

US275 – Scientific Ethics (Online)
Summer 2012



Instructor:

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Required Text:

Pojman, L.P. & Fieser, J.. (2009). Ethics: Discovering Right and Wrong, 6th ed. Cengage
ISBN: 978-0-495-50235-7

You will also use Arcadia's online databases and other web resources.

We may be using some free electronic texts later in the course. If so, you will need to download a copy of the free Kindle reader at Amazon.com. More information will be available later in the course.

Overview:

Welcome to your Arcadia University course, US275 – Scientific Ethics. Science reaches from beyond the laboratory into many aspects of our globally connected life in the twenty-first century. However, the decision on which advances should have a place in our world and which should be restricted continues to be hotly debated. In this course, we will examine how different types of ethical systems – both in the U.S. and in other parts of the globe – are associated with the making of legal, ethical, and moral decisions. This course does not require previous scientific coursework as we will examine the science of each issue from the viewpoint of ordinary citizens both here and abroad. Topics may include the debates on the differential social impact of science and technology on individuals and communities in different parts of the world in areas such as stem cells, gene therapy, drilling for oil in Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, and the transnational trafficking of human organs. Assignments will incorporate readings, discussions, position papers, and debates.

This course fulfills the Arcadia University General Education Categories:

Curricular Experience: University Seminar

Area of Inquiry: Natural & Physical World; Cultural Legacies

Intellectual Practice: Global Connections



Civility Statement:

This course involves examining the effect that different ethical systems play in decisions about the acceptance or rejection of the application of scientific principles – both in the U.S. and in other parts of the world. In particular we will consider the power and influence that some ethical systems have in influencing the local and global distribution, availability, and impact of technological advances. This course is designed to challenge your own personal views, in relation to cultural, philosophical and moral belief systems, so that regardless of your position, your opinions will be based on a critical review and contemplation of the issues rather than emotional gut feelings.

The Online Aspect of this Course:

This course is being presented in an online fashion; It is important that you login on a regular basis (daily if possible) and work on a consistent basis to complete your requirements. Since we are not meeting face-to-face, it will be imperative that you participate in the discussion forums by replying to the postings of your classmates. You will need to be self-motivated and try to stay as organized as possible; developing a schedule would be a good idea. I also suggest that you login in the beginning of the week and copy all assignments to a Word document. This will allow you to construct a quality answer, spell check, grammar check, and copy and paste into the forum.

There are three specific areas available for discussion in the course module:

1. Cyber Café: The Cyber Café is available for you to develop community outside of the course content. This is a location to introduce yourself and to discuss non-course related items. Except for assignment 1A: Introduce Yourself, the postings in the Cyber Café will not be evaluated or contribute to your final course grade in any way. However, this is a good location for you to learn more about your classmates.

2. Group Discussion Forums: There will be a number of assignments in which you will discuss topics within a small group. These responses should remain on topic and will contribute to your course grade. In posting to the discussion board, please be sure that you follow the overall guidelines for discussion etiquette, the specific instructions for that assignment, and the grading rubric. In general, you will need to post a minimum of number of comments or responses per assignment in a timely fashion (during the week of the assignment).

3. Course Discussion Forums: There will be a small number of assignments in which the discussion will extend throughout the entire class. As in the group discussion forums, responses should remain on topic and will contribute to your course grade. In posting to the discussion board, please be sure that you follow the overall guidelines for discussion etiquette, the specific instructions for that assignment, and the grading rubric. In general, you will need to post a minimum of number of comments or responses per assignment in a timely fashion (during the week of the assignment).

Discussion Etiquette

In this course, I welcome the creation of a dialogue that is open, thoughtful, and founded on the basis of informed thought on the topics. At times, some of you will not agree on the positions that are taken in the forum. This diversity is welcomed. However, each student must exercise respect for the thoughts and comments that are posted by their peers. If any posted comments are inappropriate or of an offensive nature, they will be removed from the forum and I will address the issue with the author of the content. Please follow the following guidelines:

- Never post, transmit, promote, or distribute content that is known to be illegal.
- Never post harassing, threatening, or embarrassing comments.
- If you disagree with someone, respond to the subject, not the person.
- Never post content that is harmful, abusive, racially, ethnically, or religiously offensive, vulgar or otherwise potentially offensive.

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Grading Policy:

A, A-	90% to 100%
B+, B, B-	80% to 89%
C+, C, C-	70% to 79%
D+, D, D-	60% to 69%
F	Failure to complete required work

Class participation, scholarship and academic honesty will have an effect on the final evaluation. If you experience difficulty at any point in the class (i.e. hardware problems), please notify me immediately. There will be no extensions given for the due date of any project. Conventional rules of plagiarism apply to all assignments. Anyone caught plagiarizing will receive an “F” for the assignment and will be subject to guidelines set forth by the Arcadia University Student Handbook. More than one incidence of plagiarism will result in an “F” for the course and further disciplinary actions.

Discussion Evaluation:

There will normally be one questions posted to either your group or to the entire class for each discussion topic. You will have seven days from the time that the topic is posted to participate in the discussion, but there will be intermediate deadlines every two days. Late comments will not be counted toward your grade. The specific deadline will be provided when the assignment is made.

1. You are required to answer each question that is posted by the professor in the Discussion Board area. There will normally be one question posted for each “lecture topic.” Please make sure that you support your comments with research from the field. Citations are to be provided at the end of each post as well as within the body of your answer.
2. You are required to respond to a specific minimum number of other student postings or comments. I will be looking at the way you analyze the postings and extend the conversation. Please use this opportunity to share your own experiences, but remember to support your assertions with current research findings. At this level we can all learn a great deal by sharing our experiences.
3. Normally the discussions will be worth 2 or 3 points total. You will be evaluated on the best 3 comments in each discussion
 - a. The best comment will be worth 1 point, and the second and third best comment will be worth .5 points each (1 point each in a 3 point discussion).
 - b. the score on each comment will be adjusted by + 0.1 to 0.3 based on the value of the contribution to the overall discussion.
4. Your postings will be evaluated based upon the substantive nature and how it efficiently addresses the question at hand.
 - a. Simple responses such as "I agree" are of no value and will not be counted as an acceptable posting.
 - b. Try to use the "no scroll" rule. If you have to scroll a great deal to read the posting, it becomes an arduous task. Please try to be succinct and to the point. Strive to respond at the synthesis or evaluation levels.

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PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS COURSE WILL RUN FROM MAY 21 to AUGUST 6, 2012

Date	Unit 1: Introduction to Science and Ethics	% possible	% received	Due Date
5/21	Course Introduction: #1. Syllabus & Course policies	2		5/25
5/21	Course Introduction: #2. Introduce Yourself in the Cybercafe	2		5/25, 5/30
5/23	Perspective, Controversies, & Civility #3 The civility of civilized politics?	2		6/1
5/25	Introduction to Philosophy #4 Explaining the world around you.	2		6/4
5/28	Memorial Day			
5/30	What is this thing called science? #5 Scientific controversies	2		6/6
6/1	Thinking and acting like a scientist. #6 Everyday uses of the scientific method	2		6/8
6/4	Introduction to Ethics #7 Overriding Principles	2		6/11
	TOTAL:	14		

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Date	Unit 2: Ethical Philosophies	% possible	% received	Due Date
6/6	Ethical Revisionism & Moral Objectivism #8 Ethics and the world's oldest profession	2		6/13
6/8	Value & Social Contract Theory #9 The promise of societal values	2		6/15
6/11	Egoism, Self-interest, and Altruism & Utilitarianism #10 Indentured servitude and surrogate motherhood	2		6/18
6/13	Kant and Virtue theory #11 Basis of Character	2		6/20
6/15	Religion and Fact-value #12 The God Particle and Morality	2		6/22
6/18	Moral realism and skepticism #13 Your Personal Ethical Philosophy	4		6/25
	TOTAL:	14		

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Date	Unit 3: Research Ethics	% possible	% received	Due Date
6/20	History of Human Subject Research #14 Bad Blood	3		6/27
6/22	Human Research Subject Regulations #15 Is the Common Rule Enough?	3		6/29
6/25	History of Animal Research #16 Animal Welfare and Animal rights	3		7/2
6/27	Animal Use Laws and Regulations #17 Humane Care of Laboratory animals	3		7/6
	TOTAL:	12		

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Date	Unit 4: Medical Ethics	% possible	% received	Due Date
6/29	How the body works -- no assignment for this topic	---	---	---
7/2	Diseases and their causes #18 How should we allocate funds to research cures for diseases?	3		7/9
	4th of July	---	---	---
7/6	Understanding Clinical Trials #19 Cure Interrupted	3		7/13
7/9	Costs of Prescription drugs #20 Drug Costs	3		7/16
	TOTAL:	9		

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Date	Unit 5: Transplant Ethics	% possible	% received	Due Date
7/11	Organ Failure and Transplantation #21 Who's organs are they?	3		7/18
7/13	Alternatives to Human Organ Transplantation #22 Xenotransplant costs and benefits	3		7/20
7/16	Human Transplant Concerns #23 Trafficking of human organs	3		7/23
7/18	Stem Cell Science #24 When does the embryo/fetus become an individual with protected status?	3		7/25
7/20	Stem Cell Therapy #25 Waiting to die	3		7/27
7/23	Stem Cell Policies #26 FDA - Watch dog or pit bull?	3		7/30
	TOTAL:	18		

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Date	Unit 6: Genetic Ethics	% possible	% received	Due Date
7/25	Basic concepts of DNA and Heredity #27 Roll the Dice	3		8/1
7/27	DNA Testing #28 When should information in a genetic census be used?	3		8/3
7/30	DNA Analysis #29 Patenting Genes	3		8/6
8/1	Recombinant DNA #30 Bacterial Factories	2		8/6
8/3	Genetically Modified Organisms #31 How to feed a hungry world	1		8/6
8/6	Somatic Gene Therapy -- No Assignment for this topic	--	--	--
8/6	Germline Gene Therapy #33 Germline therapy autonomy or predestination? -- No Assignment for this topic	--	--	--
	TOTAL:	12		

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	Final Project	% possible	% received	Due Date
	Topic Selection	1		6/18
	Scientific Background (draft)	1		7/2
	Scientific Background	3		7/9
	First Constructive Dialogue (draft)	1		7/11
	First Constructive Dialogue	3		7/16
	Second Constructive Dialogue (draft)	1		7/18
	Second Constructive Dialogue	3		7/23
	Rebuttal (draft)	1		7/25
	Rebuttal	3		7/30
	Commenting on other debates	4		8/6
	TOTAL:	21		