



PHIL*3450 Ethics in the Life Sciences

Winter 2020

Section(s): C01

Department of Philosophy

Credit Weight: 0.50

Version 1.00 - January 30, 2020

1 Course Details

1.1 Calendar Description

This course is an advanced introduction to the ethical implications of values and practices guiding research in the life sciences. Fields of discussion may include ethics in health care, genetics and human reproduction, environmental sciences, agriculture, animal husbandry, animal welfare, and food technologies. Material covered will be drawn from current books and articles by philosophers in this rapidly expanding area.

Pre-Requisites: 1.50 credits in Philosophy or 7.50 credits. PHIL*2120, PHIL*2180 are recommended.

1.2 Course Description

Virtually every human activity impacts other living things in some way. This course examines ethical concerns arising from human interactions with other living things. We shall discuss ethical theory and how to access ethical arguments. We shall then apply the ethical reasoning to address issues such as: The relative moral standing of ecosystems and future human generations; Our duties to aid the hungry in developing countries; Obligations to animals used in research and to produce food; Public policies to adjudicate conflicting rights-claims among urban consumers, environmentalists, and farmers over the use of water and land; The moral justifiability of genetic engineering as a whole and the patenting of life forms in particular.

1.3 Timetable

Class Meet Times: Mondays and Wednesdays, 11:30am – 12:50pm

Timetable is subject to change. Please see WebAdvisor for the latest information.

1.4 Final Exam

Exam Date: TBD

Exam time and location is subject to change. Please see WebAdvisor for the latest information.

2 Instructional Support

2.1 Instructional Support Team

Instructor:	Yussif Yakubu
Email:	yyakubu@uoguelph.ca
Office:	339 MCK
Office Hours:	Monday, 1:00pm – 2:00pm

3 Learning Resources

3.1 Required Resources

Gary L. Comstock (ed) (2015) *Life Science Ethics*: Springer, New York (2010). ISBN 978-90-481-8791-1. e-ISBN978-90-481-8792-8. (Textbook)

4 Learning Outcomes

4.1 Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. By the end of this course, students should be able to present well-informed and well-reasoned opinions on the following philosophical questions:

1. Does nature have intrinsic value?.

2. Should we be doing more to save wilderness and ocean ecosystems?.
 3. What are our duties to future generations of humans?
 4. Do animals have rights?
 5. Should scientists be signing agreements give exclusive control of research findings to private industry that fund their research?
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5 Teaching and Learning Activities

6 Assessments

6.1 Assessment Details

Attendance and Participation (10%)

Date: Every week

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|-----|------------------------------|
| 2. Weekly Reading Summaries | 10% | |
| 3 Presentation / Discussion post | 15% | |
| 4. Midterm Exam | 25% | Wednesday February 12 |
| 5. Final Exam | 40% | |

Description of Assessment #1 and Its Evaluation Criteria:

Each week, each student is required to submit a 250-word summary of the week's required reading. Students will be evaluated based on the effectiveness of their summaries and their demonstrated grasp of the content of the reading.

Description of Assessment #2 and their Evaluation Criteria:

This is aimed at encouraging students to engage in active learning. Students will be assessed based on the extent and quality of their contributions to class discussion.

Description of Assessment #3 and Its Evaluation Criteria:

Each student will have an opportunity to lead the discussion for at least one class, prior to which they will make a short presentation to the class. Students are subsequently required to submit a summary of their presentation for assessment. Students will be assessed on the effectiveness of their presentation and their demonstrated understanding of the subject matter.

Description of Assessment #4 and Its Evaluation Criteria:

The mid-term exam is aimed at evaluating students' grasp of the core concepts, principles and methods taught in the course. The assessment will also evaluate students' ability to apply the skills to different circumstances. It will be a 60-minute exam conducted during our regular class meeting

Description of Assessment # 5 and its Evaluation Criteria:

The final exam shall evaluate the entire set of skills developed during the course. i.e. clear understanding of the core principles of normative ethics and their proper application in bioethical decisions. The exam will have two sections. Section A will consist of ten short answer questions (20 marks). In section B, students will be required to answer two of three essay questions (30 marks).

7 University Statements

7.1 Email Communication

As per university regulations, all students are required to check their e-mail account regularly: e-mail is the official route of communication between the University and its students.

7.2 When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons please advise the course instructor (or designated person, such as a teaching assistant) in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. The grounds for Academic Consideration are detailed in the Undergraduate and Graduate Calendars.

Undergraduate Calendar - Academic Consideration and Appeals

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-ac.shtml>

Graduate Calendar - Grounds for Academic Consideration

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/index.shtml>

Associate Diploma Calendar - Academic Consideration, Appeals and Petitions

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/diploma/current/index.shtml>

7.3 Drop Date

Students will have until the last day of classes to drop courses without academic penalty. The deadline to drop two-semester courses will be the last day of classes in the second semester. This applies to all students (undergraduate, graduate and diploma) except for Doctor of Veterinary Medicine and Associate Diploma in Veterinary Technology (conventional and alternative delivery) students. The regulations and procedures for course registration are available in their respective Academic Calendars.

Undergraduate Calendar - Dropping Courses

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-drop.shtml>

Graduate Calendar - Registration Changes

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/genreg-reg-regchg.shtml>

Associate Diploma Calendar - Dropping Courses

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/diploma/current/c08/c08-drop.shtml>

7.4 Copies of Out-of-class Assignments

Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

7.5 Accessibility

The University promotes the full participation of students who experience disabilities in their academic programs. To that end, the provision of academic accommodation is a shared responsibility between the University and the student.

When accommodations are needed, the student is required to first register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS). Documentation to substantiate the existence of a disability is required; however, interim accommodations may be possible while that process is underway.

Accommodations are available for both permanent and temporary disabilities. It should be noted that common illnesses such as a cold or the flu do not constitute a disability.

Use of the SAS Exam Centre requires students to book their exams at least 7 days in advance and not later than the 40th Class Day.

For Guelph students, information can be found on the SAS website
<https://www.uoguelph.ca/sas>

For Ridgetown students, information can be found on the Ridgetown SAS website
<https://www.ridgetownc.com/services/accessibilityservices.cfm>

7.6 Academic Integrity

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity, and it is the responsibility of all members of the University community—faculty, staff, and students—to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff, and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that encourages academic integrity. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection.

Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor.

Undergraduate Calendar - Academic Misconduct
<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-amisconduct.shtml>

Graduate Calendar - Academic Misconduct
<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/index.shtml>

7.7 Recording of Materials

Presentations that are made in relation to course work - including lectures - cannot be recorded or copied without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a student, or guest lecturer. Material recorded with permission is restricted to use for that course unless further permission is granted.

7.8 Resources

The Academic Calendars are the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies, and regulations that apply to undergraduate, graduate, and diploma programs.

Academic Calendars

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/academics/calendars>
