

PHIL 2207 - Reproductive Ethics

Instructor Information:

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They/Them/Theirs

Office Hours: Mon & Weds, 4 - 5 pm

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Class Meetings

MWF 1:50 pm - 2:50 pm, Gill Athletic Complex, G204

Objectives and Description:

Reproductive choices are deeply personal, private ones. Decisions about whether to have children, and how to raise them, reflect some of our most fundamental values. Progress in medicine and technology, as well as changes in society and culture, however, have increasingly drawn private decisions into the public eye.

Developments in genetic engineering have given rise to questions about when, if ever, it is permissible to genetically enhance a developing infant. And projections of the effects of climate change give rise to concerns about whether it is permissible to continue to have children at all.

In this course, we will consider a variety of ethical issues at the intersection of public and private life. We will examine problems at every stage of having a child, from whether or not to genetically enhance children, to whether it is permissible to engage a surrogate, to what rights parents have over their children at all. We will work collaboratively to analyze the issues we face, and learn to engage meaningfully with others. In doing so, we will enrich our understanding of the decisions we are faced with when having children, the social and cultural factors which influence these decisions, and the ethical aspect of everyday decisions.

This course is designed such that students will:

- Become familiar with the concept of reproductive autonomy, and the exercise of rights and liberties
- Become familiar with a broad array of ethical issues in exercising reproductive autonomy, as well as important considerations on either side of each
- Demonstrate the ability to analyze, synthesize, interpret and evaluate ideas, arguments and evidence
- Demonstrate the ability to identify, and construct, an argument

Textual Analysis: Students will:

- Demonstrate close reading of a written text
- Demonstrate the ability to critically analyze a written text in terms of structure and rhetorical strategies
- Demonstrate the ability to interpret the meaning of a written text

Global Citizenship: Multicultural: Students will:

- Analyze the effects of marginalization and subordination of groups defined by categories (eg. race, gender, sexuality, religion, language, social class, and ability)
- Demonstrate skills and attitudes (eg. heightened self-awareness, capacity for perspective-shifting, acceptance of personal and social responsibility) conducive to intercultural competence
- Demonstrate knowledge of the cultural pluralism of American society, and identify the histories and contributions of diverse communities in the United States

Requirements & Policies:

By enrolling in this course, students agree to abide by all listed College and Course Policies.

College Policies: Students acknowledge and agree to abide by the College's Title IX, Accessibility, NonDiscrimination and Academic Honesty policies.

Resources for Students Who May Witness/Experience Bias, Discrimination, Harassment, or Violence

McDaniel College does not tolerate discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, disability, age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, pregnancy, military status, genetic information, marital status, veteran's status, or any other legally protected status. To report a bias-related incident, you may use the online form found on the portal and in the footer of the College's webpage. The online form may be submitted anonymously if that is preferred. You may also contact the Dean of the Faculty, the Dean of Students, the Director of Human Resources, or the Director of the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

Please note that according to Title IX, any claims of gender-based discrimination, gender-based harassment, sexual harassment, sexual violence, relationship violence, or stalking must be reported to the Title IX Coordinator. For these concerns, faculty members are not considered confidential resources and therefore incidents shared with them must be reported to the Title IX Coordinator. If you wish to speak confidentially about an incident, please contact the Wellness Center.

Request for Accommodations: McDaniel College, in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA) and the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973/ Section 504, will provide reasonable accommodations for eligible students with disabilities. If you require special assistance, please see me privately and/or seek assistance directly from the Student Accessibility and Support Services Office (SASS). You are responsible for initiating arrangements for accommodations for tests and other assignments in collaboration with the SASS Office and me.

Additional Support: If you are unable to purchase required texts due to unexpected financial hardships, you should contact your financial aid specialist to submit a special circumstances appeal. If you need support securing food, housing, or other basic needs which will affect your performance in your courses, please contact the Dean of Students for support (etowle@mcdaniel.edu). Furthermore, if you are comfortable doing so, please see me so that I can provide assistance in accessing resources.

Academic Honesty: Building a fruitful learning community requires trust and honesty. By enrolling in this course, you accept responsibility for completing all required assignments, and agree that all work you submit will be your own. You are responsible for ensuring that your work is completely your own, and that you are acknowledging all source material appropriately. Any instances of plagiarism or academic dishonesty will, at the

very least, result in you receiving a 0 on the assignment. Further infractions will be dealt with by the College Honor and Conduct Board.

Course Policies: Students understand Course Requirements, and agree to abide by Discussion Guidelines and Group Work Guidelines.

Course Requirements:

1 - Discussion Participation - 25% - 10 points/week * 15weeks = 150 points total

- Students are expected to participate actively in all weekly in-person discussions. See below for more details.

2 - Learning Logs - 10% - 5 points/week * 7weeks = 35 points total

- Students are expected to post regularly (at least once weekly) in their Learning Logs. Learning Log posts may involve reflecting on a particular reading, on a particular topic, on the learning process, or on some aspect of the course.

3 - Three Reading Responses - 30% - 100 points each * 3 = 300 points total

- Students will write a 600 - 1000 word paper in which they explain and critically evaluate an argument from class. See Reading Response Rubric for more details.

4 - Research Paper (Groups) - 35% - 300 points total (See Research Project Rubric for more details.)

- Students will write a 2000 - 2500 word paper in which they develop an arguable question relating to class topics, research their topic in depth, and develop their response to it. Please see Research Paper Rubric for more details.

Policy on Submitting Work:

All assignments must be submitted on Blackboard. Unless otherwise specified, all assignments are due by 11:59 pm at the end of the week they are due. So, if you had an assignment due for the first week of the semester, it would be due by 11:59 pm on Sunday, 2/7. This policy applies to individual and group work.

Any work submitted after the deadline will be considered late, and will receive a 3-point deduction per day late, including the day after the assignment is due. I am willing to grant extensions, but only in extreme cases. If possible, please request an extension at least 24 hours before the assignment is due. **I will NOT grant extensions requested within 6 hours of the due date.** If you are struggling to complete a piece of work, please get in contact with me! I will work with you to help you complete the assignment.

Please note that, unless you have been experiencing a family or medical emergency, I will not accept work that is a week late or more. This applies to Learning Logs as well as written work.

Written Work Grading Rubric:

This is a ROUGH guide to how I will evaluate your written work. Please do not take this rubric to be comprehensive - you will receive more detailed rubrics for the Reading Responses, and the Research Paper. However, the guide below should give you a rough idea of what I am looking for in your written work (including your Learning Logs).

Letter Grade	Numerical Value	Level of engagement and comprehension
A	90 - 100%	Synthesis-level work. Student evaluates and applies course material, leading to new insights and knowledge.
B	80 - 89%	Analysis-level work. Student is able to critically analyze and evaluate course material, application is lacking/inconsistent.
C	70 - 79%	Summary-level work. Student is able to read and comprehend course material, little/no evidence of analysis or application.
D	60 - 69%	Student demonstrates some grasp of course material, but summary is incomplete or inaccurate. Little/no demonstration of analysis.
E	59% or lower	Student demonstrates flawed/no grasp of course material, summary work contains major inaccuracies, no demonstration of analysis.

Discussion Guidelines*:

1 - Come to class prepared to discuss the material. This means that you will need to do the reading ahead of time, and that you will need to reflect on it BEFORE you come to class. It's perfectly fine if you don't understand the material perfectly - you can ask questions for clarification in class! In general, I recommend that you do the reading at least two days in advance, and that you take the time to jot down ideas or questions which you'd like to discuss.

2 - Keep your remarks relevant, and try to advance the conversation in some way. Discussing these topics can be very enjoyable! However, our purpose here is not simply to give everyone a forum to talk about their opinions of the reading. While there is room for discussing our opinions, remember that we are here to achieve a better, more complete understanding of the material, and to hone our critical faculties. Your contribution should substantively further the conversation in some way - either by contributing evidence to a point you agree with, amending a point you agree with, posing questions to further discussion, or posing a challenge to another person's position. If we each take responsibility for keeping our conversation moving forward, we'll avoid repetitive, unproductive dialogues - and we'll ultimately get to have more interesting, enlightening conversations.

3 - Be respectful and courteous. A productive learning environment requires that ALL class participants feel comfortable engaging with each other. In your interactions, I expect you to be civil and respectful of each others' views. I also expect you to be sensitive to the fact that you do not necessarily know much about your classmates, their background, or their life experience. Conduct yourselves accordingly.

An important note: if you say something intended as a joke, and it upsets another person, "it was just a joke" is not an excuse. You have still upset another person, and owe them an apology.

4 - Be charitable - by which I mean epistemically¹ charitable. We will be discussing complex, often quite abstract, topics. It is difficult to understand these ideas, let alone form coherent opinions about them! It is more difficult still to clearly articulate an idea or argument. In your discussions in class, I expect you to interpret each other with charity. Broadly, this means you should always interpret each other as attempting to say something sensible and intelligent. Do not straw man each others' arguments or ideas! This is not how productive discourse occurs.

5 - Engage with others. Philosophy teaches us to examine how we should treat each other. This is not a class that you can expect to do well in if you only consult your own opinions. If someone makes a good point, draw on it in your response (and give them credit)! If someone makes an argument you disagree with, engage with them and share what you disagree with! We have a lot that we can learn from each other.

***Policy Negotiation:** I have set out these discussion guidelines as a rough outline for productive and enjoyable discussions. However, it is ultimately up to all of you to decide how to regulate your in-person discussions. During our first week, we will discuss the Discussion Guidelines themselves, and consider amendments or additions to them.

Discussion Grading Rubric

This is a rough guide to how I will evaluate your discussion participation each week. In assigning you a discussion grade each week, I will look at your daily participation in discussion, as well as your contributions overall. A person who does very poorly on one day might do very well on another. In such cases, I will average my assessment of your participation on both days. So if you've earned a 7 on one day, and a 9 on another, you'

Non-performance 1 - 2	Basic 3 - 4	Emergent 5 - 6	Proficient 7 - 8	Distinguished 9 - 10
Student occasionally contributes to class discussion. Student contributions reflect poor	Student contributes minimally to class discussion. Student contributions demonstrate basic	Student contributes consistently to class discussion. Student contributions demonstrate some	Student contributes regularly to class discussion. Student contributions demonstrate	Student contributes actively and regularly to class discussion. Student contributions demonstrate deep

¹ Epistemic - having to do with knowledge, or states of knowledge.

understanding of central themes of reading, and of author's argument; raise no new or relevant questions or ideas; apply real-world problems in a way which detracts from focus of discussion; does not draw on other students' views; may be rude, dismissive, or uncharitable.	grasp of major themes in reading, limited engagement; demonstrate limited understanding of author's argument, may have flawed understanding of argument; raises questions which may superficially deal with important themes, but do not raise deeper issues; limited, irrelevant application of real-world problems; draws minimally on other students' contributions.	engagement with major themes in reading; demonstrate basic understanding, limited critical analysis of author's argument; raise some questions which may draw out some important ideas in readings; application of real-world problems may not be fully relevant; occasionally draw on other student's contributions to support own point.	engagement with central themes of reading; demonstrate basic understanding and critical analysis of author's argument; raise questions and ideas which draw out important and some new ideas in readings; apply some relevant real-world problems to ideas and arguments; draw on and support other students' contributions.	engagement with central themes of reading; demonstrate understanding and critical analysis of author's argument; raise questions and ideas which draw out important/new ideas in reading; apply relevant real-world problems to ideas and arguments in readings; heavily draw on and support other students' contributions.
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Group Work Guidelines

1 - Make sure all group members are contributing equally. Since all members will receive the same grade for group work, it is unfair for some group members to get a grade for work that they did not contribute to.

2 - Communicate grievances clearly and respectfully. If a group member is not participating fully in group activities, or if there is some aspect of the dynamic in your group with you dislike, communicate this to your group members! I am happy to step in to mediate group disputes, if requested.

3 - Give credit to all group members, where it is due. As members of an academic community, I expect you to practice intellectual honesty at all levels. This includes giving group members credit for work that they do. While it may not always be possible to clearly delineate every individual's particular contribution, if one group member took the lead on a particular project, or offered a particularly apt line of reasoning, I expect you to credit them for that.

***Policy Negotiation:** Groups will be assigned randomly at the beginning of the semester. However, it is important that group members be accountable for participating equally in group work. It is therefore my policy that group members may vote a member out of the group - or, conversely, that a member may request to leave or switch groups. However, because this policy is ultimately supposed to help you all form strong, productive

groups, we will negotiate the specific policies and procedures to be used when a group has a grievance with a member.

Instructor Expectations:

As your instructor, I am committed to creating a safe, enjoyable, and transparent learning environment. To that end, here is what you can expect from me:

1 - Fairness - I am committed to treating all of my students with fairness and compassion. I believe that you are equal participants in the learning process. In my evaluations of your work, I will provide clear rubrics for my grading, and will stick to these. In my dealings with you, I will treat you with honesty and respect.

2 - Contact - I love hearing from my students! Please do not ever hesitate to reach out with questions, concerns, or just to bounce an idea off me. I will always reply within 24 - 48 hours. In general, I try to give myself one day a week off, typically Saturdays. So if you send me an e-mail on Saturday, it is unlikely I will see it until Sunday. I will still respond within that 24 - 48-hour window. I prefer that you contact me via e-mail, but if there is an emergency and you cannot use e-mail, you may contact me via phone. I've included my phone number in my contact information above. I will be holding regular in-person office hours, but am also happy to schedule a one-on-one meeting with you to discuss any questions or concerns you may have.

3 - Clarification - I will do my best to explain things clearly, but I will not always succeed the first time around. If there is a concept or argument which you are struggling to understand, and my explanation has not been helpful, please let me know! I will work with you to make sure that you feel comfortable with the course material. This applies to course material and to any comments I give you on written work.

4 - Understanding and Accommodation - I understand that sometimes emergencies happen, and that we can't always plan for contingencies. If you find yourself falling behind in the course, and are not sure what to do, please get in contact with me! I will work with you to come up with a plan. Additionally, it is important to me that all students feel comfortable in my classroom. If there is something I am doing which is impeding your understanding - or, conversely, if there is something I am not doing which would help you learn - please let me know! I am open to suggestions, and want to make this class enjoyable and accessible for everyone.

Course Schedule

Week	Topic + Readings	To Do
<u>Week 1</u> Mon Aug 23 - Sun Aug 29	<u>Introductions</u> - Syllabus, Course Schedule, all Rubrics - Quill Kukla, "Introduction: Impressionable Bodies"	- Participate actively in discussion - Reach out to Work Group members, establish means of communication - Post in Learning Log
<u>Week 2</u> Mon Aug 30 - Sun Sep 5	<u>Reproductive Autonomy</u> - Christine Overall, <i>Why Have Children?</i>, Chpt 2 - Dorothy Roberts, <i>Killing the Black Body</i>, Introduction	- Participate actively in discussion - Post in Learning Log
<u>Week 3</u> Mon Sep 6 - Sun Sep 12	<u>Contraception</u> - Dorothy Roberts, <i>Killing the Black Body</i>, "From Norplant to the Contraceptive Vaccine" excerpts	- Participate actively in discussion - Post in Learning Log
<u>Week 4</u> Mon Sep 13 - Sun Sep 19	<u>Prenatal Screening</u> <u>For Mon 9/13</u> - Victoria Seavilleklein, "Challenging the Rhetoric of Choice in Prenatal Screening" <u>For Weds 9/15</u> - Sarah Zhang, "Prenatal Testing and the Future of Down Syndrome"	- Participate actively in discussion - Attend Dr. Rosemary Garland-Thomson's guest lecture on Wednesday, 9/15 - Post in Learning Log - Submit Reading Response 1 by Sunday 9/19, 11:59 pm
<u>Week 5</u> Mon Sep 20 - Sun Sep 26	<u>Cloning and Enhancement</u> - John Robertson, "Cloning as a Reproductive Right" - Sandra Shapshay, "Procreative Liberty, Enhancement, and Commodification" -	- Participate actively in discussion - Post in Learning Log

<u>Week 6</u> Mon Sep 27 - Sun Oct 3	<u>Surrogacy</u> - Debra Satz, "Markets in Women's Reproductive Labor" - Malene Tanderup et. al., "Reproductive Ethics in Commercial Surrogacy"	- Participate actively in discussion - Post in Learning Log
<u>Week 7</u> Mon Oct 4 - Sun Oct 10	<u>Abortion</u> - Judith Thomson, "In Defense of Abortion" - Don Marquis, "Why Abortion is Immoral" -	- Participate actively in discussion - Post in Learning Log - Submit Project Proposal by Sunday 10/10, 11:59 pm
<u>Week 8</u> Mon Oct 11 - Sun Oct 17	<u>Decision-Making and Autonomy</u> - Anne Lyerly, et. al., "RISK and the Pregnant Body."	- Participate actively in discussion - Post in Learning Log - Submit Reading Response 2 by Sunday 10/17, 11:59 pm
<u>Week 9</u> Mon Oct 18 - Sun Oct 24	<u>Parents' Rights</u> - Harry Brighouse and Adam Swift, "Parents' Rights and the Value of the Family"	- Participate actively in discussion - Post in Learning Log
<u>Week 10</u> Mon Oct 25 - Sun Oct 31	<u>Protecting Children</u> - Frank Edwards, "Saving Children, Controlling Families"	- Participate actively in discussion - Post in Learning Log - Submit Annotated Bibliography by Sunday 10/31, 11:59 pm
<u>Week 11</u> Mon Nov 1 - Sun Nov 7	<u>What We Owe to Parents</u> - Anne Alstott, <i>No Exit</i>, Introduction	- Participate actively in discussion - Post in Learning Log - Submit Reading Response 3 by Sunday 11/7, 11:59 pm
<u>Week 12</u> Mon Nov 8 - Sun Nov 14	<u>Antinatalism</u> - Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, "Parenthood and Procreation", Section 2.4	- Participate actively in discussion - Post in Learning Log

	- Thomas Young, "Overconsumption and Procreation: Are They Morally Equivalent?"	
<u>Week 13</u> Mon Nov 15 - Sun Nov 21	<u>Presentations</u> - Students will listen to their peers present their research projects, and will ask questions and offer constructive criticism.	- Ask questions and provide constructive criticisms for peers' Presentations - Post in Learning Log
<u>Week 14</u> Mon Nov 22 - Sun Nov 28	<u>Presentations</u> - Students will listen to their peers present their research projects, and will ask questions and offer constructive criticism. - No class meetings Weds 11/24 or Fri 11/26	- Ask questions and provide constructive criticisms for peers' Presentations - Post in Learning Log
<u>Week 15</u> Mon Nov 29- Sun Dec 5	<u>Presentations and Revision</u> - Students will listen to their peers present their research projects, and will ask questions and offer constructive criticism.	- Ask questions and provide constructive criticisms for peers' Presentations - Work with group to implement revisions suggested by peers, edit and finalize Research Project - Post in Learning Log Research Project Final Draft due Sunday 12/5, 11:59 pm