

PHIL 3514: Biomedical Ethics  
University of Memphis

Course description

From the course catalog: "Biomedical Ethics" involves "discussion of ethical problems raised by contemporary medical practices and biological innovations from standpoint of contemporary ethical theories including abortion, euthanasia, behavior modification, human experimentation and genetic engineering."

This online course serves as an introduction to biomedical ethics. After surveying a range of moral theories and approaches to bioethical concerns, we will rely on both philosophical readings and case studies in our investigation into a variety of controversial topics central both to the discipline of biomedical ethics and to wider social debates. These will include research ethics and informed consent, physician-patient relationship (considering autonomy, truth-telling, and confidentiality), euthanasia, abortion, and genetic control (considering the use of embryonic stem cells and genetic screening/selection).

Throughout the course, every effort shall be made to explore and analyze the balance of considerations and arguments on all sides of an issue. Students will be required both to offer their perspectives and to learn from and engage the perspectives of others. Course objectives are as follows: students will acquire a deeper appreciation of the complexities involved in noteworthy bioethical debates; develop a facility for applying ethical theories and principles to bioethical concerns; advance skills in extracting, presenting, and critically evaluating bioethical arguments; and learn, study, and collaborate in an online educational environment.