

## **RELG 2650 – Religion and Bioethics: Beliefs, Bodies, and Power**

University of Virginia, Fall 2017

**Professor:** Nichole M. Flores, Ph.D.

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**Teaching Assistants:** Eric Hilker,  
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**Class Meetings:** MW 11-11:50,

Occasional Fridays 11-11:50

**Class Location:** Wilson 301

**Prof. Flores Office Hours:** M 12-1, TU 11-12

**Course Hashtag:** #UVAreligiousBioethics

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** What is the relationship between beliefs, bodies, and power? This course analyzes challenging ethical issues in religion and health care from various Christian (Catholic and Protestant), Jewish, and Islamic theological perspectives. We begin by exploring various bioethical frameworks (narrative, virtue, principles, social solidarity, etc.) before applying these methods to a range of practical issues: end of life care, maternal-fetal relations, human genetics, research ethics, and global health. In addition to theology and philosophy, the course engages the disciplines of politics, law, and public policy.

### **COURSE EXPECTATIONS AND POLICIES:**

- **Students are expected to attend every lecture.** You are permitted two (2) absences for any reason (no instructor approval needed). Check in on Top Hat to receive credit for being present and on time.
- **Students are expected to arrive on time for class, which begins promptly at 11am.** Tardiness disrupts your professor and classmates. The habit of tardiness reflects poorly on your capacity for professionalism in any field that you may choose to pursue.
- **Students are expected to attend every discussion section.** You are permitted one (1) absence for any reason (no TA approval necessary). Additional absences require approval from TA. Unexcused absences will result in a reduction of your participation grade.
- **Students are expected to use laptops, tablets, and phones responsibly during class.** These devices are only permitted for taking notes and utilizing the Top Hat platform during class.
- **Students are expected to complete the assigned reading every week.** Please come to class (both lecture and discussion section) prepared to discuss and engage the *primary arguments and salient points* of each text, along with the *strengths and limitations* of each argument. Failure to complete reading and prepare for class will result in a reduction of your participation grade.
- **Students are expected to submit assignments by their designated deadlines.** Late assignments will not be accepted and thus will receive no credit. Extensions may be granted by your TA in consultation with Prof. Flores in extraordinary situations (possibly during documented medical or family emergency, but never due to conflict with another course's requirements). Please contact your TA with questions.
- **Students are expected to take both the midterm and the final exam on their scheduled dates.** Exams will only be rescheduled upon official approval of the

- Dean's Office, no exceptions.
- **Students with documented disabilities can expect appropriate accommodations whenever necessary.** All students with special needs requiring accommodations should present the appropriate paperwork from the Student Disability Access Center (SDAC). It is the student's responsibility to present this paperwork in a timely fashion and follow up with the instructor (in this case, the discussion section TA) about the accommodations being offered. Accommodations for examinations (e.g., extended time, low distraction environment) should be arranged at least one week before an exam. The SDAC is located in the Department of Student Health and can be contacted at (434) 243-5180/5181.
  - **Student athletes are expected to present official notification of expected absences as soon as this information is available.** Exams may not be proctored by team academic representatives, no exceptions.

**HONOR CODE:** Students are to comply with all of the provisions of the University's Honor Code. By enrolling in this course, the student has agreed to abide by and uphold the Honor System of the University of Virginia, as well as the following policies specific to this course:

- **All graded assignments—response essays, examinations, and event attendance—must be pledged.** Please record your pledge at the end of each written assignment and examination. Please consult your TA if you have any questions about pledging assignments.
- **Collaboration in the form of discussion (study groups for exams) and peer review (for response essays) is permitted for this course.** Discussing essay ideas and consulting other students for help refining arguments, revision feedback, and editing is encouraged in this class. Please consult your TA if you have any questions about acceptable collaboration.
- **Unattributed use of material is prohibited on all assignments in this course.** Parenthetical citation is acceptable for response essays and direct quotations in exams. Please consult your TA if you have any questions about citation.
- **Posting PowerPoint presentations to online sources, either public or private, is prohibited for this class.** This is an infringement of intellectual property rights and will be reported to the University.
- **Recording lectures is strictly prohibited.** Exceptions for recording will be made for students with SDAC approval.
- **Recording any part of lecture and/or posting to social media (i.e. Snapchat, YouTube) without the professor's permission is prohibited for this class.**
- **Suspected violations will be forwarded to the Honor Committee.** Further, Prof. Flores may decide to assign a score of zero on the assignment in question regardless of any action taken by the Honor Committee.

**Please consult Prof. Flores any questions regarding the course honor policy.** If you believe you may have committed an Honor offense, you may wish to file a Conscientious Retraction by calling the Honor Offices at (434) 924-7602. For your retraction to be considered valid, it must be filed with the Honor Committee before you are aware that the act in question has come under suspicion by anyone. More information can be found at <http://www.virginia.edu/honor>. Your Honor representatives can be found at: <http://www.virginia.edu/honor/2015-2016-representatives/>.

**GRADING POLICY:** Written work is graded based on persuasiveness of **thesis/argument**, quality and authoritativeness of **evidence** (quality and factual correctness), **writing quality**, and depth of **analysis/insight**. Further, essays should model both charitable and critical engagement with the myriad religious perspectives explored in class. *Ad hominem* attacks on any author or religious perspective will be viewed negatively by the party responsible for grading the work (e.g. “The author is obviously stupid” or “People from X religion are depraved,” etc.)

- **Appealing Grades: A student may email TA to request an appointment for grade review, but must wait 48 hours after an assignment has been returned.** The TA will hear the case before consulting Prof. Flores for a final decision. Grade reviews can result in grade increase or reduction, or confirm the initial assigned grade.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:** Course grades will be based on the following elements:

- **Participation – 10%** This portion of your grade is based on three elements:
  - **Adherence to course policies** (see “Course Expectation and Policies” and “Honor Code” sections for details)
  - **Quality of contribution to discussion section.** Each student is expected to contribute to discussion section.
  - **Friday Symposium Attendance.** Each student is required to attend one (1) Friday Symposium event over the course of the semester. To keep the symposia small, spots are limited to 45. Please sign-up to secure a spot and sign-in to receive credit.
- **Reading Response Essays – 20%**  
Preparation and presentation to discussion section of three (3) short response essays (maximum length: 2 pages each, double-spaced, 1” margins). Each essay will make an argument in relation to the reading. Requirements and schedule sign-up will be provided during discussion section.
- **Midterm Examination – 30%**
- **Final Examination – 40%**

**FRIDAY SYMPOSIA SCHEDULE:** Friday Symposia offer students the opportunity to discuss topics of interest with Prof. Flores in a more intimate setting than the large lecture. Symposia are held in from 11-11:50 in the regular lecture hall; please sign-up to secure a spot and sign-in to receive credit. 2017 topics will include sports, film, television, and news media.

1. **September 8**, “Religion, Bioethics and Sports”
2. **October 6**, “Religion and Bioethics in Film”
3. **November 3**, “Religion and Bioethics on TV”
4. **December 1**, “Religion and Bioethics in the News”

**REQUIRED TEXTS:** (*Course texts are on reserve at Clemons Library.*)

1. **(B&C)** Tom L. Beauchamp and James F. Childress, ***Principles of Biomedical Ethics***, seventh edition, (Oxford University Press, eBook available)
2. Rebecca Skloot, ***The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*** (Broadway Books, eBook available)
3. **(CR)** Course Reader – Available for purchase from N.K. Print & Design

4. Top Hat platform: <https://tophat.com> (Join Code: 083633)

**COURSE SCHEDULE:** \*Indicates readings new to Fall 2017 course reader

**PART I: TRADITIONS AND METHODS IN THEOLOGICAL BIOETHICS**

**Week 1 – August 23**

**Introduction: Bodies, Beliefs, and Power (22)**

(CR) Childress and Siegler, “Metaphors and Models of Doctor-Patient Relationships: Their Implications for Autonomy” (12)

(CR) Kaveny, “The Limited Descriptive Reach of Public Reason” (10)\*

**Week 2 – August 28 & 30**

**Language: Metaphor, Rhetoric, and Narrative (101)**

Skloot, Prologue and Chapters 1, 3, 4, 7, 11, 12, 13, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 27 (101)

**Week 3 – September 4 & 6**

**Encountering Religious Perspectives (59)**

(CR) Kelly, Magill, & Have, “Religion and Health Care” (7)\*

(CR) Kelly, Magill, & Have, “The Dignity of Human Life” (14)\*

(CR) Dorff, “The Jewish Tradition: Religious Beliefs & Health Care Decisions” (5)

(CR) Meilaender, “Christian Vision” (9)

(CR) Sachedina, “Health and Suffering” (24)

**Week 4 – September 11 & 13**

**Exploring Methods in Bioethics: Principles (60)**

B&C, Chapter 1, “Moral Norms,” pp. 13-25 (13)

B&C, Chapter 4, “Respect for Autonomy,” pp. 101-114 (14)

B&C, Chapter 5, “Nonmaleficence,” pp.150-156 (7)

B&C, Chapter 6, “Beneficence,” pp. 214-226, 229-232 (17)

B&C, Chapter 8, “Professional-Patient Relationship,” pp. 302-310 (9)

**Weeks 5 – September 18 & 20**

**Exploring Methods in Bioethics: Critiques of Principles and New Directions (58)**

(CR) Mustafa, “Islam and the Four Principles of Medical Ethics” (4)

(CR) Myser, “Differences from Somewhere: The Normativity of Whiteness in Bioethics in the United States” (12)

(CR) Zoloth, “Heroic Measures: Just Bioethics in an Unjust World” (6)

(CR) Cahill, “Participatory Bioethics in Action” (27)\*

(CR) Keenan, “What Does Virtue Ethics Bring to Genetics?,” pp. 97-105 (9)

FILM: *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* (Watch online via UVA Library)

**Week 6 – September 25 & 27**

**Exploring Methods in Bioethics: Justice and Human Rights (54)**

B&C, Chapter 7, 249-262 (14)

(CR) Farmer, “Health, Healing, and Social Justice: Insights from Liberation Theology” (28)\*

(CR) Fenton, “Bioethics and Human Rights” (12)\*

**MIDTERM REVIEW CLASS – Wednesday, September 27**

**Week 7 – October 3 & 5****READING DAY** – Monday, October 3**MIDTERM EXAM** – Wednesday, October 5 (In Class)**NO DISCUSSION SECTIONS THIS WEEK****PART II: ISSUES IN BIOETHICS****Week 8 – October 9 & 11****End of Life Care I: Decision and Determinations (78)****a) *Theological Reasoning:*****(CR)** Sachedina, “Death and Dying” (27)**(CR)** Gillick, “Artificial Nutrition and Hydration...” (4)**(CR)** Address of Pope John Paul II (20 March, 2004) (4)**b) *Public Determinations:*****(CR)** President’s Commission, “Understanding the ‘Meaning’ of Death,” pp. 31-43 (13)**(CR)** President’s Council on Bioethics, “The Limited Wisdom of Advanced Directives” (13)**B&C**, Chapter 5, pp. 158-174 (17)**Week 9 – October 16 & 18****End of Life Care II: Euthanasia and Physician-Assisted Suicide (PAS) (55)****B&C**, Chapter 5, pp. 174-186 (13)**(CR)** Oregon Death with Dignity Act (2014 report) (6)**(CR)** Quill, “Doctor, I Want to Die. Will You Help Me?” (4)**(CR)** Pellegrino, “Compassion Needs Reason Too” (2)**(CR)** Callahan, “When Self-Determination Runs Amok” (4)**(CR)** CDF, *Declaration on Euthanasia* (6)**(CR)** Meilander, “Euthanasia and Christian Vision” (11)**(CR)** O’Laughlin, “The Politics of Life and Death” (9)\***Week 10 – October 23 & 25****Organ and Tissue Transplantation (46)****(CR)** Satel, “An Internet Lifeline, in Search of a Kidney” (5)**(CR)** Satel, “Why People Don’t Donate Their Kidneys” (4)**(CR)** Sandel, “How Markets Crowd Out Morals” (2)\***(CR)** Kelly, “International Organ Trafficking Crisis: Solutions Addressing the Heart of the Matter” (33)**B&C**, Chapter 2, pp. 54-55 (2)**FILM:** *Tales from the Organ Trade* (Watch online via UVA Library)**Week 11 – October 30 & November 1****Maternal-Fetal Relations I: Abortion (55)****(CR)** Declaration of the Pontificate Council for the Family regarding ‘Embryonic Reduction’ (2)**(CR)** Rosner, “Pregnancy Reduction in Jewish Law” (5)**(CR)** SCOTUS, “Roe v. Wade: Majority Opinion and Dissent” (5)\***(CR)** Beckwith, “Roe v. Wade: Its Logic and Legacy” (18)

- (CR) Manian, “The Consequences of Abortion Restrictions for Women’s Healthcare” (21)  
 (CR) Asch, “Can Aborting ‘Imperfect’ Children Be Immoral?” (4)

**Week 12 – November 6 & 8**

**Maternal-Fetal Relations II: Conscientious Refusal and Alternative Strategies (44)**

**c) Conscientious Refusal:**

- (CR) ACOG Committee Opinion, “The Limits of Conscientious Refusal” (6)\*  
 (CR) Dresser, “Professionals, Conformity, and Conscience” (2)\*  
 (CR) NPR, “Birth Control at the Supreme Court: Does Free Coverage Violate Religious Freedom?” (5)\*  
 (CR) Greenhouse, “Birth Control Continues to Bedevil the Supreme Court” (5)\*

**d) Material Cooperation:**

- (CR) Rubio, “Abortion: Toward Cooperation with the Good” (26)

**Week 13 – November 13 & 15**

**Human Genetics and Research Involving Human Subjects (72)**

**a) Human Genetics:**

- (CR) U.S. Supreme Court, *Buck v. Bell* (1927) (4)  
 (CR) Gould, “Carrie Buck’s Daughter” (9)  
 (CR) Mundy, “A World of Their Own,” (8)  
 (CR) Kilner, “The Ends Don’t Justify the Genes” (2)  
 (CR) Mitchell, “Hurtling Toward Eugenics...Again” (3)  
 B&C, “The Concept of Privacy,” pp. 312-324 (13)  
 FILM: *The Lynchburg Story* (watch online via UVA Library)

**b) Research Involving Human Subjects:**

- (CR) *The Nuremberg Code* (1)  
 (CR) Emanuel, et. al., “What Makes Clinical Research Ethical?” (10)  
 B&C, “The Meaning and Justification of Informed Consent,” pp. 120-141 (22)

**Week 14 – November 20 & 22**

**Race and Research Ethics (26)**

- (CR) Townes, “The Doctor Ain’t Taking No Sticks: The Tuskegee Syphilis Study” (26)  
 FILM: *The Deadly Deception* (Watch online via UVA Library)

**THANKSGIVING RECESS: NO LECTURE OR DISCUSSION SECTION –  
 Wednesday, November 22 – Friday, November 24**

**Week 15 – November 27 & 29**

**Justice & Health Care Ethics (19)**

- B&C, Chapter 7, “Justice,” pp. 270-276 (7)  
 (CR) Arras, “The Right to Health Care” (12)\*

**FINAL REVIEW CLASS – Monday, December 4**

**FINAL EXAMINATION – Tuesday, December 12 at 9AM**

**Appendix: An Open Letter from the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Virginia in Response to the Events of August 11 and 12**

The Department of Religious Studies denounces the violence and terror perpetrated by the gathering of white supremacists in Charlottesville, VA on August 11th and 12th, 2017. As a faculty, we are particularly horrified that our University Grounds were used to promote this agenda and that students, who were exercising their constitutionally protected right to protest, were physically attacked a short distance from their dormitories.

The Department of Religious Studies rejects the white supremacist ideology of intolerance and its practice of hateful speech, as well as the violence it engenders. We stand in solidarity with the victims of these events and with those who courageously resisted the hate groups and their virulent messages; we stand with the community of Charlottesville and with all those at whom hate continues to be directed. We cherish the diversity of our student body and commit ourselves to supporting students who are targeted by hate groups. We promise to be available to students who seek support from us, even as we actively develop new initiatives to support them.

As a department, we advocate for no single religious faith or political point of view. Our faculty comprises scholars who practice different religions or no religion at all. Our professors, all of whom serve the Commonwealth of Virginia, hold a range of political views. Those who are American citizens vote their consciences individually in elections, for a wide array of political parties. Amid this political and national diversity, we stand united in our unanimous and unequivocal condemnation of those who promote hate, by way of violent speech and action—the white supremacists, the neo-Nazis, the neo-Fascists, the anti-Semites. And we regard this condemnation as the expression of a simple, moral truth rather than a political statement.

We must not hesitate to name and condemn the intimidation, terror, and violence that convulsed and profaned our city and university this weekend. We consider the groups who organized and participated in the “Unite the Right” rally to be hate groups. We do not take their views to represent a legitimate, alternative political perspective: they are dangerous, and they perpetuate what is universally condemned by all the world’s religions and ethical systems. We feel morally compelled to call out those who afflicted our community with their night-time mob on the University’s Grounds and with their violence on our city’s streets the following day. Burning torches, aggressive chanting, and racist, homophobic, and antisemitic slogans echo the symbolism, and messages, of Nazi-era Germany and of the Ku Klux Klan in the United States. This is not a time for equivocation. We stand firmly and explicitly against the views and actions of those espousing hate, terror, and violence in Charlottesville over this past weekend, and any other day.