

## 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 2026-2027**

A (Year)

English

Gent

**Lecturers in academic year 2026-2027**

Mertes, Heidi

LW01

lecturer-in-charge

De Proost, Michiel

LW01

co-lecturer

Sterckx, Sigrid

LW01

co-lecturer

**Offered in the following programmes in 2026-2027**

[Research Master of Arts in Philosophy](#)

**crdts**

9

**offering**

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