

HCE 3300/Phil 3300: Bioethics and Human Nature Through Film

Instructor: Jeffrey Bishop, MD, PhD
May 29-June 15, 2017
Madrid, Spain

Course Sessions:

The course will meet Monday through Thursday between 3:30 PM and 7:30 PM on the SLU Madrid campus.

Course Description:

What does it mean to be human? The course confronts this enduring question by considering how medicine and biotechnology challenge definitions and conceptualizations of being human. This course will do so through the medium of film and from a cross-cultural perspective. How should we define a human being? What are the implications of how we understand the beginning and end of human life? What is the relationship between the body and mind or soul? How do advances in medicine and biotechnology inform our appreciations of the relationship between the body and the essence of being human?

By examining Spanish and American approaches to ethical dilemmas as depicted by cinematic narratives, the course will explore how social and cultural dynamics shape understandings of what it means to be human. The course will consider the ethical dilemmas posed by such diverse practices as abortion, euthanasia, sex reassignment surgery, cognitive enhancement/manipulation, and genetic enhancement, as well as asking the question of “how should one live?” In its engagement of Spanish and American cultural perspectives, the course will also familiarize students with the difficulties of engaging in cross-cultural ethical analysis.

Course Objectives:

- Articulate various philosophies of human nature and the challenges of conceptualizing and defining the human being.
- Appreciate the ethical dilemmas presented by medicine and biotechnology and identify particular bioethical issues suggested by cinematic narratives.
- Understand how social, cultural, and political dynamics influence the recognition, framing, and resolution of ethical issues.
- Recognize the challenges of engaging in cross-cultural ethical analysis.

Attendance Policy:

Due to the limited number of class meeting sessions, students are expected to attend ALL classes, including class discussions, film viewings, and field experiences. Students are expected to attend class punctually and for the duration of the scheduled class meeting. Failure to attend a class will be excused only in the event of an emergency, and the instructors reserve the right to request appropriate documentation of exigent circumstances necessitating the

absence. Any *unexcused absences* will result in failure of the course and withdrawal from the study abroad program. This attendance policy will be strictly observed and is not negotiable.

Meetings with Instructor:

Students are strongly encouraged to meet with instructors to clarify course assignments or resolve difficulties with the course material. Students are also invited to meet with instructors to discuss course material, bioethics, or academic and career goals or concerns. Questions are welcomed and may be submitted by email. Instructor will make an attempt to respond to all emails within 36 hours.

Course Assignments:

- Complete a minimum of 8 of 10 Film Note Worksheets, submitting them the day after the film is viewed. (Film Note Worksheet is attached at the end of the syllabus).
- Reading material: All reading materials will be available on the course blackboard site prior to commencement of the course. Readings are to be completed the date of the film discussion.
- Class Participation and Discussion: Students will be expected to be engaged in discussion in class.
- Reflection Paper: Students will complete a 2-page reflection comparing two paintings from our field trip to the Prado. Paper due on June 5 by 12N.
- Final Paper: Students will also complete a final paper of 6-8 pages in length (See below). All papers should be submitted as an email attachment to the instructor by 12N on June 23. Failure to submit the paper by the deadline will result in a half-letter deduction of the paper grade for every 24 hours the paper is late. (For example, a paper that would have received an A- if submitted within 24 hours after the deadline the deadline will receive a B+, a B if submitted within 48 hours of the deadline, and so on). Students should speak with instructors before the assigned due date if extraordinary circumstances will prevent them from observing assignment deadlines. Papers should be formatted in 12 point Times New Roman Font and double-spaced with 1" margins on all sides. All papers are expected to provide source citations where appropriate, including use of assigned readings and films. Students may use the MLA, APA, or Chicago citation styles but must use the style consistently within the paper.

Assessment:

Participation: 40%

This course presents a unique opportunity for cross-cultural dialogue. Accordingly, active participation is a significant component of the classroom learning experience. Students are expected to contribute regularly to classroom discussion, pose thoughtful questions, and respond to the observations and comments of peers. The participation grade will be adjusted if students fail to

demonstrate respect for peers, instructors, and guest speakers, including use of electronic devices for purposes not related to the class (i.e. checking email) and talking while others are speaking. The participation grade will also be adjusted if the quality of participation evidences a lack of preparation (failure to read assigned materials and failure to watch films). Students who anticipate being uncomfortable participating in class are strongly encouraged to meet with instructors promptly to discuss how they may engage in classroom discussion in a comfortable manner. Included in the participation grade for the course will be the Film Note Worksheets.

Field Reflection Paper. 20%

Students must submit a brief (2 to 3 page) reflection on the field trip to the Museo Nacional del Prado. The Students will be given a list of paintings to observe and asked to answer a series of questions for their notes. Students will then write up their analysis and comparison of two or more of the paintings focusing on the artists depiction of human nature. Students can also draw on literature in art or art history.

Due Date: Monday, June 5, 2017, by 12N

Final Paper. 40%

Students will be expected to write an original paper of between 6 and 8 pages in length upon completion of the course. The paper should bridge themes explored in at least two of the films viewed in the class. The paper should also incorporate reading material and original research. The paper should not be a mere summary of class discussions, but rather the paper should articulate an original thesis and develop an argument. Moreover, the paper should address how social and cultural dynamics might influence an understanding of the ethical issue explored. Students should discuss their proposed thesis (either in person or by email) with instructors prior to submitting their paper.

Due Date: Friday, June 26th, 2017 at 12N.

Overview of Due Dates:

Film Note Worksheets	Due the day after film is viewed.
Field Reflection (2-3 pages)	Due June 5, 2017.
Final Paper (6-8 pages)	Due June 23, 2017.

Schedule

Date	Time	Topic	Readings
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HCE 3300/Phil 330 Syllabus Summer 2017

May 29	3:30-5:30 PM	Introduction	N/A
	5:30-7:30 PM	Film: <i>The Cider House Rules</i>	
May 30	3:30-5:30 PM	Discussion: <i>The Cider House Rules</i>	Reading: Alan Goldman, "What we learn from rules in the Cider House Rules," <i>Philosophy and Literature</i> , 2010, 34: 359–372.
	5:30-7:30 PM	Film: <i>Mar adentro</i>	
May 31	3:30-5:30 PM	Film: <i>Yo, Tambien</i>	
	5:30-7:30 PM	Discussion: <i>Mar Adentro!</i> And <i>Yo, Tambien!</i>	Reading: Diana Cohan Agrest, "Suicide: <i>Mar Adentro</i> " Friedman, Lester D., Quadrelli, Silvia, Colt, Henri G., <i>The Picture of Health: Medical Ethics and the Movies</i> , Oxford, 2011. Reading: Victoria Rivera-Cordero, "The Self Inside and Out: Authenticity and Disability in <i>Mar Adentro</i> and <i>Yo Tambien</i> ," <i>Hispania</i> 96.1 (2013): 62–70.
June 1	3:30-5:30 PM	Field trip	Museo Nacional del Prado
	5:30-7:30 PM		
June 5	3:30-5:30 PM	Discussion: Disability, aging, and Human Nature.	
	5:30-7:30 PM	Film: <i>La piel que habito</i>	

HCE 3300/Phil 330 Syllabus Summer 2017

June 6	3:30-5:30 PM	Discussion: <i>La piel que habito</i>	Reading: Jeremy Biles, Review of the Skin I Live In, Journal of Religion and Film, 2012; 16(1): 1-5.
	5:30-7:30 PM	Film: <i>Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind</i>	
June 7	3:30-5:30 PM	Film: <i>Gattaca</i>	
	5:30-7:30 PM	Discussion: Altering the Human Person	Readings: Andy Miah, "Blessed are the Forgetful: The Ethics of Memory Deletion in <i>Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind</i> , Bioethics at the Movies, ed. By Sandra Shapshay, Johns Hopkins, 2009.
June 8	3:30-5:30 PM	Film: <i>Hable con ella</i>	
	5:30-7:30 PM	Discussion: <i>Hable con ella</i>	Reading: A.W. Eaton, "Almodovar's Immoralism" in A.W. Eaton <i>Talk to Her</i> , Routledge, 2008. http://timothyquigley.net/vcs/eaton-almodovar_ai.pdf
June 12	3:30-5:30 PM	N/A	
	5:30-7:30 PM	Film: <i>Ex Machina</i>	
June 13	3:30-5:30 PM	Discussion: <i>Ex Machina</i>	Readings: Roger Epstein, The Empty Brain. https://aeon.co/essays/your-brain-does-not-process-information-and-it-is-not-a-computer Luciano Floridi, "Should we be afraid of AI?". https://aeon.co/essays/true-ai-is-both-logically-possible-and-utterly-implausible
	5:30-7:30 PM	Film: <i>Children of Men</i>	

June 14	3:30-5:30 PM	Discussion: <i>Children of Men</i>	Readings: http://movies2.nytimes.com/2006/12/25/movies/25chil.html?ref=movies Hope and Children of Men by Matt White https://thejesuitpost.org/2014/12/advent-themes-through-film-hope-children-of-men/ Children of Men and a Plural Messianism by Sarah Schwartzman http://www.unomaha.edu/jrf/vol13.no1/ChildrenMen.htm
	5:30-7:30 PM	Film: <i>The Tree of Life</i>	
June 15	3:30-5:30 PM	Discussion: <i>The Tree of Life</i>	Reading: Peter Candler, "The Tree of Life and the Lamb of God" by Peter Candler http://theotherjournal.com/2011/07/29/the-tree-of-life-and-the-lamb-of-god/
	5:30-7:30 PM	Conclusion	

Course Policies:

Discussion and activities will be central to the learning process in this course. Active participation in class is therefore necessary, both for your benefit and for your fellow students. At the same time, the issues we will be discussing can be both controversial and personal for many of us. As a result, I expect a lively debate will arise on various topics. Many of you will have personal expertise or experience that will enrich our discussions and I hope that you will share it with us when it is appropriate. This also means that all participation must be **respectful of other viewpoints and beliefs**. You need not accept or endorse other views, but you must give all points of view a charitable hearing and careful consideration. Lack of respect for other students will be reflected in a decrease in your participation grade. Likewise, if your participation does not reflect a reading of the assigned material, it will not count towards your participation grade. I will strive to foster a safe classroom environment that is conducive to the open exchange of ideas, and reserve the right to take measures in order to accomplish this goal (up to and including removing those elements that prove to be obstacles for fulfilling this goal).

Asking for Help or Clarification

You may contact the instructor at any time with questions regarding the course or course requirements. Please do not hesitate to ask for guidance. You may contact me by email or stop by the office.

Changes to Syllabus

The instructor expects to follow this syllabus throughout the semester. It is possible that the instructor may make changes to the syllabus during the semester. These changes will be communicated during class OR by email. It is the responsibility of all students to keep up to date with changes. If a student misses class, it is the student's responsibility to find out whether any announcements were made in class.

Class Attendance

Attendance at all class meetings and any individual meetings scheduled between the instructor and student is expected.

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism is a very serious academic offense and is grounds for immediate failure of a course. Plagiarism can take the form of directly copying material. But it is also wrong to take ideas without citing sources. Please review the Academic Integrity policy printed below.

“The university is a community of learning: its effectiveness requires an environment of mutual trust and integrity. As members of this community, students share with Faculty and Administrators the responsibility to maintain this environment. Academic integrity is violated by any dishonesty in submitting for evaluation assignments, tests, research reports, etc., required to validate the student's learning. In a case of clear indication of such dishonesty, the Faculty member or Administrator has the responsibility to apply sanctions to protect the environment of integrity necessary for learning.

Although not all forms of academic dishonesty can here be listed, the instances listed below should be seen as actions that not only violate the mutual trust necessary between Faculty and students, but they also undermine the validity of the University's evaluation of students and take unfair advantage of fellow students. Soliciting, receiving, or providing any unauthorized assistance in the completion of any work submitted toward academic credit is dishonest.

Examples of academic dishonesty would be copying from another student, copying from a book or class notes during a closed-book exam, submitting materials authored by or editorially revised by another person but represented as the student's own work, copying a passage or text directly from a published source without appropriately citing/recognizing that source, taking a test or doing an assignment or other academic work for another student, or securing or supplying in advance a copy of an examination without the knowledge or consent of the Instructor. This list is not exhaustive.

Any clear violation of academic integrity will be met with sanctions. In a case of dishonesty within a course, the Instructor may assign an appropriate grade

and/or recommend further sanctions to the Dean. The Dean may, in a clearly serious instance of apparent or alleged academic dishonesty, appoint an ad hoc committee to hear, judge, render an opinion, and, if warranted, recommend sanctions. The Dean is responsible for the final decision and notification of all associated parties.

The student who is judged guilty of an act of serious academic dishonesty, e.g., involving a final course or degree examination or plagiarism in the preparation of a major paper or research-report, may be suspended for a specified time period or dismissed altogether from their respective schools and the University. Suspension or dismissal may also be warranted for societal reasons, e.g., unauthorized solicitation or distribution of controlled substances, endangering one's self or another person, or abusing alcohol or illicit drugs. Reports of such actions may come from nonacademic staff, Faculty, Administrators, or other students. Such reports are to be directed to the Dean who is responsible for decisions to suspend or dismiss."

In addition to the above policy of student should be aware of their major-Department and School or College policy, as well as the Department of Philosophy's and the College of Arts and Science's policy on academic integrity.

1. The policy described above also pertains to all uses of electronic information such as the internet and database information. In particular, students should be attentive to the appropriate use of the world wide web.
2. Reporting mechanisms for academic dishonesty should follow the faculty "chain of command", ordinarily reporting abuses to the course instructor or departmental faculty; if that is not feasible or satisfactory a report may then be filed with the Department Chair; if that is not feasible of satisfactory a report then may be filed with the Student's dean.
3. When a change of grade occurs due to a penalty assigned by faculty on matters of academic integrity, the lower grade should be recorded on the relevant course grade sheet (this refers to the term essay assessment form used by the Department);
4. All course syllabi in the Department should refer to this new policy on academic integrity.

Academic Integrity Syllabus Statement

Academic integrity is honest, truthful and responsible conduct in all academic endeavors. The mission of Saint Louis University is "the pursuit of truth for the greater glory of God and for the service of humanity." Accordingly, all acts of falsehood demean and compromise the corporate endeavors of teaching, research, health care, and community service via which SLU embodies its

mission. The University strives to prepare students for lives of personal and professional integrity, and therefore regards all breaches of academic integrity as matters of serious concern.

The governing University-level Academic Integrity Policy was adopted in Spring 2015, and can be accessed on the Provost's Office website at:

http://www.slu.edu/Documents/provost/academic_affairs/University-wide%20Academic%20Integrity%20Policy%20FINAL%20%206-26-15.pdf.

Additionally, each SLU College, School, and Center has adopted its own academic integrity policies, available on their respective websites. All SLU students are expected to know and abide by these policies, which detail definitions of violations, processes for reporting violations, sanctions, and appeals. Please direct questions about any facet of academic integrity to your faculty, the chair of the department of your academic program, or the Dean/Director of the College, School or Center in which your program is housed.

Title IX Statement

Saint Louis University and its faculty are committed to supporting our students and seeking an environment that is free of bias, discrimination, and harassment. If you have encountered any form of sexual misconduct (e.g. sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, domestic or dating violence), we encourage you to report this to the University. If you speak with a faculty member about an incident of misconduct, that faculty member must notify SLU's Title IX deputy coordinator, Marta Maruri, whose office is located on the ground floor of Padre Rubio Hall, Avenida del Valle, 28 (mmaruri@slu.edu; 915-54-5858 ext. 213) and share the basic fact of your experience with her. The Title IX deputy coordinator will then be available to assist you in understanding all of your options and in connecting you with all possible resources on and off campus.

If you wish to speak with a confidential source, you may contact the counselors at the SLU-Madrid's Counselling Services on the third floor of San Ignacio Hall (counselingcenter-madrid@slu.edu; 915-54-5858 ext. 230) or Sinews Multipletherapy Institute, the off-campus provider of counseling services for SLU-Madrid (www.sinews.es; 91-700-1979) To view SLU-Madrid's sexual misconduct policy and for resources, please visit the following web address:<http://www.slu.edu/Documents/Madrid/campus-life/SLUMadridSexualMisconductPolicy.pdf>.

Accommodation Statement

In recognition that people learn in a variety of ways and that learning is influenced by multiple factors (e.g., prior experience, study skills, learning disability), resources to support student success are available on campus. Students who think they might benefit from these resources can find out more about:

- Course-level support (e.g., faculty member, departmental resources, etc.) by asking your course instructor.
- University-level support (e.g., tutoring/writing services, Disability Services) by visiting the Academic Dean's Office (San Ignacio Hall) or by going to <http://www.slu.edu/madrid/learning-resources>.

Students who believe that, due to a disability, they could benefit from academic accommodations are encouraged to contact Disability Services at +34 915 54 58 58, ext. 230, send an e-mail to counselingcenter-madrid@slu.edu, or to visit the Counseling Office (San Ignacio Hall). Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries. Course instructors support student accommodation requests when an approved letter from Disability Services has been received and when students discuss these accommodations with the instructor after receipt of the approved letter.

Information regarding the collection of student work for assessment. The following statement should be included on course syllabi, with the italicized sentence made specific to your course:

Saint Louis University - Madrid Campus is committed to excellent and innovative educational practices. In order to maintain quality academic offerings and to conform to relevant accreditation requirements, we regularly assess our teaching, services, and programs for evidence of student learning outcomes achievement. For this purpose we keep on file anonymized representative examples of student work from all courses and programs such as: assignments, papers, exams, portfolios, and results from student surveys, focus groups, and reflective exercises. Thus, copies of your work for this course, including, any exams, oral presentations, assignments, submitted papers and/or portfolios, may be kept on file for institutional research, assessment and accreditation purposes. If you prefer that Saint Louis University-Madrid Campus does not keep your work on file, you will need to communicate your decision in writing to your professor.

Additional material deemed important by the instructor (e.g., a statement of student responsibilities in the course, lab policies, policies about submitting work, using SLU Global, etc.).

Classroom Etiquette Policy

As aspiring citizens, students need to approach this course as professionals at all times. Consistent with the course requirements and expectations, as well as the competencies the course is designed to help students develop, you will be expected to submit all assignments by their due dates, attend all required class sessions, arrive to class prepared and on time, remain for the full class time, dress appropriately, pay attention, contribute thoughtfully to class discussions, be

respectful of and courteous to others, refrain from eating, and use technology appropriately. You are welcome to use your laptop or tablet computer to enhance your education while in class; however, computers that become distractions from engaged participation in discussions either to the operator or others will not be tolerated. Distractions include (but are not limited to) reading your email, surfing the net or using your cell phone. Surely you can wait until a break or the end of class to indulge in these vices of modern life.

Film Notes

- 1) What understanding of human nature does each of the main characters in the film hold?

- 2) What understanding of human nature do you think the author and/or director holds?

- 3) Is the author or director portraying what he or she thinks is the dominant understanding of human nature held by his or her culture? Is he or she endorsing the dominant culture's understanding of human nature? Or is he or she challenging the dominant culture's understanding of human nature?

- 4) Do you accept the various main characters' understanding of human nature? The author or director's understanding? The dominant culture's understanding?

5) Give your assessment of these various understandings of human nature.

6) In what way does these understandings of human nature shape the ethics of the character? Where might your understanding of the ethics confirm or challenge the ethics of the characters?