

# THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT TYLER

## Course Syllabus

### Course Information

PHIL 4301: Bioethics

Instructor: Gregory L. Bock, Ph.D.

Office: CAS 245 (by appointment)

E-Mail: [gbock@uttyler.edu](mailto:gbock@uttyler.edu)

Office Phone: 903.566.7456

Department Phone: 903.566.7373

### Catalog Description

A philosophical exploration of ethical issues that arise in medicine and other health-related fields

### Required Textbook

Medical Ethics: Accounts of Ground-Breaking Cases 9<sup>th</sup> Edition, by Gregory Pence, ISBN: 9781260241044 (only the 9<sup>th</sup> edition is acceptable)

### Student Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to...

1. explain several different theories of normative ethics.
2. apply normative ethics to bioethical cases.
3. identify the four principles of biomedical ethics.
4. defend a point of view on an end-of-life case.
5. defend a point of view on a beginning-of-life case.
6. carefully and accurately articulate a point of view different from one they hold.
7. demonstrate critical thinking skills in an essay on an ethical issue.
8. demonstrate a deeper understanding and sensitivity to the cultural and religious beliefs of stakeholders in the healthcare system.

### Grading

Initiator Posts (5 @ 100 points each):

400 points (lowest dropped)

Response Post Assignments (5 @ 10 pts each):	40 points (lowest dropped)
Quiz on Moral Theories and Principles	100 points
Research Project (1 @ 100 points each):	100 points
TOTAL:	640 points

## Grading Scale Percentages

A=90-100%, B=80-89%, C=70-79%, D=60-69%, F=less than 60%

## Assessment

**Discussion Board Assignment:** You'll make a minimum of six contributions to each discussion board: 1 initiator post + 5 response posts = 6 total posts (minimum). These posts will be spread out over three days, which means you need to be active on the board at least three separate days before the board closes. For example, you might post your initiator post on Friday, 2 response posts on Saturday, and 3 response posts on Sunday.

**INITIATOR POSTS:** You'll write one initiator post for each board. An initiator post is one that starts a thread based on the discussion prompt. A good post will offer a clear point of view and bring moral theory and principles to bear on the question.

The post must be at least 500 words. There's no maximum word count, but keep in mind that grades are not based on quantity of words but on demonstrated comprehension and critical thinking. The grading rubric below shows exactly what is expected.

Due dates are posted on each discussion board.

Connections and citations to the textbook are required. If you only use course material to quote from, quotation marks and parenthetical citations are enough, for example: "yada, yada" (*Pence, page number*). If students use even one outside source – like the excellent [Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#) – a reference list for *all* sources must be included at the end of the post and must follow Chicago Manual of Style (CMS). See [here](#) for Chicago examples, and see below for how proper citations affect the grade. I expect multiple references to course readings. There should also be several citations included (at least 3) and not just when you use a direct quote. A post that doesn't engage with the textbook can earn a 65% at best.

You must post first in order to view other posts. The edit function will be disabled. If you want to edit after posting, you may reply in the thread with corrections or request that I

delete the post. There must be a very good reason for deletion. For grading purposes, I consider your first post to be the initiator post even if it is blank or incomplete.

Late initiator posts can be turned in for a lower grade before the board officially closes. A late penalty of half a letter grade per day applies in each case unless accompanied by a valid excuse (e.g. a doctor's note that indicates a serious illness).

DISCUSSION BOARD RUBRIC (INITIATOR POSTS)	
0-35 points	Point of view is clear and well-defended.
0-35 points	Multiple connections made (at least 3) to the textbook (including citations)
0-10 points	Moral theory and principles play a prominent role in the post.
0-10 points	Conveys respect for other points of view even if it takes a contrary position
0-10 points	Grammar is polished, several citations are included, and style conforms to Chicago Manual of Style.

**RESPONSE POSTS:** In addition to the weekly initiator post, you'll write at least five response posts for each discussion board (for a total of 6 contributions: 1 initiator post + 5 response posts = 6). A response post is one that replies to a classmate's post and continues the conversation. One that ends the conversation or just says "I agree" in so many words does not qualify as a response. Good posts carry on the conversation in an interesting and relevant way and draw other students into the discussion. The minimum requirements for receiving credit for a response post are the following:

1. The post is 50 words.
2. The post is relevant to the thread.
3. The last sentence is a question.

Posts under 50 words don't count toward the required number of response posts. If you happen to post a few that are under 50 words, just make sure to post a few more posts that are 50 words.

If some of your posts don't end in a question, a deduction of **1 point** will be applied to the response post grade.

The penalty for not spacing out your posts over three days will be applied to the response post grade as a **3 point** deduction.

Extra credit will be awarded for posting extra response posts that meet the minimum conditions (above) for response posts (up to five extra posts). Response posts are due when the board closes (see each discussion board for date and time).

Late response posts will not be accepted. Once the board closes, there are no further opportunities to complete the assignment, so it's advisable to post early to avoid unforeseen events such as last-minute technical problems. Encountering technical issues is not a valid excuse for late work unless the issue is the university's fault.

The discussion board is the focus of the class, the main learning tool (notice the percentage of the grade). I will be active on the boards and hope to be involved in some rich conversations. Be sure to return regularly to the threads to reply to questions and comments, especially in your own thread. Learn how to search for posts, including mine, by using the search function on the board. When I reply to a post, I often take a contrary position as devil's advocate. My response to your posts should be interpreted as constructive and an opportunity to strengthen your argument. It doesn't mean that I don't like you or that I have a different moral or political stance than you. In fact, it's nearly impossible to figure out my personal beliefs from my posts. If I express a point of view, I do so for teaching purposes, to help you think more carefully about your own position and to extend the conversation. By the way, it's possible to get an A in this class and disagree with my personal opinions. It happens quite regularly.

Additional points will be deducted for late initiator posts. No late initiator or response posts are accepted after the board closes.

Cases of plagiarism earn an automatic zero and a possible F in the course. Plagiarized posts may be sent to UT Tyler Judicial Affairs to receive additional consequences. In short, do your own work, and be careful to give credit to the original author when you quote or paraphrase.

### ***Quiz on Moral Theories and Principles***

This quiz covers the content of Chapter 1 in the textbook. The quiz is taken in Canvas. It is open book, but students must work alone and not use other sources, such as the Internet.

### ***Research Project***

This assignment varies, depending on whether the student signed up for the in-person section or the online section. In-person students will give an oral presentation to the class in the form

of a philosophical argument at a time arranged with the instructor. Online students will submit an essay that meets the requirements below. The essay will be due at the end of the semester.

### Essay

This assignment is a persuasive essay that takes a point of view on one of the issues discussed in the class. It must engage the textbook closely, but it can include outside sources, too.

- 2000-2500 words
- Double-spaced
- No cover page
- Name and title at the top center of first page
- Page numbers on the bottom right of each page
- Standard twelve-point font (e.g. Times New Roman)
- One-inch margins
- .docx, rtf, or pdf file formats only
- The introduction should be no more than half a page.
- The conclusion should be no more than half a page and only review the main points.
- No inflammatory or disrespectful language

ESSAY RUBRIC (100 POINTS)	
0-35 points	<b>Is the argument strong?</b> The essay makes a clear claim and applies moral theories and principles in support of the claim.
0-35 points	<b>Are connections made with readings in the course?</b> Student makes multiple, relevant connections (with citations) to the textbook. Aim for at least two citations per paragraph.
0-15 points	<b>Is the paper civil and reasonable?</b> Does the author avoid polemical and demeaning language? Does the author seem to be aware of other points of view?
0-15 points	<b>Is the paper well-written?</b> Grammar is polished, and citation style conforms to <a href="#">Chicago Manual of Style</a> . Also, the paper meets the thesis statement and topic sentence requirements in the instructions and is a five-paragraph essay organized in the way described above.

Additional instructions may be presented in the Canvas drop box.

Additional points will be deducted for late papers and papers that don't satisfy the "basic requirements" above. Cases of plagiarism earn an automatic zero and a possible F in the course. Plagiarized papers may be sent to UT Tyler Judicial Affairs to receive additional consequences. Using ChatGPT to write your paper is considered plagiarism.

If you receive help from the Writing Center on an early draft and use the information to revise your paper, I will award you five extra credit points in the extra credit column, which amounts to half a letter grade on the paper. In order to receive extra credit, you must opt in to “email instructor” when you visit the Center. If I don’t receive an e-mail from the Writing Center, you will not receive credit. The Writing Center is often busy, so you must plan ahead and make an appointment. No exceptions will be made if you are too late in making your appointment.

### UT TYLER HONOR CODE

I embrace honor and integrity.  
Therefore, I choose not to lie, cheat or steal, nor to accept the actions of those who do.