

**PHIL 643 / EPIB 625: Medical Ethics**The Ethics of Human ExperimentationTime: Monday, 11:35 AM–2:25 PMRoom: 3647 Peel, Room 101Professor: Jonathan KimmelmanOffice: 3647 Peel St., Room 306Office Hours: by appointmentTel: 398-3306E-mail: jonathan.kimmelman@mcgill.ca**Course Overview**

Some of the earliest and foundational debates in bioethics grew out of controversies surrounding human experiments. This class provides an introduction to the ethics of conducting experiments on study materials that talk back- namely, human beings. Though there is a particular focus on clinical trials, the course surveys issues in public health research, experimental psychology, and vivisection. Also covered: (1) scandals (!) (2) regulation; (3) ethical theory and principles; (4) empirical methods in ethics; (5) theory of risk.

**Required Readings**

All readings will be available in a course packet, available for purchase at the McGill Bookstore. In addition, students will be expected to read key research ethics documents / policies, including the Belmont Report, parts of the Tricouncil Policy Statement, 45 CFR 46, and Declaration of Helsinki. These are accessible over the web.

**Course Requirements**

1. *In-class participation:* One of the most important skills as scholar in bioethics is the ability to identify important gaps or contradictions in an argument, and to formulate a research program deriving from a body of work. Students are expected arrive at class prepared with 1-2 critical questions or observations that point to tensions within or between papers or that identify major unresolved issues in the materials. Students can take a holiday for submitting questions for five sessions (plus the introductory class, of course- so questions submitted for *5 sessions total*). These questions / observations must be submitted at the start of class in hard copy. Students should also be able to describe scholarly approaches or analogies that might inform analysis of a particular issue.

**Contribution to final grade: 30%.**

2. *Short essay:* For one of the sessions where questions are not submitted, students will submit a short commentary (900-1200 words) that summarizes and responds critically to one of the assigned readings. The essay can criticize the work, extend it, elaborate on one theme, or provide some context for why the reading is important.

**Contribution to final grade: 15%.**

3. *Final paper:* This involves a well researched, well argued, and focused essay (2500-3000 words) due the last class of the term. Papers must list word count on cover page; >3000 words is not accepted. You must discuss your topic with me beforehand. These papers should be written as if they were to be submitted for publication; you should aim to absorb the style and structure of argument used in the assigned readings. Final papers should not be summaries of the published literature; instead, they should strive to make a contribution to the literature on research ethics. This means that you should perform literature searches using standard scholarly databases, (e.g., PubMed or Philosopher's Index), and spend a considerable amount of time identifying gaps in the literature that you might try to tackle. The paper must involve ethical analysis, and should not simply provide a summary of what others have said. I will encourage students who write outstanding papers to submit their articles for publication.

**Contribution to final grade: 30%.**

4. *Midterm Exam:* Students will receive a midterm exam lasting 1 hour. The exam will cover material from each session up to then, *including the first session*. The exam will consist of several short answer questions about the history, policies, and practices in research ethics, and several short essay questions that test recall of various topics discussed or require you to apply principles already discussed to new questions.

**Contribution to final grade: 25%**