

LGLS 485 – SCIENCE, LAW, AND HUMAN VALUES

Bryant University

Course Syllabus

Professor Andrea Boggio

Phone: 401-232-6455

E-mail: aboggio@bryant.edu

Office: Faculty
Suite F, Room 414

Office hours

Tuesday, 9:00am-9:30am | 11:00am-12:00pm

Thursday, 11:00pm-12:00pm | 5:00pm-6:30pm

By appointment

Course Objectives

The purpose of this course is to study how science, law, and human values interact. Whether conducting biomedical research or developing biotechnology applications, scientists cannot ignore the impact that new research and new products have on society. The course is meant to provide students with a conceptual framework to analyze how society affects and is affected by science by focusing in particular on current policy debates in bioethics and environmental ethics. The focus is on both a domestic and a global perspective. This course develops critical thinking skills, communication skills, and problem solving skills.

Textbooks:

- 1) Joseph R. DesJardins, *Environmental Ethics*. 4 ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning
- 2) Mc-Graw Hill Reader (print or eBook)

Prerequisite: Law and Society (LGLS 360)

Structure

The course is structured around three parts:

- **Part 1 – Understanding science and society issues:** This part introduces the student to science and the scientific method, and to why constraints on science may be appropriate. Basic concepts of moral philosophy, leading ethical theories, and the relationship between law and morality are also explored.
- **Part 2 – Bioethics:** This part focuses on how law and ethics inform and shape a number of areas of science that are the subject of current debates in the policy arena, such as research ethics with human subjects; cloning; informed consent, and the use of animals in scientific research.
- **Part 3 – Environmental Ethics:** This part focuses on current policy discussion on environmental issues such as the protection of flora and fauna; sustainable development; climate change; and genetically modified crops.

Goals

Throughout the semester, you will explore a selected number of current debates in science, law, and ethics, become familiar with its factual dimension, and develop the ability to analyze such debates. A major goal of the course is to offer a practical foundation in the critical assessment of arguments that are used in the debates as well as improving your ability to make arguments in writing and orally. The substantive materials are presented in a manner which encourages critical analysis.

You will also study the legal regulation pertaining to science and human values in two countries of your choice. This will allow you to have a better understanding of how laws differ from nation to nation and the implications of comparative variations.

Assignments

Students will be asked to work both independently and in small groups or 3 to 4 students.

Each group will:

(1) Analyze two case studies one in bioethics and one environmental ethics. Each small group will:

- a) discuss the legal and ethical issues raised in a current debate,
- b) answer specific questions about each case
- c) present and lead a class discussion on the case, and
- d) act as a peer reviewer of a different group.

(2) Research, and write two reports regarding, the laws of two country reports using the framework of a project aiming to monitor health policies through the world and ranking nations based on the degree of freedom of research and medical care

(<http://www.freedomofresearch.org/report/Freedom-of-medical-research-and-treatment-around-the-globe>). The issue to be researched are: Assisted reproduction technologies (ART); Research with human embryonic stem cells; End-of-life decisions; and Abortion and contraception. One of the two countries must be a country where English is not the first language. More guidance will be provided later in the semester.

Each student will write:

- a) one commentary papers (to be submitted before the case is discussed in class), between 500 and 1,000 words, in which you must reflect on the topic, formulate questions about the readings, and comment on the postings of others
- b) a research paper incorporating class discussion (to be submitted at the end of the semester) on a relevant topic of your choice. Before you begin, you should contact me with a proposal to make sure that your chosen topic is appropriate. The paper should be between 5,000 and 6,000 words, demonstrating independent research. The first draft will be due on November 30. You will also be asked to write comments on the drafts of two other students. The final version of the term paper, revised in the light of the comments that you will have received from me and two students, is due on December 14.

In addition there will be a midterm, closed book test at the end of Part 1.

Grading:	Class Participation and presentation:	15%
	Commentary paper:	15%
	Research paper :	25%
	Midterm:	15%
	Country reports	30%

Rubrics and breakdown of how points are calculated will be provided.

Letter grades are assigned as follows:

93-100%: A

90-92%: A-

87-89%: B+

83-86%: B

80-82%: B-

77-79%: C+

73-76%: C

70-72%: C-

67-69%: D+

60-66%: D

59% or below: F

Time expectation

This is a three-hour course. The expectation is 9 hours of preparation outside class each week. The course is structured to require 9 hours of readings and project work per week. Students are expected to attend each class and to arrive promptly and remain for the entire class period.

Class Schedule

Week	Topic	Readings
1	Analyzing Issues in Science and Technology Does Politics Come Before Science in Government Decision Making?	JDJ: Ch.1 MGH: 1-40
2	Freedom and constraints Medicine and Moral Arguments: Ethical arguments and ethical theories	Handout JDJ: Ch.2 MGH:41-51
3	Tampering with nature Is Genetic Enhancement an Unacceptable Use of Technology? Is It Ethically Permissible to Clone Human Beings?	MGH: 52-91
4	Research ethics with human subjects Is informed Consent Still Central to Medical Ethics? Should Prisoners Be Allowed to Participate in Research?	Handout MGH: 92-123
5	Informed consent and the Nazi experiments Guest lecturer: Michael Bryant	Readings posted on Blackboard
6	Responsibilities to the natural world Should Animal Experimentation Be Permitted? Is the Use of Animals in Research Justified?	JDJ: Ch.5 MGH: 124-161
7	Risk and Choice Is the Precautionary Principle a Sound Approach to Risk Analysis? Should Genetically Modified Foods Be Banned?	MGH: 162-200
8	Will Hydrogen Replace Fossil Fuels for Cars?	MGH: 201-217
9	Inherent value of life Should the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge Be Opened to Oil Drilling? Should the Endangered Species Act Be Strengthened?	JDJ: Ch.6 MGH: 218-252

10	MOVIE: "An inconvenient truth"	In class exercise
11	Ecological ethics Is the Threat of Global Warming Real? Should Society Act Now to Halt Global Warming? Can Pollution Rights Trading Effectively Control Environmental Problems?	JDJ: Ch.7 MGH: 253-319
12	Stakeholders Do Environmentalists Overstate Their Case? Business's Environmental Responsibilities Environmental Justice	MGH: 320-351 JDJ: Ch.10
13	Student Presentations	