**Spring 2022 Syllabus for**

**PHIL 104: Bioethics**



Class time and location: MW, 12:00pm-1:15 pm in DH 110

Professor: Dr. Garret Merriam

Office Location: Mendocino 3028

Office Phone: 916-278-7588

Office hours: MW: 1:30 pm-2:45pm and by appointment

Email Address: merriam@csus.edu

**Course Description:** Ethical dilemmas faced by professionals and patients in the field of medicine, e.g., patient self-determination and informed consent, discrimination in health care, euthanasia, abortion, surrogate motherhood, genetic modification, and rights to health care. Emphasis is on the well-reasoned application of general moral principles to practical medical decisions.

**Readings:** All readings will be posted as PDFs on Canvas. There is no textbook for the course.

**Slides:** I will post the slides I use in lecture on Canvas. I strongly advise you to download these slides and bring your own copy of them with you to class.

**Grade Break Down:**

Discussion Boards: 150 points (10 points per week)

Reading Quizzes: 150 points (10 points per week)

Case Analysis: 150 (3 at 50 points apiece)

1-on-1 Meeting: 50 points

First Paper: 200 points (Due 4/1)

Second Paper: 300 points (Due 5/16)

Total: 1,000 possible points

Your final grade will be determined by the number of points you have out of a possible 1000. A = 1,000-930; A- =929-900; B+ = 899-870; B = 869-830; B- = 829-800; C+ = 799-770; C = 769-730; C- = 729-700; D+ = 699-670; D = 669-630; D- = 629-600%; F = 590-0%

Discussion Boards: For each reading there will be you will get a grade of 0-10 points for your participation in the discussion boards. As the name suggests, the boards should be about a dialogue between members.

To get full credit you MUST POST AT LEAST TWICE: once posting your thoughts in reaction to the reading, and second in reaction to someone else’s post. I’m looking to see that your posts are (a) relevant to the reading/topic at hand, (b) substantive (i.e.—more than just a single sentence) and (c) demonstrate that you’ve read the assigned reading, watched the video lecture, and thought about the topic. When responding to what other people have said you can agree or disagree with them, but either way you should ask questions, challenge them, try to get them to think more about the topic. (Just saying ‘I agree, great post!’ in your response doesn’t cut it.)

While there is no formal word count, posts less than 150 words or so are very unlikely to get full credit, as it is hard to demonstrate detailed consideration of the material in such a short length. I want to see that you’re really thinking about the material. Posts are due BEFORE the start of class in which the assigned reading is scheduled.

Reading Quizzes: Each week there will be a short quiz on the readings. Each quiz will be 5 questions long, worth 2 points each for a total of 10 points. The purpose of the quiz is to make sure you’ve done the reading, and will focus on the basic facts in the reading. The quizzes are open book, open notes. You will have 15 minutes to complete the quiz. Quizzes are due BEFORE the start of the class in which the assigned reading is scheduled.

Case Analysis: I will periodically post a set of case studies relevant to our recent readings. When you find a case that interests you, record a short (5-10 minute) video giving your thoughts on the case. To get full credit you need to (a) summarize the relevant key details of the case, (b) answer at least one of the questions posted in the case in detail, and (c) apply at least one moral theory or moral principle to the case.

1-on-1 Meeting: At least once during the semester you have to meet with me in my office hours (either in person or on Zoom.) I recommend discussing a draft of your paper with me, but it can be used to discuss anything course related (e.g.--difficulties you’re having with the material, something in the reading that caught your attention that we didn’t get to discuss in class, questions about your grade, etc.)

Papers: There are two papers for this class, each of which must be at least 1200 words long (about 4 pages, double-spaced). You will need to demonstrate both an understanding of what you’ve read and an ability to think about it and criticize it in your own terms. There will be a lecture dedicated to how to write a philosophy paper, and how I will apply the rubric when grading them.

Attendance Bonus and Penalty**:** “80% of life is just showing up.”To give you an incentive to show up, each one of you starts with 60 bonus points (out of 1000) that will be attributed to your final grade. Every time you miss a class, I take 30 points away from your grade. Hence, you can miss two classes before your extra points run out; after that, it starts eating into your earned points.

Extra Credit: There are several ethics related talks on campus this semester, including the departments’ Nammour Symposium. I will announce and list these talks on Canvas and in class. If you attend one of these talks and write a short (300 word) reflection on the talk and its relevance to our course material you may get up to 30 extra credit points (subject to my grading). You may attend as many of these talks as you wish, but there is a maximum of 60 total extra credit points possible.

Our First Two Weeks: Because of the current COVID situation the first two weeks of this semester will be entirely online. Hopefully after that we will be at our regular in-person class meetings. This uncertainty makes scheduling and pacing of the material a challenge. As such, I am keeping the reading schedule fluid for now, so we can adjust as we go, if needed. Once/if things become more concrete I will post a more complete reading list. For now, only the first two weeks are set. All readings will be posted on Canvas.

Week 1: **Moral Principles & Moral Theories** (Total pages: 18)

* Why Study Bioethics?
* “Principles and Theories in Bioethics”–Lewis Vaughn

Week 2: **Paternalism and Patient Autonomy** (Total pages: 20)

* “Paternalism and Patient Autonomy”–Lewis Vaughn
* “Confronting Death”—Dax Cowart and Robert Burt

**Course policies:**

Academic Dishonesty**:** I do not expect this problem to arise, but should you be caught cheating on a paper, this may be grounds for your **immediate failure** of the course. Everyone must complete [the Plagiarism Tutorial here](http://lib.usm.edu/plagiarism_tutorial/) before I will grade your papers. You will need to screen shot the results and submit them on Canvas, shortly before the first paper is due.

ALL incidents of cheating and plagiarism will be reported both to the Department Chair and to the Judicial Officer in the Office of Student Affairs for possible further administrative sanction. It is your responsibility to know and [comply with the University’s Stated Policy](http://www.csus.edu/umanual/AcademicHonestyPolicyandProcedures.htm).

Late Work Policy: Papers: I am usually willing to give short extensions, provided the request is made BEFORE the paper is due. Otherwise, no late papers will be accepted.

Quizzes: If you know you will miss a quiz notify me in advance and we can make arrangements for you to make up at a later date. Otherwise, no late quizzes/reflections will be accepted.

To prove that you read the syllabus: Beneath the syllabus posting on Canvas there is a tab labeled “Did you read the syllabus?” Click on it and attach a picture of a pet animal. It can be your cat, dog, bird, etc., or one you got from the internet, as long as it’s a picture of a pet. I will not grade any of your assignments until you complete this task.

If You’re Having Difficulty**:** Please contact me. I would like to give everyone an “A” and, to help make that possible, I’m also available to give tutorial help to anyone who needs and wants it. You must, however, let me know that you want the extra help.This course demands that your reading skills be at least the level of a first-year college student, and even then you may need to read with your dictionary handy.

If your reading or study skills are lacking, you may need extra help and extra effort. My goal is not for you or anyone to fail, but for you to succeed as well as you possibly can. You will have to do the work to meet the standards of the course, but I will be there in any way possible to help you do this--all you need do is call or email me for help.

Reasonable Accommodations**:** If you have a documented disability (visible or invisible) and require accommodation or assistance with assignments, tests, attendance, note taking, etc., please contact me by the end of the third week of semester so that arrangements can be made. Failure to notify and consult with the instructor by this date may impede my ability to offer you the necessary accommodation and assistance in a timely fashion. Also be sure to consult with the [Services to Students with Disabilities in Lassen Hall](http://www.csus.edu/sswd/index.html) to see what other campus services and accommodation options are available for you. Students with other types of accommodation requirements, such as English as a second language, are invited to discuss them with me to facilitate understanding and the best learning experience for all. All information will remain confidential.

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Contact Information for the Chair of the Department**:** If you have a problem with either the class or with me I would appreciate it if you talked to me about it first. But if you feel you cannot talk to me for some reason, you can talk to my department Chair, Dr. Russell DiSilvestro at rdisilv@csus.edu.

Student Health & Counseling Services: Due to the current and ongoing events faced by many during this public health crisis and era of civil unrest, the University recognizes that many of you may be in need of support. Please be aware that [Health and Counseling Services](https://www.csus.edu/student-life/health-counseling) staff are available for virtual and in-person services.

Additionally, if you are experiencing any COVID-like symptoms (fever, cough, sore throat, muscle aches, loss of smell or taste, nausea, diarrhea, or headache) or have had exposure to someone who has tested positive for COVID contact **Student Health & Counseling Services (SHCS) at 916-278-6461** to receive guidance and/or medical care. You are asked to report any possible COVID-related illnesses or exposures to SHCS via this link [COVID-19 Illness/Exposure Report Form](https://sacstateshcs.wufoo.com/forms/covid19-illnessexposure-report/). You should expect a call from SHCS within 24 hours. As an FYI, the [Sac State Mobile App](https://www.csus.edu/information-resources-technology/communication-collaboration/sacstate-mobile.html) also has a self-assessment tool, in case you would like to screen yourself for symptoms of COVID-19. Feel free to utilize it, especially if you plan on going somewhere where others may be exposed (such as going to campus). The app will also have information on the University’s latest on-campus protocols.