Bioethics in the 21st Century
Philosophy 80G / Biomolecular Engineering 80G
Fall 2008

Instructors:
Dr. Mark Akeson, Department of Biomolecular Engineering, UCSC
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Office Hours: By appointment
Physical Science Building (PSB), Room 405C

Jake Metcalf, Department of Philosophy, UCSC
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Office Hours: Tuesday, 12-1:30, and by appointment
Cowell Philosophy Annex, Room 101

Class meeting time: Tuesday/Thursday, 2:00-3:45 pm, Humanities Lecture Hall 206

Teaching Assistants:
Steve Benz: sbenz@soe.ucsc.edu
Jonathan Magasin: jmagasin@soe.ucsc.edu
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Readings:
Weston, Anthony; A Rulebook for Arguments, 3rd Ed. ($7 at Baytree Bookstore)
Additional readings and multimedia materials will be distributed via WebCT. You will be required to print some readings in order to discuss them closely in section (<100 pages total). Otherwise, printing is optional.

Course Goals & Structure:
Bioethics in the 21st Century aims to give students a rigorous foundation for understanding the scientific and ethical issues raised by biotechnology. This course is designed to meet general education requirements, and will serve both science majors and non-science majors at all levels of experience. Interaction among students and faculty from the humanities and sciences is a strength of the course.

A typical week will be as follows. On Tuesday a guest speaker will present a one-hour seminar in a specific area of science, business, or ethics. The speaker will teach from his or her background, particularly focusing on experiences related to the ethical questions addressed by the course. This one-hour talk will be followed by a discussion with the guest speaker. Attendance during the discussion is mandatory, and active student participation will be expected. On Thursday, the instructor from the Philosophy Department will lecture on the ethical issues raised by that speaker’s topic, and the instructor from the Biomolecular Engineering Department will lecture on the basic science needed to understand the next week’s expert presentation.
WebCT:  http://ic.ucsc.edu/services/learning_management_system/index.php
The day-to-day functioning of this course will rely heavily on WebCT, including the schedule of speakers, downloading required and suggested readings or online videos, distribution of the weekly assignments, and lecture slides. Students are expected to check WebCT for additional information on a regular basis. If students have confusion or trouble with WebCT, they are expected to ask for help from their instructor, TA, and/or campus technical support. Please note that in order for WebCT to function, your computer’s web browser must be supported and configured correctly, instructions for which are available at the above site. If you are already enrolled, WebCT will recognize you as such. If you are wait-listed or adding to the class, you will need to follow instructions at the above site for adding yourself to the system so that you can log into this course’s WebCT content.

Discussion Sections:
In the discussion sections, students will more fully explore the issues covered in lecture and in the readings. This course relies heavily on discussion, and attendance at weekly TA-led discussion sections is mandatory. Students are expected to come to discussion section with all relevant readings and lecture notes and to be prepared to participate. The instructors and teaching assistants reserve the discretion to give failing grades to students who miss three or more discussion sections.

Student Evaluation:
Midterm (Thursday, 6 November, 2-3:45 pm)  25%
Final Exam (Thursday, 11 December, 4-7pm)  30%
Weekly Essays (Six essays, 5% each)*  30%
Discussion section attendance and participation  15%

* Each student is responsible for six out of eight short weekly essays, due Thursday in class. The new assignments will be posted on WebCT by Friday. Essays will NOT be accepted late. A late essay will be counted as one of the two essays students may skip.

Disability Resource Center:
If you qualify for classroom accommodations because of a disability, please submit your Accommodation Authorization from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) to one of the instructors in a timely manner, preferably within the first two weeks of the quarter. Contact DRC at 459-2089 (voice), 459-4806 (TTY).

Absence from the midterm or final exam will be granted for medical reasons when a signed note from the attending physician is provided by the student. The note must be an original on the physician’s stationery with a phone number so that its authenticity can be confirmed. An incomplete grade or a make-up exam will be assigned to the student at the instructors’ discretion. Excused absences will not be granted for non-emergency reasons.

Academic Misconduct: By enrolling in the university, students are automatically agreeing to abide by policies, including those on academic misconduct. Academic integrity and scholarship are core values that should guide our conduct and decisions as members of the UCSC community. Plagiarism and cheating contradict these values, and so are very serious academic offenses. Penalties can include a failing grade in an assignment or in the course, or suspension or expulsion from the university. Students are expected to familiarize themselves with and follow citation practices.