Feminist Bioethics
PHIL 402 | WS 422 | PHIL 673 | PHIL 675
University of Waterloo
Fall 2018
AL 124 Thursdays 11:30-2:20

How to find me (in person and online)
Instructor: Katy Fulfer
- office in Hagey Hall 324
  - Office hours: Wednesdays 4-5, by appointment
  - I have an open door policy. If my door is cracked, please feel welcome to come in. I’m usually in the office at least for a little bit M-F.
- kfulfer@uwaterloo.ca
  - Please include “Feminist Bioethics” or your course code in email subject heading
  - Monday-Friday, I respond to emails within 48 hours
- (519) 888-4567 x 31675
- @katyfulfer (tweet me questions!)

As a professor at the University of Waterloo and as an immigrant to Canada, it is important for me to acknowledge that I am a guest on this land, which is the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (Neutral), Anishnaabeg, and Haudenosaunee peoples. The University of Waterloo is situated on the Haldimand Tract, land promised to Six Nations, which includes six miles on each side of the Grand River. You are welcome to ask me about why I include this acknowledgement on my syllabus.

What this course is about.
Bioethics emerged as a discipline to respond to power differences between health care professionals and their patients or research subjects. Feminists have expanded this analysis of power to emphasize structural inequalities that are produced along axes of gender, race, ability, sexuality, sex, socio-economic status, and geographical location (just to name a few).

You will gain a foundation in feminist bioethics in this course. Feminist bioethics is both interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary, and involves both critique and theory generation. Our focus will be on philosophical feminist bioethics, though we will draw on empirical approaches as well as philosophy.
First, we will examine how feminists have challenged and revised the ways in which concepts such as autonomy, vulnerability, health, and disability are conceived by clinical practice and in public health. Second, we will explore how narrative functions in relation to philosophical argument in philosophical feminist bioethics. Third, we will turn to current debates in feminist bioethics that challenge and expand on previous feminist theory and practice.

What you should get out of this course (or, what the course is designed to help you learn).

1. Apply feminist concepts or methods to questions in bioethics
2. Assess the strengths and weaknesses of philosophical arguments in feminist bioethics
3. Engage in charitable philosophical analysis with others
4. Conduct original research in feminist bioethics

It is my intention that you will leave this course with a paper to submit to an appropriate conference or research forum and with pieces you can publish for public audiences (e.g., blog posts). LEARN will contain links to conferences that may be good opportunities.

I’ve created the course to meet these objectives. But what about you? What do you expect or hope to get out of this course?

What we should expect of each other.
Because of our unique perspectives, we each have something to offer the class. To make space for diverse perspectives, the classroom should be respectful and accessible. Class discussion and disagreement are encouraged within the context of a respectful classroom environment. Hateful speech will not be tolerated. Be aware that some topics may trigger painful experiences for some members of class (and we cannot always predict what these topics may be). We will discuss strategies for promoting an inclusive learning space, and I welcome feedback throughout the semester about how to promote accessibility.

If you have temporary or chronic disabilities of any kind (including learning disabilities, ADHD, depression, health conditions), and you require accommodations, the AccessAbility Services office (Needles Hall extension, first floor, room 1401) collaborates with academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations, please register with the AccessAbility office at the beginning of each academic term. If you have questions about whether you might need accommodations, it is worth getting in touch with AccessAbility to check in.
Disabilities may not be the only reason why someone needs flexibility. Please speak with your academic counselor (or me, if appropriate) if there are any life circumstances that may affect your participation in the course. These may be personal, health-related, family-related issues, or other concerns. Keep in mind that Waterloo has a verification of illness form that must be submitted for accommodations for illness.

Everyone needs help sometimes. Links and contact information for on- and off-campus mental health resources can be found on the last page of the syllabus and on LEARN.

What to expect in class.
Class will be structured around analyzing the course readings. We will examine both philosophical concepts and problems that arise in practice. For the most part, the theoretical and practical content will be intertwined: theory helps us understand problems, and the problems inform the theorizing. The readings are tough, but together we will work through them to enhance our understanding.

Class will usually begin with an overview of the main arguments of the material and may include some supplemental context. The majority of our time will focus on your questions. There will be a wellness break approximately mid-way through class. Class time will also be set aside to discuss and practice for assignments.

In addition, we will have a few clinical ethicists come and talk about their philosophical work outside of the academy.

In my experience, the following strategies, expressed by the acronym PREP, support learning and success.

**Prepare for class**
- I recommend reading assigned material in three stages.
  - Read over the abstract or introduction and section headings.
  - Skim the reading quickly to get a sense the whole piece.
  - Read the article carefully, writing down additional questions you have.
- Check LEARN every 48 hours for announcements.

**Reflect**
- Review assigned material and notes after class to reinforce key points.
- Notice any emotions, positive or negative, that are elicited by readings or discussion.
- Follow-up questions or reflections with me in my office hours.

**Engage (participate)**
- Listen actively and contribute to class activities and discussion.
- Be kind towards yourself and civil towards others.
**Practice self-care**
- Learning involves the whole person. Practicing self-care outside of the classroom has positive benefits on your learning.

**Texts**

We will read Jennifer Scuro’s *The Pregnancy ≠ Childbearing Project* (Rowman & Littlefield, International, 2017). It is available in the bookstore.

Other readings will be available through the library’s e-reserve system. See the full [reading schedule](#) and the [course bibliography](#) on LEARN.

**The assignments**

A few notes:
- Plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated.
- If you have to miss the class for any reason, please talk to me about it so we can make sure you are on track for succeeding in the course. Missing any class can affect your grade, and missing more than one class period may result in not being able to pass the course.
- Rubrics and more detailed assessment instructions will be available on LEARN.
- Some assignments will not be able to be submitted late. For other assignments, a late penalty of -5% will be applied per 24 hour period the paper is late.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Due date</th>
<th>Learning goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Discussion questions</strong></td>
<td>25% (5 x 5% each)</td>
<td>Opportunity for weekly submission through LEARN, by 4 pm on Wednesdays and in-class portion</td>
<td>2, 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public philosophy project</strong></td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Opportunity for weekly submission through LEARN, by 4 pm on Wednesdays and in-class portion</td>
<td>1, 2</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Research Project</strong></td>
<td>55%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>--Proposal and annotated bibliography</strong></td>
<td>--10%</td>
<td>In class, Nov. 8</td>
<td>1-2, 4</td>
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Assignment descriptions

Discussion Questions

Most class periods will be structured around discussion questions, which are designed to generate critical discussion of the readings and should not be answerable by a "yes" or "no."

Between September 13 and November 22, students will post five discussion questions about course readings. Have a copy of your question with you in class, and read your classmates’ questions before class. Each question should be approximately a paragraph or two in length, and must be posted to the LEARN page by 4 pm on the Wednesday before class. A rubric, templates, and a sample discussion question can be found on LEARN.

Please note that you will not receive marks for a discussion question unless you are able to present it in class. Discussion questions may not be submitted late or made up. You may only submit one discussion question per week.

Evaluation

Discussion questions will be marked out of 20 points. You will be assessed on how well you accomplish the following:

- Is your written question clearly connected to the reading? Does it contain page number citations to relevant passages?
- Have you posed thoughtful questions for discussion that provide evidence of careful reading?
- Have you provided enough detail for others to understand your question, while being concise?
- Does your question include a brief statement about how you would begin to answer it?
- Were you an active participant in the discussion of your question?
Public philosophy project

Feminist bioethicists are regularly engaged in public philosophy: writing comments when the government solicits public feedback, blogging, hosting public conversations. In this project, you will do philosophy that is primarily aimed at a non-academic audience.

Option 1: Blogging (2 blogs at 10% each)

Students will write philosophical blog entries (500-800 words) applying insights from feminist bioethics to current issues in bioethics (broadly construed). Blogs need not present original arguments, though they should be useful and relevant to the audiences for whom they are intended.

Students will have an opportunity to present blogs in class. Blogs do not have to be on material that is assigned for that class period. However, you may not submit a blog post and a discussion question in the same week.

Option 2: Propose something!

Here you can be creative. Think about avenues where philosophical thinking might meaningfully engage non-academic audiences. For example, perhaps you design a social media strategy around a current topic in feminist bioethics. Perhaps you write a series of letters to the editor for local news organizations, or work with a classmate to facilitate a public conversation about a current bioethical question or debate. We can work together to ensure that the project meets your interests and the learning goals for the class, and that the scope of the project is comparable to writing two blog posts.

Research Project

The research project presents your unique philosophical stance on a question or issue in feminist bioethics.

- PHIL 420 and 673 and WS 422 students will write an argumentative paper.
- PHIL 675 students will complete an applied research project.
- I am open to PHIL 420 and WS 422 students completing an applied project rather than a traditional philosophical paper. If this interests you, we should begin talking about it before Thanksgiving.

Proposal and Annotated Bibliography

Students will write a paper abstract or project proposal summarizing their main arguments for their research project. Proposals should not exceed one single-spaced page.

PHIL 420 and 673: The proposal should include your first articulation of a narrow thesis statement suitable for the length of the research project. Assume a general philosophical audience for this project.
**WS 422**: The proposal should include your first articulation of a narrow thesis statement suitable for the length of the research project. If your audience is not a philosophical one, be sure to indicate who your main audience is (e.g., policy makers).

**PHIL 675**: Your proposal should describe what form your final project will take, how it displays your unique philosophical stance, and who the intended audience will be.

For all students, the annotated bibliography will include five entries that are relevant to your project. All entries should be from scholarly material or primary sources (e.g., a piece of legislation), unless approved by me beforehand.

For our purpose, the annotated bibliography will include bibliographic references and short abstracts summarizing and evaluating the main arguments in the source material as they relate to your research question. One of these entries may be from a source included in the reading schedule. The remaining four entries will come from the student’s research.

**First Draft and Argument Workshop**

As part of the research project, students will present their research as works-in-progress to their classmates and provide feedback to classmates on their projects. Comments received during this argument workshop will help students refine their ideas. I will provide some suggestions on how to give effective feedback.

**PHIL 420 and WS 422**: The first draft should be at least 2000 words long and should (as much as possible) not exceed 3000 words (including references). Although this draft is a first draft, it is not a rough draft. The paper should be polished and complete.

**PHIL 673**: The first draft should be at least 3000 words long and should (as much as possible) not exceed 3500 words (including references). Although this draft is a first draft, it is not a rough draft. The paper should be polished and complete.

**PHIL 675**: The first draft of the project will be a complete version of the project.

**Revised Drafts**

**PHIL 420 and WS 422**: The second draft of your research paper should incorporate feedback received from the argument workshops. It should be 2500-3000 words (including references).

**PHIL 673**: The second draft of your research paper should incorporate feedback received from the argument workshops. It should be 4000-4500 words (including references).

**Evaluation for PHIL 420, PHIL 673, and WS 422 Essays**

Your papers will be assessed for content and structure. These two aspects are mutually-supporting. Good content relies on good structure for the point of the paper to be adequately relayed to the reader.
**Structure**
[ORG] Does the author have a clear thesis statement? Is there a plan for the paper at the outset and does the author follow that plan? Does the paper have an explicit overall direction?
[CLR] Is the author’s position clear and is the paper clearly written overall? Could another student at the same level who is not enrolled in the course understand the paper?

**Content**
[CON] Does the author use convincing evidence to support their position? Do the claims made in different parts of the paper follow from one another? Are they consistent?
[UND] How well does the author understand and make appropriate use of the material relevant to the paper? How well does the author understand the complexity of the issues involved?
[OBJ] Has the author considered an objection to the view advanced in the paper and provided an appropriate reply?

**PHIL 675**: The second draft of the research project should incorporate feedback received from the argument workshops.

**Evaluation for PHIL 675 Applied Research Projects**

General points from the paper rubric will apply in the evaluation of applied projects. As an assessment of student learning, I am looking for your unique stance on a philosophical issue and your ability to understand and synthesize research. Applied projects will also be assessed on how well they accomplish their stated goals, and whether they are appropriate for their intended audience.

**Facilitating a Class Discussion (optional)**

This assignment is optional, but strongly encouraged as a professional development opportunity for graduate students or for undergraduates who are considering graduate school or professions where they will facilitate workshops or meetings.

You may work individually or in groups of up to three people to lead a class period. This involves presenting assigned readings and facilitating a class discussion for a class period. I recommend you provide an overview of the author’s argument, and bring a list of points you would like for the class to discuss. You should also incorporate and facilitate classmates’ discussion questions into your presentation. Although this assignment is not part of the formal assessments, I will provide written comments for facilitators, and will meet with you in person if that would be helpful to you.
University Policies

These are institutionally-required statements for undergraduate course outlines. Some of this information is stated differently in the outline above.

Cross-listed course

Please note that a cross-listed course will count in all respective averages no matter under which rubric it has been taken. For example, a PHIL/PSCI cross-list will count in a Philosophy major average, even if the course was taken under the Political Science rubric.

Academic Integrity and Discipline

*Academic Integrity:* In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. See the [Office of Academic Integrity webpage](http://example.com) for more information.

*Discipline:* A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. Check the [Office of Academic Integrity](http://example.com) for more information. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to [Policy 71 - Student Discipline](http://example.com). For typical penalties check [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties](http://example.com).

Grievances and Appeals

*Grievance:* A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read [Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances](http://example.com), Section 4. When in doubt, please be certain to contact the department’s administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.

*Appeals:* A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to [Policy 72 - Student Appeals](http://example.com).
Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

**Note for students with disabilities:** The AccessAbility Services office, located on the first floor of the Needles Hall extension (1401), collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the AS office at the beginning of each academic term.

If you are using Turnitin® in your course

**Turnitin.com:** Text matching software (Turnitin®) will be used to screen assignments in this course. This is being done to verify that use of all material and sources in assignments is documented. Students will be given an option if they do not want to have their assignment screened by Turnitin®. In the first week of the term, details will be provided about arrangements and alternatives for the use of Turnitin® in this course. Note: students must be given a reasonable option if they do not want to have their assignment screened by Turnitin®. See guidelines for instructors for more information.

Mental Health Support

All of us need a support system. The faculty and staff in Arts encourage students to seek out mental health supports if they are needed.

**On Campus**
- Counselling Services: counselling.services@uwaterloo.ca / 519-888-4567 ext 32655
- **MATES:** one-to-one peer support program offered by Federation of Students (FEDS) and Counselling Services
- Health Services Emergency service: located across the creek form Student Life Centre

**Off campus, 24/7**
- **Good2Talk:** Free confidential help line for post-secondary students. Phone: 1-866-925-5454
- Grand River Hospital: Emergency care for mental health crisis. Phone: 519-749-433 ext. 6880
- **Here 24/7:** Mental Health and Crisis Service Team. Phone: 1-844-437-3247
- **OK2BME:** set of support services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning teens in Waterloo. Phone: 519-884-0000 extension 213

Full details can be found online at the Faculty of ARTS website
Download UWaterloo and regional mental health resources (PDF)
Download the WatSafe app to your phone to quickly access mental health support information