

# Biomedical Ethics

By Sowaka Harshita Foundation

---

**Instructor:** Dr. Rinita Mazumdar  
**Course/Section:** Biomedical Ethics  
**Mode:** Online  
**Duration:** 8 weeks  
**Term:** September 2025  
**Host Platform:** KaaBharat

---

## Course Description

In this course, we will study different ethical theories such as Utilitarianism, deontological theories, Aristotle's theory of Virtue, among others, and apply them to the practice of medicine in the modern world. We will explore important ethical dilemmas in medical practice, such as rationing patients to save resources, patient autonomy versus physician paternalism, errors in diagnosis, truth-telling, and the physician's role in executions. We will also discuss the evolving role of the nursing profession. Additionally, we will examine technological changes in determining death, prolonging lives, reproductive technologies, prenatal testing, selective abortion, the use of technology to eradicate disease, stem cell research, using embryos for research, genetic enhancement, and clinical trials.

---

## Content

### Week 1: Introduction to Biomedical Ethics

- Why Study Biomedical Ethics?
- Understanding Ethical Dilemmas in Healthcare

### Week 2: Moral Theories and Principles in Biomedical Ethics

- Utilitarianism
- Kant
- Kant's Absolute Duties
- Ross's Prima Facie Duty
- Moral Reasoning in Medical Context
- Summary of Moral Nihilism
- Summary of Right-Based Approach
- Rawls

### **Week 3 (I): Physician-Patient Relationship and the Changing Nursing Profession (Saturday)**

- Alan Goldman
- Physician Execution (KenBaum)
- Autonomy, Paternalism, and Informed Consent
- Autonomy & Cultural Differences
- Autonomy and Euthanasia
- Advocacy or Subservience for the Sake of the Patient

### **(II): End of Life Decisions (Sunday)**

- End of Life Decisions
- Euthanasia
- Extreme Preemies and Rights of Baby Doe
- Mrs. Smith's Case
- Terry Schiavo

### **Week 4 (I): Moral Theories and Principles Continued – Ethical Dilemmas in the Distribution of Scarce Resources (Saturday)**

- Hippocratic Oath
- Dworkin
- UNOS and QALY
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- Universal Access to Health Care and Distribution

### **(II): Continued: Error in Diagnosis, Physician and Execution (Sunday)**

- Errors in Medicine
- Physician and Execution
- Physician Execution (KenBaum)

### **Week 5 (I): The Ethics of Reproduction and Stem Cell Research Involving Embryos (Saturday)**

- Robertson Procreative Liberty
- Steinbock Selective Abortion
- The Rights of the Unborn and the Value

### **(II): Continued: The Ethics of Death and Dying (Sunday)**

- Ann Quinlan and Conroy Cases
- Bernat

- How Much of the Brain Must Be Dead
- Living Wills
- Pellegrino
- Nancy Rhoden

### **Week 6: Procreative Liberty and the Right to Selectively Abort Fetuses**

- Disability Prenatal Testing and Selective Abortion
- Haack
- Minkoff & Paltrow
- Pre-natal Testing (Asch)
- Embryo Ethics (Sandel)

### **Week 7: Ethical Dilemmas in Using Technology for Enhancement**

- Enhancement
- The Argument of Genetic Enhancement
- Michael Sandel Genetic Enhancement
- The Designer Baby Myth (Rinker)

### **Week 8 (I): The Ethics of Clinical Trials (Saturday)**

- PPT – AZT Trials and Tribulations
- PPT – The Lesson of SARS

### **(II): Genetic Manipulation for Embryonic Research**

- Michael Sandel Genetic Enhancement

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

---