

Syllabus, Philosophy 104: Bioethics, 3 units, Department of Philosophy, College of Arts and Letters, CSU-Sacramento, Summer 2025 (section 1; fully online*).

Instructor: Russell DiSilvestro. Best contact option: Canvas “Inbox”—expect a response by the next business day; expect grading/feedback within 3 business days. Other contact options: email (rdisilv@csus.edu), office phone (916.278.6766; voicemail checked M-F 9am), real or virtual office hours (although this course is fully asynchronous, I am available for synchronous conversations by appointment in Mendocino Hall 3000 and/or via Zoom: <https://csus.zoom.us/j/97564568649> or meeting ID 975-6456-8649).

Catalog Description: “Ethical dilemmas faced by professionals and patients in the field of medicine, e.g., patient self-determination and informed consent, discrimination in health care, euthanasia, abortion, surrogate motherhood, genetic modification, and rights to health care. Emphasis is on the well-reasoned application of general moral principles to practical medical decisions.”

Text: Caplan and Arp, *Contemporary Debates in Bioethics*, Wiley (2014). Free ebook online at <http://library.csus.edu>

Technology Requirements: Links to required activities and recordings can be found in Canvas.

Learning Objectives: By the end of the course, each student will be able to...

- ✓ Meet the learning [objectives](#) associated with all GE area D (Individual and Society) courses at CSUS:
 1. Describe and evaluate ethical and social values in their historical and cultural contexts.
 2. Explain and critically examine social dynamics and issues in their historical and cultural contexts.
 3. Demonstrate an understanding of the role of human diversity in human society (for example, race, class, age, gender).
 4. Explain and apply the principles and methods of academic disciplines (for example, philosophy) to the study of social and individual behavior.
- ✓ Meet the learning objectives associated with developing competence in philosophical language and literature on ethical dilemmas in biology and medicine:
 5. Identify moral and social consequences of advances in biology and medicine on the practices and institutions of our and other societies.
 6. Critically examine how thoughtful and diverse experts and peers apply moral concepts and theories to moral issues raised by advances in biology and medicine.
 7. Represent and express philosophical reasoning about advances in biology and medicine by writing clear and concise analytical and argumentative prose.

* Please note: I want as many as possible to enroll and excel in this online course. Students who do not participate in online discussions and quizzes during the first week of the summer session will be considered to have left the course and may be administratively dropped so that other students may enroll and excel.

Grading: Final grades are determined by points earned out of 1000. Grade floors are 930=A, 900=A-, 870=B+, 830=B, 800=B-, 770=C+, 730=C, 700=C-, 670=D+, 630=D, 600=D-. 600 is necessary for credit (CR) in the course. Attendance is not graded. Late work is only graded at the discretion of the instructor. Some extra credit may be earned for additional activities announced in advance. Total points are calculated as follows using the “Definition of Grade Symbols” at the University's Academic Policies page (<http://catalog.csus.edu/academic-policies/#text>):

- ✓ **Quizzes (30 points per topic x 15 topics = 450 points):** For each topic, after reading the texts and watching the online videos, take a timed (60 minute) online quiz before 11:59pm each Wednesday (30 points). The questions come directly from that topic's readings and videos. Unless announced otherwise, each quiz can only be taken once.
- ✓ **Discussions (30 points per topic x 15 topics = 450 points):** For each topic, use the discussions to make your own long reply to the target question by 11:59pm each Wednesday (10 points), your own medium replies to three long replies of other students in your small group by 11:59pm each Sunday (15 points), and your own short replies to three remaining long replies of other students in your small group by 11:59pm each Sunday (5 points). See details in the Discussion Guidelines page within Canvas and in each topic.

You should do at least one of the following two options, but if you do both, then only the higher scoring option will count towards your final grade:

- ✓ **Final Exam Option (100 points):** The online final exam window will open at 12:01am Sunday at start of week 6 and close at 11:59pm on Sunday July 6 at the end of week 6. The final exam will be scored (100 points), timed (120 minutes), and cumulative (made of questions drawn from the quiz question pools). The final exam can only be taken once.
- ✓ **Final Paper Option (100 points):** You can expand one of your long replies into a full philosophical analysis by 11:59pm on Sunday July 6 at the end of week 6. See details in the 'Philosophical Analysis' PDF. We will use <http://turnitin.com> for this paper.

Other Course and University Policies:

Etiquette/Netiquette: All of us involved in this course should conduct ourselves in ways consistent with the [Hornet Honor Code](#).

Academic Honesty: Students should conduct themselves with respect for others and perform their work with intellectual integrity and honesty, which includes giving proper attribution to sources. Each instance of academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, cheating on an exam, etc.) will result a score of 0 (not just a failing grade) for that assignment/test and, if necessary, referral to the department and college for disciplinary procedures consistent with the Academic Honesty Policies articulated in the University Policy Manual. Procedures for reporting and imposing sanctions are described in detail at: <http://www.csus.edu/umannual/student/stu-0100.htm>.

Exceptions: Although attendance is not a relevant issue in an asynchronous course, late work for good cause such as medical or family emergencies (including COVID-19 related reasons like illness or quarantine) may be excused on a case-by case basis, typically with advance written notice and appropriate documentation.

Tech Requirements:

- ✓ Canvas: Most versions of Internet Explorer, Firefox, Chrome, and Safari, support the use of Canvas. To view specific Operating System and Browser compatibility with Canvas, please refer to: <https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10720>.
- ✓ Zoom: You can download Zoom and find more information about using Zoom here: <https://www.csus.edu/information-resources-technology/zoom/student-resources.html>.
- ✓ PowerPoint: If you do not have access to PowerPoint, you can download it for free here (scroll down to PowerPoint and click on "Access Online or Download from Office365"): <https://www.csus.edu/information-resources-technology/software-catalog/#business-productivity>.
- ✓ If you experience difficulties with your computer or connecting to the campus networks please contact the Information Resource Technology (IRT) Service Desk by e-mail: servicedesk@csus.edu or phone (916) 278-7337.
- ✓ For information about their complete services visit: <http://www.csus.edu/irt/ServiceDesk/>.

Tech Support: If you need technical assistance, including with devices or WiFi access, here are some helpful links for the Information Resources and Technology office:

- ✓ During the Covid-19 campus closure, laptops can be checked out for long-term, remote use, as specified here: <https://www.csus.edu/information-resources-technology/teaching-learning/laptop-checkout.html>.
- ✓ Other assistance, such as information on WiFi Access, can be found here: <https://www.csus.edu/information-resources-technology/remote-learning/>

[Services to Students with Disability \(SSWD\)](#): Sacramento State is committed to ensuring an accessible learning environment where course or instructional content are usable by all students and faculty. If you believe that you require disability-related academic adjustments for this class, please immediately contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSWD) to discuss eligibility. A current accommodation letter from SSWD is required before any modifications, above and beyond what is otherwise available for all other students in this class will be provided.

[Student Health and Counseling Services](#): Your physical and mental health are important to your success as a college student. Student Health and Counseling Services (SHCS) in The WELL offers medical, counseling, and wellness services to help you get and stay healthy during your time at Sac State. SHCS offers: Primary Care medical services, including sexual and reproductive healthcare, transgender care, and immunizations; urgent care for acute illness, injuries, and urgent counseling needs; pharmacy for prescriptions and over-the-counter products; mental health counseling, including individual sessions, group counseling, support groups, mindfulness training, and peer counseling; athletic training for sports injury rehabilitation; wellness services,

including nutrition counseling, peer led health education and wellness workshops, and free safer sex supplies; violence and sexual assault support services. Most services are covered by the Health Services fee and available at no additional cost.

[Crisis Assistance & Resource Education Support \(CARES\)](#): If you are experiencing challenges with food, housing, financial or other unique circumstances that are impacting your education, help is just a phone call or email away. The CARES office provides case management support for any enrolled student.

Other University Support and Services (each is a live link):

- ✓ [Academic Advising](#)
- ✓ [COVID-19 Information and Resources at Sacramento State](#)
- ✓ [Dreamer Resource Center](#)
- ✓ [Martin Luther King Center](#)
- ✓ [Multicultural Center](#)
- ✓ [Peer and Academic Resource Center](#)
- ✓ [Reading and Writing Center](#)
- ✓ [Student Success Center](#)