

PHIL 244.1001 BIOETHICS



Blood letting. Attributed to Aldobrandino of Siena: Li Livres dou Santé. France, late 13th Century. The British Library, Sloane 2435

PROFESSOR

Simone Gubler

CONTACT

simoneg@unr.edu

LECTURE TIMES

10:00AM-10:50AM MW

LECTURE LOCATION

<https://unr.zoom.us/j/82508725277>

OFFICE HOURS

Monday & Wednesday 3PM-4PM

OFFICE LOCATION

<https://unr.zoom.us/j/83927726115>

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Historically, pandemics have forced humans to break with the past and imagine their world anew. This one is no different. It is a portal, a gateway between one world and the next. We can choose to walk through it, dragging the carcasses of our prejudice and hatred, our avarice, our data banks and dead ideas, our dead rivers and smoky skies behind us. Or we can walk through lightly, with little luggage, ready to imagine another world. And ready to fight for it.
- Arundhati Roy, April 3, 2020, Financial Times.

We are living through an extraordinary and challenging time. This course is designed both to introduce you to the field of bioethics, and to present you with an opportunity to grapple - in a philosophically rich way - with the ethical implications of life during a pandemic.

Our focus throughout this course will be on questions of healthcare and justice that are provoked by the COVID-19 pandemic. We will learn about important bioethical concepts and arguments, and consider how they might apply to questions provoked by the present moment - questions such as:

How should scarce medical resources like ventilators and vaccines be allocated? What special duties might doctors have during a pandemic? When are mandatory lockdowns and quarantines justified? How responsible are individuals for stopping the spread of disease? What resources must the state provide to ensure the health and well-being of the public? In what ways has the pandemic disproportionately impacted the rights and well-being of particular social groups? What information about the pandemic can we trust, and why? What cracks has the pandemic exposed in our society: and what steps should we take to build a more equitable future?

We will meet synchronously twice a week (MW). Our third (F) class is asynchronous - it features recorded conversations with experts in ethical thought (many of whom have authored texts assigned in this course).

POLICIES

Office Hours

All students are encouraged to visit me during my office hours. I want each of you to come at least once, early on in the semester, so that I can get to know you. To this end, I will ask you to sign up for a one-on-one meeting with me in Week Two. Office hours represent a good opportunity to discuss any questions you might have in relation to the course, as well as to troubleshoot any challenges that threaten your success.

Readings

All assigned readings are compulsory. You do not need to buy a text for this course. All readings are on Web Campus. Some of the readings consist of edited extracts from longer works, so be sure to use the versions online in preparation for class.

Disability Services

If you are a student who would normally seek accommodations in a traditional classroom, please contact me as soon as possible. You may also contact the Disability Resource Center for services for online courses by emailing drc@unr.edu or calling 775-784-6000. Academic accommodations for online courses may be different than those for seated classrooms; it is important that you contact us as soon as possible to discuss services. The University of Nevada, Reno supports equal access for students with disabilities. For more information, visit the Disability Resource Center. This course may leverage 3rd party web/multimedia content, if you experience any issues accessing this content, please notify your instructor.

Academic Honesty

Many norms will be in question in this course. One community standard that will not be up for debate, however, is academic honesty. The University Academic Standards Policy defines academic dishonesty, and mandates specific sanctions for violations. See the University Academic Standards policy: UAM 6,502.

Student Learning Outcomes

As stipulated in the UNR course catalogue, upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. state a thesis about a text in bioethics, and provide evidence and philosophical argument (including replies to counter-arguments) in its defense.
2. analyze at an introductory level some fundamental issues and problems in bioethics.
3. distinguish better and worse reasoning in texts concerned with bioethics.
4. explain the practical implications of an abstract debate in the bioethics literature, especially in the light of recent or evolving scientific/technological developments.

Audio and Video Recording

Surreptitious or covert video-taping of class or unauthorized audio recording of class is prohibited by law and by Board of Regents policy. This class may be videotaped or audio recorded only with the written permission of the instructor. In order to accommodate students with disabilities, some students may be given permission to

POLICIES

record class lectures and discussions. Therefore, students should understand that their comments during class may be recorded.

Equal Opportunity and Title IX

The University of Nevada, Reno is committed to providing a safe learning and work environment for all. If you believe you have experienced discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic/dating violence, or stalking, whether on or off campus, or need information related to immigration concerns, please contact the University's Equal Opportunity & Title IX office at 775-784-1547. Resources and interim measures are available to assist you. For more information, please visit: <https://www.unr.edu/equal-opportunity-title-ix>

COVID-19 Training Policies

Students must complete and follow all guidelines as stated in the Student COVID-19 Training modules, or any other trainings or directives provided by the University.

Face Coverings

In response to COVID-19, and in alignment with local, state, and U.S. Center for Disease Control guidelines, face coverings are required at all times in all UNR indoor public spaces, including classroom, laboratory, studio, creative space, or any type of in-person instructional activity, and public spaces. Furthermore, individuals who have not been fully vaccinated against COVID 19 are required to wear a face covering at all times while on campus, including all indoor and outdoor public spaces. A "face covering" is defined as a "covering that fully covers a person's nose and mouth, including without limitation, cloth face mask, surgical mask, towels, scarves, and bandanas" (State of Nevada Emergency Directive 024). Students that cannot wear a face covering due to a medical condition or disability, or who are unable to remove a mask without assistance may seek an accommodation through the Disability Resource Center.

COVID-19 Social Distancing

Face coverings are not a substitute for social distancing. Students shall observe current social distancing guidelines where possible in accordance with the Phase we are in while in the classroom, laboratory, studio, creative space (hereafter referred to as instructional space) setting and in public spaces. Students should avoid congregating around instructional space entrances before or after class sessions. If the instructional space has designated entrance and exit doors students are required to use them. Students should exit the instructional space immediately after the end of instruction to help ensure social distancing and allow for the persons attending the next scheduled class session to enter.

Accommodations for COVID 19 Quarantined Students

For students who are required to quarantine or self-isolate due to 1) COVID 19 infection or 2) exposure while not vaccinated, instructors must provide opportunities to make-up missed course work, including assignments, quizzes or exams. In courses with mandatory attendance policies, instructors must not penalize students for missing classes while quarantined.

**Failure to Comply
with Policy
(including as
outlined in this
Syllabus) or
Directives of a
University
Employee**

In accordance with section 6,502 of the University Administrative Manual, a student may receive academic and disciplinary sanctions for failure to comply with policy, including this syllabus, for failure to comply with the directions of a University Official, for disruptive behavior in the classroom, or any other prohibited action. "Disruptive behavior" is defined in part as behavior, including but not limited to failure to follow course, laboratory or safety rules, or endangering the health of others. A student may be dropped from class at any time for misconduct or disruptive behavior in the classroom upon recommendation of the instructor and with approval of the college dean. A student may also receive disciplinary sanctions through the Office of Student Conduct for misconduct or disruptive behavior, including endangering the health of others, in the classroom. The student shall not receive a refund for course fees or tuition.

**Philosophical
Charity**

Some of the ideas that we'll deal with in this class are likely to seem very odd to you. You might even want to reject them outright. That's perfectly normal. When we encounter new or unfamiliar ideas and arguments, especially when they seem to threaten our standard ways of thinking about things, there's a strong impulse to reject them. But the art of being a good philosopher is, in part, the art of pushing through (and then rationally investigating) that initial reaction of repulsion to a strange idea. So, to that end, let's operate according to a guiding principle: 'the principle of charity':

"The principle of charity governs the interpretation of the beliefs and utterances of others. It urges charitable interpretation, meaning interpretation that maximizes the truth or rationality of what others think and say"

- R. Feldman, Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy

I'd like us to follow this principle in all of our work in this class — in our interactions with each other, with invited guests, as well as with the ideas in the set readings.

So, when someone makes an argument or claim:

- Start from the assumption that the person is rational and is trying to communicate something interesting and meaningful to you.
- Be generous: try to give the best possible interpretation to their statement.
- Be patient: avoid attributing wrongness or confusion until you've carefully considered whether a relevant insight may be derived from their statement.

ASSESSMENT

Vocabulary Quiz

- 5%** You will receive a vocabulary sheet on the 27th of January. You will have one week to complete the online vocabulary quiz, which will challenge you to use these words in context (due February 3rd on Web Campus).

Weekly Reading Quizzes and Online Discussion Posts

- 30%** These weekly quizzes and discussion posts require you to respond to prompts that draw on knowledge of the assigned readings and videos, and to interact productively with your classmates and philosophical ideas.

Podcast and Identity Verification

- 25%** This assignment asks you to make your own podcast. You will identify a pandemic-related story with ethical significance, and report on it, drawing on the ideas of at least three philosophers surveyed in this course, and making the ethical dimensions of the situation explicit for your audience. A detailed prompt may be found on Web Campus. Your podcast is due on March 14th. Per university policy, prior to the submission date, you will need to meet with me online in order to discuss your plan for the episode and verify your identity by showing a government- or university-issued ID. More information will be provided on WebCampus.

Final Take-home Exam

- 30%** The take-home exam will be distributed on May 3rd and will cover all material up to that date. Answers are due May 12th.

Participation and Attendance

- 10%** Participation in class exercises and discussion is expected. Attendance is also required. You are permitted two unexplained absences without penalty. Each further unexplained absence will result in a 2% reduction in the overall course grade.

Extra Credit

- 2%** Your education does not end at the classroom door. As an incentive to participate in, and benefit from, the research activity of the university at large, 2% extra credit (to be added to your final grade) is on offer to students who attend events that are relevant to this class (1% per event, maximum of two events). There is a list of eligible events on Web Campus as well as a prompt that you may use to write a critical summary of the event. Email me this summary to claim your extra credit.

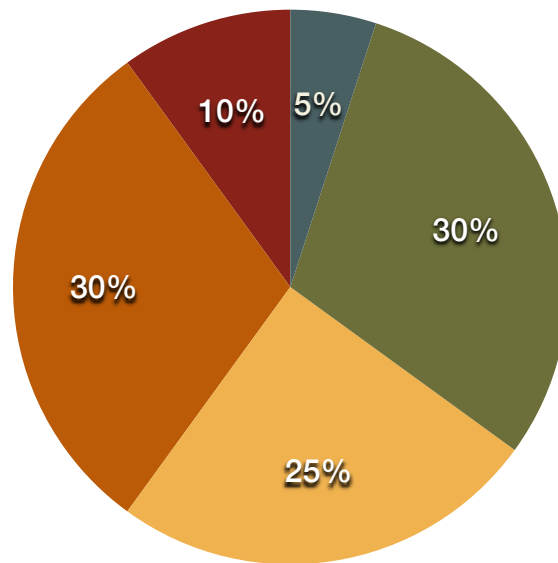
Late Work

If you face a challenge that threatens your ability to complete work by the due date, please contact me so that we can trouble-shoot the situation. Any work submitted late, and without an extension, will be subjected to a grade penalty of 5% per day.

GRADES

A	94-100	A-	90-93
B+	87-89	B	84-86
B-	80-83	C+	77-79
C	74-76	C-	70-73
D+	67-69	D	64-66
D-	60-63	F	0-59

- Vocabulary Quiz 5%
- Weekly Quizzes and Discussion Posts 30%
- Podcast 25%
- Take-Home Exam 30%
- Participation 10%



SCHEDULE OF READINGS

WEEK ONE Monday, January 25	Introduction	<i>Syllabus</i>
WEEK ONE Wednesday, January 27	Quarantine & Lockdowns Vocabulary list distributed	Gerald Lang, <i>Costs and Risk Imposition</i> and Stephanie Collins, <i>Are you complicit in deaths if you don't stay home? How to do good during the virus lockdown</i>
WEEK ONE Friday, January 29		<u>Watch:</u> 1. <i>Fair Warning</i> 2. <i>Guided by the Science</i> 3. <i>Playing it Down</i>
WEEK TWO Monday, February 1	Freedom and Paternalism	J.S. Mill, extracts from <i>On Liberty</i>
WEEK TWO Wednesday, February 3	Vocabulary quiz due	Gerald Dworkin, "Paternalism," from <i>Morality, Harm and the Law</i>
WEEK TWO Friday, February 5	Scarce Resource Allocation and Triage: Valuing Lives and Fairness	Listen: <i>Radiolab - Playing God</i>
WEEK THREE Monday, February 8		Ezekiel Emanuel et al., <i>Fair Allocation of Scarce Medical Resources in the Time of COVID-19</i> and Ben Bramble, <i>Triage</i> (from <i>Pandemic Ethics</i>)
WEEK THREE Wednesday, February 10	Quality Adjusted Life Years (QALYs)	Elizabeth Barnes - extracts from <i>The Minority Body</i> and John Harris, <i>The Value of Life</i>
WEEK THREE Friday, February 12		Watch: <i>Health, Disability, and Triage</i> - Elizabeth Barnes, August Gorman, and Christopher Lunsford

SCHEDULE OF READINGS

WEEK FOUR Monday, February 15	Lotteries and Fairness	Martin Paterson, <i>Pandemic Influenza and Utilitarianism</i> and Iwao Hirose, <i>Should We Select People Randomly?</i>
WEEK FOUR Wednesday, February 17		John Taurek - <i>Should the Numbers Count?</i>
WEEK FOUR Friday, February 19		Watch: <i>Moral Dilemmas, Moral Risk, and Science in a Democratic Society</i> - Philip Kitcher and Max Khan Hayward
WEEK FIVE Monday, February 22	Valuing Life - Age and Disability	Greg Bognar, <i>Fair Innings</i>
WEEK FIVE Wednesday, February 24		Franklin G. Miller, <i>Why I Support Age-Related Rationing of Ventilators for COVID-19 Patients</i> and Diana Popescu and Alexandru Marcoci, <i>Allocating ICU Beds and Ventilators Based on Age is Discriminatory</i>
WEEK FIVE Friday, February 26	Human Challenge Trials	Watch: <i>Risk, Fairness, and Challenge Trials</i> - Nir Eyal
WEEK SIX Monday, March 1		Nir Eyal, <i>Why Challenge Trials of SARS-CoV-2 Vaccines Could Be Ethical Despite Risk of Severe Adverse Events</i>
WEEK SIX Wednesday, March 3	Informed Consent	Gopal Sreenivasan, <i>Does informed consent to research require comprehension?</i> and Arnon Keren and Ori Lev, <i>Uncertainty, error and informed consent to challenge trials of COVID-19 vaccines</i>
WEEK SIX Friday, March 5	Vaccine Distribution	Watch: <i>Vaccine Distribution and Justice</i> - a panel with Lisa Herzog and Brian Berkey

SCHEDULE OF READINGS

WEEK SEVEN Monday, March 8		Ezekiel J. Emanuel et al. <i>An Ethical Framework for Global Vaccine Allocation</i> and NY Times, <i>People Are Dying - Whom Do We Save First With the Vaccine?</i>
WEEK SEVEN Wednesday, March 10	Reading Day	No Class Meeting
WEEK SEVEN Friday, March 12	Note: Podcast due March 14	Watch: <i>Inside Italy's COVID War</i>
WEEK EIGHT Monday, March 15	Health Workers and Role Ethics	Arthur Izak Applbaum, <i>Professional Detachment: The Executioner of Paris</i>
WEEK EIGHT Wednesday, March 17		Arthur Izak Applbaum, and <i>Doctor Schmoctor, Practice Positivism and its Complications</i> and Udo Schulenk, <i>Health Care Professionals Are under No Ethical Obligation to Treat COVID-19 Patients</i>
WEEK EIGHT Friday, March 19	The Post-Pandemic Future of Work	Watch: <i>Labor, Exploitation, and Work in the Aftermath of the Pandemic</i> - Joshua Cohen, Matt Zwolinski
WEEK NINE Monday, March 22		Judy Fudge and Mundlak, <i>The Future of Work and the COVID-19 Pandemic</i>
WEEK NINE Wednesday, March 24	Reading Day	No Class Meeting
WEEK NINE Friday, March 26		Watch: <i>Gender, Labor, and the Pandemic</i> - Gina Schouten, Judy Fudge
WEEK TEN Monday, March 29		Joshua Cohen, <i>Good Jobs</i>

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WEEK TEN Wednesday, March 31		Gina Schouten, <i>The Pandemic May Set Gender Equality Back by Decades. Should Liberal Feminism Declare Bankruptcy?</i> and Nancy Fraser, <i>A Feminism Where 'Lean In' Means Leaning On Others</i>
WEEK TEN Friday, April 2		Listen: <i>What (new) forms of living might the coronavirus produce?</i> - Stephanie Collins
WEEK ELEVEN Monday, April 5	Collective Responsibility, Collective Action	Philip Pettit, <i>Responsibility Incorporated</i>
WEEK ELEVEN Wednesday, April 7		Stephanie Collins and Niels de Haan, <i>Interconnected Blameworthiness</i>
WEEK ELEVEN Friday, April 9		Watch: <i>Collective Action, Public Choice, and the Pandemic</i>
WEEK TWELVE Monday, April 12	Conspiracy Theories and COVID-19	Vox, <i>Why COVID-19 Conspiracy Theories have Spread so Quickly</i> and Rachel Fraser, <i>Epistemic FOMO</i>
WEEK TWELVE Wednesday, April 14		Thi Nguyen, <i>Echo Chambers</i>
WEEK TWELVE Friday, April 16		Watch: <i>Conspiracy Theories, Truth, and the Pandemic</i> - Rachel Fraser
WEEK THIRTEEN Monday, April 19		Regina Rini, <i>Fake News and Partisan Epistemology</i>
WEEK THIRTEEN Wednesday, April 21	Reading Day	No Class Meeting
WEEK THIRTEEN Friday, April 23		Watch: <i>Social Media, Social Epistemology, and the Pandemic</i> - Regina Rini
WEEK FOURTEEN Monday, April 26		Alex Worsnip, <i>The Obligation to Diversify One's Sources</i>

WEEK FOURTEEN Wednesday, April 28	One last provocation...	Daniel Halliday, <i>Should a COVID-19 Vaccine Be Mandatory?</i>
WEEK FOURTEEN Friday, April 30		Watch: <i>Games, Public Policy, and the Pandemic</i> - Thi Nguyen
WEEK FIFTEEN Monday, May 3	Exam review	
WEEK FIFTEEN Wednesday, May 5	Prep Day - No Class Take-home exam distributed	
WEEK SIXTEEN Wednesday, May 12	Take-home exam due	
