



PHL 260

Bioethics and Biotechnology

S2 External 2014

Philosophy

Contents

<u>General Information</u>	2
<u>Learning Outcomes</u>	3
<u>Assessment Tasks</u>	3
<u>Delivery and Resources</u>	7
<u>Unit Schedule</u>	7
<u>Policies and Procedures</u>	10
<u>Graduate Capabilities</u>	11
<u>Changes since First Published</u>	16

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Unit Convenor and Lecturer

Dr Mianna Lotz

mianna.lotz@mq.edu.au

Contact via mianna.lotz@mq.edu.au

W6A Room 734

By appointment

Tutor

Jai Galliot

jai.galliot@mq.edu.au

Contact via jai.galliot@mq.edu.au

By appointment

Tutor

Ruby Catsanos

ruby.catsanos@mq.edu.au

Contact via ruby.catsanos@mq.edu.au

By appointment

Credit points

3

Prerequisites

12cp or admission to GDipArts

Corequisites

Co-badged status

CBMS807 Bioethics and Biotechnology

Unit description

This unit introduces students to a selection of the most pressing ethical questions and concerns raised by current developments in biotechnology, especially in the sphere of genetic technology. The first section of the unit provides an introduction to ethical reasoning, to issues of social justice and to the relationship between social values, scientific enquiry and research ethics in the context of biotechnology. The second section focuses on the ethics of gene technology in the spheres of human medicine and reproduction, including: genetic screening/testing; gene therapies (somatic and germ cell therapies); genetic enhancement; and human reproductive cloning. In the third section we explore the impact of biotechnologies on other aspects of human, non-human animal and environmental welfare including: genetic engineering of plants and animals (GMOs); nutrigenomics and biofortified foods; bio-prospecting and commercial exploitation of human genetic material.

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

The ability to demonstrate a sound understanding of the major ethical issues posed by specific biotechnological advances;

Possession of a sound understanding of the central ethical concepts, principles and theories that arise in debates concerning the applications of biotechnological developments;

The ability to analyse and critically evaluate relevant case studies and scientific contexts, as well as theories and arguments in the relevant literature;

The development and application of skills and concepts involved in ethical reasoning and argumentation to past, current and future controversies in biotechnological and other sciences;

Development of your ability to construct arguments in support of your own ethical positions and values;

Development of your skills in clarity of thought, clarity of oral and written expression, and written argumentation.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Due
Online Discussion Exercise	10%	13 August 1pm

Name	Weighting	Due
Test	20%	20 August 1pm
Essay	30%	EITHER: 19 Sept OR 7 Nov (5pm)
Participation	15%	Continuous
Exam	25%	University Examination Period

Online Discussion Exercise

Due: **13 August 1pm**

Weighting: **10%**

Individual introduction PLUS reflection on film in Lecture 1.

As well as introducing themselves online on the ilearn Discussion Board, students watch a film clip and post an online comment on the film.

Post a message on the ilearn Discussion Board for this Unit, containing the following:

- (i) Begin by introducing yourself. Include the following information: Name (and nickname or preferred name); Where you are from (locally or internationally); What you are studying at university (subjects, not degree); Why you are studying this unit/what you hope to get out of it.
- (ii) Then add a comment about one or two of the issues or questions that you felt were raised by or in the film from Lecture 1.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- The ability to demonstrate a sound understanding of the major ethical issues posed by specific biotechnological advances;
- The development and application of skills and concepts involved in ethical reasoning and argumentation to past, current and future controversies in biotechnological and other sciences;
- Development of your skills in clarity of thought, clarity of oral and written expression, and written argumentation.

Test

Due: **20 August 1pm**

Weighting: **20%**

Case study application of emerging skills.

Internal: 45min in-class test.

External: 45min timed online test.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- The ability to demonstrate a sound understanding of the major ethical issues posed by specific biotechnological advances;
- Possession of a sound understanding of the central ethical concepts, principles and theories that arise in debates concerning the applications of biotechnological developments;
- The ability to analyse and critically evaluate relevant case studies and scientific contexts, as well as theories and arguments in the relevant literature;
- The development and application of skills and concepts involved in ethical reasoning and argumentation to past, current and future controversies in biotechnological and other sciences;
- Development of your skills in clarity of thought, clarity of oral and written expression, and written argumentation.

Essay

Due: **EITHER: 19 Sept OR 7 Nov (5pm)**

Weighting: **30%**

Written essay, 1500-1600 words. (NB: Choose ONLY ONE essay option. You can select whether to do your essay on a topic from the first half of the unit (Sept deadline) or from the second half (Nov deadline).

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Possession of a sound understanding of the central ethical concepts, principles and theories that arise in debates concerning the applications of biotechnological developments;
- The ability to analyse and critically evaluate relevant case studies and scientific contexts, as well as theories and arguments in the relevant literature;
- The development and application of skills and concepts involved in ethical reasoning and argumentation to past, current and future controversies in biotechnological and other sciences;
- Development of your ability to construct arguments in support of your own ethical positions and values;
- Development of your skills in clarity of thought, clarity of oral and written expression, and written argumentation.

Participation

Due: **Continuous**

Weighting: **15%**

Internal: Frequency of attendance & quality of contribution in both lectures and tutorials.

External: Comment on 75% of tutorial topics posted on online Discussion Board.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- The ability to demonstrate a sound understanding of the major ethical issues posed by specific biotechnological advances;
- The development and application of skills and concepts involved in ethical reasoning and argumentation to past, current and future controversies in biotechnological and other sciences;
- Development of your ability to construct arguments in support of your own ethical positions and values;
- Development of your skills in clarity of thought, clarity of oral and written expression, and written argumentation.

Exam

Due: **University Examination Period**

Weighting: **25%**

Short exam (1.5 hours) during University Examination period. Compulsory for Internal AND External students.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- The ability to demonstrate a sound understanding of the major ethical issues posed by specific biotechnological advances;
- Possession of a sound understanding of the central ethical concepts, principles and theories that arise in debates concerning the applications of biotechnological developments;
- The ability to analyse and critically evaluate relevant case studies and scientific contexts, as well as theories and arguments in the relevant literature;
- The development and application of skills and concepts involved in ethical reasoning and argumentation to past, current and future controversies in biotechnological and other sciences;
- Development of your skills in clarity of thought, clarity of oral and written expression, and

written argumentation.

Delivery and Resources

There will be one 2-hour lecture per week, and for internal students, one 1-hour tutorial per week.

Please check Timetables for confirmation of days/times and venues.

All materials, including lecture recordings, will be available on the unit ilearn site.

ALL ASSESSMENT IS COMPULSORY IN THIS UNIT. You do not need to have passed each assessment to pass the unit, but you do need to have completed EVERY assessment task to be eligible to sit the exam.

Unit Schedule

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES AND REQUIRED READINGS

Note: The following are REQUIRED readings for this unit. All readings listed below are in the Unit Reader. Where more than one reading is listed priority is to be given to reading(s) marked ‘’, but it is expected that all readings listed here will have been read by the end of the unit.*

SECTION I: (LECTURES 1–4) FRAMEWORKS FOR ETHICAL REASONING

LECTURE 1 (Aug 6): Introduction/overview of course. Introducing the process and principles of ethical reasoning.

Reading:

*Stephen Cohen: ‘What is Ethics?’

*James Rachels: ‘What is Morality?’

NOTE: NO TUTORIALS in Week 1

LECTURE 2 (Aug 13): Overview of key moral theories and their applications to issues in biotechnology.

Reading:

* Damian Grace and Stephen Cohen: Excerpt from *Business Ethics: Problems and Cases*.

* Anne Thomson: ‘Moral Principles and Moral Theories’.

NOTE: Online Discussion Exercise due: by 12pm today.

LECTURE 3 (Aug 20): IN-CLASS and ONLINE TEST, 12-1pm.

NOTE: NO TUTORIALS this week.

LECTURE 4 (Aug 27): The role of ethics and social values in science

Reading:

* E. Emanuel *et al*: 'What Makes Clinical Research Ethical?' *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)*, Vol. 283, No. 2 (May24/31: 2701-2711.

* Glass: 'The Ethical Basis of Science.'

LECTURE 5 (Sept 3): The moral legacy of eugenics and key principles of justice in biotechnology.

Reading:

* Buchanan *et al*: Excerpt from 'Eugenics and Its Shadow'

* Wikler and Barondess: 'Bioethics and Anti-Bioethics in Light of Nazi Medicine: What Must We Remember?'

Buchanan *et al*: Excerpt from 'Genes, Justice and Human Nature.'

SECTION II (LECTURES 5–9): GENETIC TECHNOLOGY IN THE SPHERE OF HUMAN HEALTH AND REPRODUCTION

LECTURE 6 (Sept 10): Ethical issues posed by genetic screening, testing and diagnosis

Reading:

* Clarke: 'Genetic Screening and Counselling.'

* Steinbock: 'Preimplantation Genetic Diagnosis and Embryo Selection.'

LECTURE 7 (Sept 17): The ethics of somatic and germline genetic therapy

Reading:

* Chadwick: 'Gene Therapy.'

* Elias and Annas: 'Somatic and Germline Gene Therapy.'

Warren: 'The Moral Status of the Gene.'

*** ESSAY 1 DEADLINE: 5pm Friday 19 September**

MONDAY 22 SEPT – FRIDAY 27 SEPT: MID SEMESTER BREAK

LECTURE 8 (Oct 8): Stem cell research and the moral status of human embryonic stem cells.

Reading:

* Harris: 'Stem Cells, Sex and Procreation'

LECTURE 9 (Oct 15): The moral acceptability of genetic enhancement and the therapy/enhancement distinction

Reading:

* Peter Singer: 'Parental Choice and Human Improvement'.

* Ruud Ter Meulen *et al*: 'Ethical Issues of Enhancement Technologies'.

David Resnik and Daniel B. Vorhaus: 'Genetic Modification and Genetic Determinism'.

LECTURE 10 (Oct 22): Would it be morally permissible to clone human beings?

Reading:

* Brock: 'Cloning Human Beings: An Assessment of the Ethical Issues Pro and Con.'

Holm: 'A Life in the Shadow: One Reason Why We Should Not Clone Human Beings.'

Kass: 'The Wisdom of Repugnance.'

SECTION III (LECTURES 11–12): THE SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS OF BIOTECHNOLOGY

LECTURE 11 (Oct 29): Ethical issues posed by commercialisation of human genetic material

Reading:

* Chadwick and Hedgecoe: 'Commercial Exploitation of the Human Genome'

Munzer: 'Property, Patents and Genetic Material'

LECTURE 12 (Nov 5): Ethical and environmental issues in food biotechnology.

Reading:

*Thompson: 'Ethical Issues in Food Biotechnology'

Altieri and Rosset: 'Ten Reasons Why Biotechnology Will Not Ensure Food Security, Protect the Environment and Reduce Poverty in the Developing World.'

McGloughlin: 'Ten Reasons Why Biotechnology Will Be Important to the Developing World.'

Wills: 'Disrupting Evolution: Biotechnology's Real Result.'

*** ESSAY 2 DEADLINE: 5pm Friday 7 November**

SEMESTER ENDS – EXAMINATIONS BEGIN

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](#). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

Academic Honesty Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html

Assessment Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy.html>

Grading Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grading/policy.html>

Grade Appeal Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/gradeappeal/policy.html>

Grievance Management Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grievance_management/policy.html

Disruption to Studies Policy http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html *The Disruption to Studies Policy is effective from March 3 2014 and replaces the Special Consideration Policy.*

In addition, a number of other policies can be found in the [Learning and Teaching Category](#) of Policy Central.

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

Learning Skills

Learning Skills (mq.edu.au/learningskills) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- [Workshops](#)
- [StudyWise](#)
- [Academic Integrity Module for Students](#)
- [Ask a Learning Adviser](#)

Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the [Disability Service](#) who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at ask.mq.edu.au

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit <http://informatics.mq.edu.au/help/>.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

Graduate Capabilities

Capable of Professional and Personal Judgement and Initiative

We want our graduates to have emotional intelligence and sound interpersonal skills and to demonstrate discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgement. They will exercise initiative as needed. They will be capable of risk assessment, and be able to handle ambiguity and complexity, enabling them to be adaptable in diverse and changing environments.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- The ability to analyse and critically evaluate relevant case studies and scientific contexts, as well as theories and arguments in the relevant literature;
- The development and application of skills and concepts involved in ethical reasoning and argumentation to past, current and future controversies in biotechnological and other sciences;
- Development of your ability to construct arguments in support of your own ethical positions and values;

- Development of your skills in clarity of thought, clarity of oral and written expression, and written argumentation.

Assessment tasks

- Essay
- Participation
- Exam

Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills

Our graduates will take with them the intellectual development, depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content in their chosen fields to make them competent and confident in their subject or profession. They will be able to demonstrate, where relevant, professional technical competence and meet professional standards. They will be able to articulate the structure of knowledge of their discipline, be able to adapt discipline-specific knowledge to novel situations, and be able to contribute from their discipline to inter-disciplinary solutions to problems.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- The ability to demonstrate a sound understanding of the major ethical issues posed by specific biotechnological advances;
- Possession of a sound understanding of the central ethical concepts, principles and theories that arise in debates concerning the applications of biotechnological developments;
- The ability to analyse and critically evaluate relevant case studies and scientific contexts, as well as theories and arguments in the relevant literature;
- The development and application of skills and concepts involved in ethical reasoning and argumentation to past, current and future controversies in biotechnological and other sciences;
- Development of your ability to construct arguments in support of your own ethical positions and values;
- Development of your skills in clarity of thought, clarity of oral and written expression, and written argumentation.

Assessment tasks

- Test
- Essay
- Exam

Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

We want our graduates to be capable of reasoning, questioning and analysing, and to integrate and synthesise learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments; to be able to critique constraints, assumptions and limitations; to be able to think independently and systemically in relation to scholarly activity, in the workplace, and in the world. We want them to have a level of scientific and information technology literacy.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- The ability to demonstrate a sound understanding of the major ethical issues posed by specific biotechnological advances;
- Possession of a sound understanding of the central ethical concepts, principles and theories that arise in debates concerning the applications of biotechnological developments;
- The ability to analyse and critically evaluate relevant case studies and scientific contexts, as well as theories and arguments in the relevant literature;
- The development and application of skills and concepts involved in ethical reasoning and argumentation to past, current and future controversies in biotechnological and other sciences;
- Development of your ability to construct arguments in support of your own ethical positions and values;
- Development of your skills in clarity of thought, clarity of oral and written expression, and written argumentation.

Assessment tasks

- Online Discussion Exercise
- Test
- Essay
- Participation
- Exam

Problem Solving and Research Capability

Our graduates should be capable of researching; of analysing, and interpreting and assessing data and information in various forms; of drawing connections across fields of knowledge; and they should be able to relate their knowledge to complex situations at work or in the world, in order to diagnose and solve problems. We want them to have the confidence to take the initiative in doing so, within an awareness of their own limitations.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- The ability to analyse and critically evaluate relevant case studies and scientific contexts, as well as theories and arguments in the relevant literature;
- The development and application of skills and concepts involved in ethical reasoning and argumentation to past, current and future controversies in biotechnological and other sciences;
- Development of your ability to construct arguments in support of your own ethical positions and values;
- Development of your skills in clarity of thought, clarity of oral and written expression, and written argumentation.

Assessment task

- Essay

Creative and Innovative

Our graduates will also be capable of creative thinking and of creating knowledge. They will be imaginative and open to experience and capable of innovation at work and in the community. We want them to be engaged in applying their critical, creative thinking.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- The development and application of skills and concepts involved in ethical reasoning and argumentation to past, current and future controversies in biotechnological and other sciences;
- Development of your ability to construct arguments in support of your own ethical positions and values;
- Development of your skills in clarity of thought, clarity of oral and written expression, and written argumentation.

Assessment tasks

- Essay
- Participation

Effective Communication

We want to develop in our students the ability to communicate and convey their views in forms effective with different audiences. We want our graduates to take with them the capability to read, listen, question, gather and evaluate information resources in a variety of formats, assess, write clearly, speak effectively, and to use visual communication and communication

technologies as appropriate.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Development of your ability to construct arguments in support of your own ethical positions and values;
- Development of your skills in clarity of thought, clarity of oral and written expression, and written argumentation.

Assessment tasks

- Online Discussion Exercise
- Test
- Essay
- Participation
- Exam

Engaged and Ethical Local and Global citizens

As local citizens our graduates will be aware of indigenous perspectives and of the nation's historical context. They will be engaged with the challenges of contemporary society and with knowledge and ideas. We want our graduates to have respect for diversity, to be open-minded, sensitive to others and inclusive, and to be open to other cultures and perspectives: they should have a level of cultural literacy. Our graduates should be aware of disadvantage and social justice, and be willing to participate to help create a wiser and better society.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- The ability to demonstrate a sound understanding of the major ethical issues posed by specific biotechnological advances;
- Possession of a sound understanding of the central ethical concepts, principles and theories that arise in debates concerning the applications of biotechnological developments;
- The ability to analyse and critically evaluate relevant case studies and scientific contexts, as well as theories and arguments in the relevant literature;
- The development and application of skills and concepts involved in ethical reasoning and argumentation to past, current and future controversies in biotechnological and other sciences;
- Development of your ability to construct arguments in support of your own ethical positions and values;

- Development of your skills in clarity of thought, clarity of oral and written expression, and written argumentation.

Assessment tasks

- Online Discussion Exercise
- Test
- Essay
- Participation
- Exam

Socially and Environmentally Active and Responsible

We want our graduates to be aware of and have respect for self and others; to be able to work with others as a leader and a team player; to have a sense of connectedness with others and country; and to have a sense of mutual obligation. Our graduates should be informed and active participants in moving society towards sustainability.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- The ability to analyse and critically evaluate relevant case studies and scientific contexts, as well as theories and arguments in the relevant literature;
- The development and application of skills and concepts involved in ethical reasoning and argumentation to past, current and future controversies in biotechnological and other sciences;

Assessment task

- Participation

Changes since First Published

Date	Description
04/08/2014	Additional tutor added due to increased enrollments.
03/08/2014	Correction to time of test.