given 13 timed quizzes worth 10 points each. Respondus Lockdown Browser is required for online exams and quizzes. In addition, the first week self-introduction will be counted as a quiz score. The quizzes will cover the book material. You will be allotted to answer the multiple choice, short answer, or true/false questions. You will have only one chance to answer the question. Therefore, make sure to answer carefully. 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 open at 8:00 am CST on the Monday of the week and closed at 11:59 pm CST on Sunday of the week. 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". Specific details on this writing assignment will be provided for you on Canvas. **The deadline is final!** In all cases, the final validity and acceptability of any excuse for absence are at the instructor's discretion. Please turn your paper 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. Respondus Lockdown Browser is required for online exams and quizzes. Everyone is expected to take the exam.

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.

<http://library.unk.edu/services/distance.php>

<http://library.unk.edu/services/illdd.php>

If you have specific questions about Interlibrary loan contact Sheryl Heidenreich at heidenreichs@unk.edu.

LATE WORK/MAKE-UP EXAM POLICY

Students are strongly encouraged to complete assignments, quizzes, and exams several hours before due. There will be no opportunity to make up missed quizzes, assignments or exams, and a score of zero will be assessed. The deadline is final! The exams will be removed at 11:59 pm on the due date. Late papers will not be accepted! Makeup exams will be given only under extreme or extenuating circumstances, which can be documented! In any and all cases, the final validity and acceptability of any excuse for absence are at the instructor's discretion.

PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Neither will be tolerated! I have a **ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY** for both of these. Do either of them and you will automatically fail this course, not be allowed to re-enroll, possibly have criminal charges brought against you, and possibly be unable to enroll in future Biology courses.

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>

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.

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/>

COURSE TIMELINE

Topics and dates are tentative and subject to change by the instructor.

Week / Date	Chapter / Topic	Activities
#1 / (1/23 – 1/29)	Section A: Introduction: Biology, Medicine, and Ethics Section B: May Surrogate Decision Makers Terminate Care for a Person in a Persistent Vegetative State?	Self-Introduction Discussion #1 Timed quiz #1 Discussion #2
#2 / (1/30 – 2/5)	Section A: Should Physician-Assisted Death Be Legalized? Section B: Should Embryos Produced During IVF Be Considered Children?	Timed quiz #2 Discussion #3 Timed quiz #3 Discussion #4
#3 / (2/6 – 2/12)	Section A: Should a Pregnant Woman Be Punished for Exposing Her Fetus to Risk? Section B: Should Pharmacists Be Allowed to Deny Prescriptions on Grounds of Conscience?	Timed quiz #4 Discussion #5 Timed quiz #5 Discussion #6
#4 / (2/13 – 2/19)	Section A: Is Human Germline Gene Editing Morally and Socially Acceptable? Section B: Is the Use of Medical Tools to Enhance Human Beings Morally Troubling?	Timed quiz #6 Discussion #7 Timed quiz #7 Discussion #8
#5 / (2/20 – 2/26)	Section A: Should Scientists Create Artificial Living Things? Section B: Could Conservation of Wild Species be Improved through the Use of De-extinction Tools?	Timed quiz #8 Discussion #9 Timed quiz #9 Discussion #10
#6 / (2/27 – 3/5)	Section A: Does Government Overreach by Mandating Health Insurance? Section B: Is There an Ethical Duty to Provide Health Care to Undocumented Immigrants?	Timed quiz #10 Discussion #11 Timed quiz #11 Discussion #12
#7 / (3/6 – 3/12)	Section A: Should Terminally Ill Patients Be Able to Gain Access to Experimental Treatments? Section B: Should HPV Vaccination be Mandatory?	Timed quiz #12 Discussion #13 Timed quiz #13 Discussion #14
#8 / (3/13 – 3/19)	Section A: Position Paper due on 3/17 Section B: Comprehensive Final Exam due on 3/19	Position Paper Final Exam