

## Philosophy 2710F: Reproductive Ethics

<b>Fall Term 2016</b> <b>Class times:</b> M 1:30-3:30, W 1:30-2:30 <b>Classroom:</b> TH 3102 <b>TA:</b> Nicole Fice	<b>Instructor:</b> Prof. Carolyn McLeod <b>Office:</b> Stevenson Hall 4133 <b>Office Hours:</b> M 3:30-4:30, Th 2:30-3:30 <b>Tel:</b> 519-661-2111, ext. 85877 <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:cmcleod2@uwo.ca">cmcleod2@uwo.ca</a>
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### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The ethical aspects of human reproduction are complex and fascinating. That is true because of the continual development of assisted reproductive techniques—most recently, uterine transplantation and egg freezing; growing global markets for eggs, sperm, and surrogate pregnancies; inequalities in access to reproductive services, such as abortions; ethical pressures on people not to reproduce, including environmental pressures; and the list goes on. In this course, we will cover many of the most current and heated topics in reproductive ethics and discuss why there is such controversy surrounding them.

We will also approach these topics using different ethical frameworks, particularly those of reproductive rights and of what is called ‘reproductive justice.’ The goal of insisting on people’s reproductive rights is to protect their interests in reproducing and their freedom to reproduce or not reproduce, while the goal of reproductive justice is to end structural inequalities (e.g., class-based or racial inequalities) that inappropriately limit people’s reproductive lives. We will analyze recent case studies in reproductive ethics using these frameworks, or, in other words, by asking what reproductive rights or reproductive justice demand in them. Examples of cases include the first-ever uterine transplants and abortion access in Brazil and other countries affected by the Zika virus.

### **COURSE MATERIALS**

All readings will be available for free online with links in our reading schedule and on the course OWL site, or as PDFs or Word documents posted on OWL. We will also be listening to podcasts or videos that will be available for free online, to listen to on any computer or smartphone.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

1. Homework and in-class assignments, worth 40%

These assignments are in lieu of having tests or exams. They will normally be written assignments but will also often involve discussion in class (in groups or with the class as a whole). Examples are “reflection paper” assignments and essay peer review.

2. Two essays, approximately 1500 words each, and each worth 30%

These are argumentative essays that will give you the opportunity to defend your own position on a topic in reproductive ethics. We will discuss the rubric that will be used for grading these papers in class. For at least one of the papers, students will be required to write a detailed outline that they will bring to a class before the paper is due and have reviewed by a peer.

Students will be given detailed instructions ahead of time about how to do the homework and in class assignments as well as the essays. Overall, the assignments will be designed to help us achieve the course goals.

**COURSE GOALS:**

<b>GOALS: As a result of taking this course, you will learn to:</b>	<b>ACTIVITIES: Some of the things we will do to promote these goals are:</b>	<b>ASSESSMENT: We will know how well you have attained these goals by evaluating:</b>
Distinguish ethical claims from other types of claims, especially descriptive ones	Discussing these concepts during the first couple of weeks, and reviewing them as needed	Whether you keep track of these distinctions in your assignments and in class discussion
Understand the method of doing ethics, particularly reproductive ethics	Discussing method in the first couple of weeks, and returning to it as needed	Whether you display an accurate understanding of method in your assignments and in class discussion
Understand and assess the arguments philosophers have given in reproductive ethics	Reconstructing philosophers' arguments together in class	How you reconstruct these arguments on your own in your assignments
Construct your own clear and persuasive written arguments in reproductive ethics	Writing two essays, and engaging in an essay peer review	Whether your essays meet the standards set in our grading rubric
Analyze current issues in reproductive ethics using ethical frameworks, such as that of reproductive rights	Analyzing contemporary case studies	How you analyze the cases in your assignments and in class discussion
Engage in rigorous, respectful debate about heated topics in reproductive ethics	Large and small group classroom discussion	Whether our discussion is productive and respectful

## **AUDIT**

Students wishing to audit the course should consult with the instructor prior to or during the first week of classes.

## **DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY POLICIES**

The **Department of Philosophy Policies** which govern the conduct, standards, and expectations for student participation in Philosophy courses is available in the Undergraduate section of the Department of Philosophy website at <http://uwo.ca/philosophy/undergraduate/policies.html>. It is your responsibility to understand the policies set out by the Senate and the Department of Philosophy, and thus ignorance of these policies cannot be used as grounds of appeal.

## **ACCOMMODATION**

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the Office of the Dean of the student's Faculty of registration, together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. The UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness and further information regarding this policy can be found at [http://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_medical.pdf](http://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf).

## **ACADEMIC OFFENCES**

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

## **PLAGIARISM CHECKING**

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>.

## **SUPPORT SERVICES**

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>  
Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>  
Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>  
Student Development Centre <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain

help. Immediate help in the event of a crisis can be had by phoning 519.661.3030 (during class hours) or 519.433.2023 after class hours and on weekends.