GHENT UNIVERSITY

Course Specifications

Valid as from the academic year 2026-2027

Bio-Ethics (A005604)

Course size *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

Credits 9.0 **Study time 270 h**

Course offerings in academic year 2027-2028

A (Year)	English	Gent

Lecturers in academic year 2027-2028

Mertes, Heidi	LW01	lecturer-in-charge
De Proost, Michiel	LW01	co-lecturer
Sterckx, Sigrid	LW01	co-lecturer

Offered in the following programmes in 2027-2028	**crdts**	**offering**
Research Master of Arts in Philosophy	9	A

Teaching languages

English

Keywords

literature research; review of arguments; argumentation; normative analysis; wide reflective equilibrium

Position of the course

This course is one of the eighteen research seminars that constitute the core of the master programme. Depending on initial qualifications, students enrol for three or five such research seminars.

Contents

This seminar focuses on normative research in the field of bioethics. Depending on the enrolled students' background knowledge, introductory sessions explaining and applying the basic methods in bioethics such as principlism, casuistry, analogy, and wide reflective equilibrium will be organized.
Based on the lecturers' experiences with different types and topics of research, students will be trained in developing normative research questions and selecting the appropriate methodology for answering those questions.
From the formulated research questions and methodologies, one question and approach will be retained as the central focus for the rest of the seminar, in which students will be guided through the steps of conducting normative research in the field of bioethics, including compiling a state-of-the-art and further developing the research question based on a well-founded selection of relevant literature, a critical review of potentially relevant empirical studies and strong argumentation skills.
Students will prepare drafts and oral presentations about their on-going work to obtain feedback from the lecturers and/or peers.
At the end of the seminar, the students will either submit a research proposal, or a paper based on their research.

Initial competences

The students have a reasonable knowledge of normative ethical theories and a minimal knowledge of bioethics.
The students are able to write a philosophical paper.

Final competences

1 Ability to formulate original and innovative research problems based on the duly founded insight into the internationally recognised state-of-the-art in bioethics.
2 Ability to work out original perspectives and solutions to the selected research

problems, and argue for them clearly and convincingly.
3 Ability to deepen one's knowledge of bioethics independently.
4 Ability to report on research orally and in writing (for academic peers) in a clearly-understood manner.

Conditions for credit contract

This course unit cannot be taken via a credit contract

Conditions for exam contract

This course unit cannot be taken via an exam contract

Teaching methods

Seminar, Lecture, Independent work

Extra information on the teaching methods

- students read and analyse texts that are discussed in the seminars and response lectures
- students report on their progress for their paper/research proposal according to a fixed timeline

Study material

Type: Handbook

Name: Principles of Biomedical Ethics
Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty
Optional: no
Language : English
Online Available : No
Available in the Library : Yes
Available through Student Association : No
Usability and Lifetime within the Course Unit : regularly
Usability and Lifetime within the Study Programme : one-time
Usability and Lifetime after the Study Programme : occasionally
Additional information: The main chapters are read and discussed.

Type: Reader

Name: several bioethical publications
Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty
Optional: no
Language : English
Available on Ufora : Yes
Online Available : Yes
Available in the Library : Yes
Available through Student Association : No
Additional information: Depending on the students' interests, an annually varying selection of bioethical publications will be made.

References

Course content-related study coaching

The lecturers will support the students in the development of both the personal and the common themes.

Assessment moments

end-of-term and continuous assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period

Assignment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period

Assignment

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Skills test, Participation

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

not applicable

Extra information on the examination methods

participation: Students have reading assignments before each session and prepare questions to feed the discussion.
writing assignment: Students write a paper or research proposal in the 2nd semester.

Calculation of the examination mark

40% participation, preparation of sessions
60% paper/research proposal

Facilities for Working Students

online participation is possible