

Philosophy 336 – Medical Ethics (Summer 2015)

Instructor: Corey Katz

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Mailbox/Location: Adorjan Hall, Philosophy Office, 1st floor

Class Location: Xavier Hall G22

Meeting Times: MTWR 10-11:30am

Office hours: By appointment.

Course Description

This course introduces students to a range of issues in medical and bio-ethics and builds the skills of ethical reflection and argument. It is presumed that all participants have had an introductory course in ethics, although we will initially review some general moral theories. The course welcomes a plurality of standpoints but we will explore both contemporary positions and critiques of them from an Aristotelian-Thomistic position. While agreement with any presented position is not required it is expected that participants will work to explain their ethical judgments by giving reasonable support for their positions.

Required Texts

1. Lisa Belkin, *First Do No Harm* ISBN: 044922290X
2. XanEDU reader (online) available through the Campus Bookstore

Course Objectives

1. To deepen students' understanding of major ethical systems and concepts by applying those systems and concepts to issues in the field of medical and bio-ethics.
2. To familiarize students with a number of significant and perennial issues within the fields of medical and bio-ethics.
3. To equip students with the skills for engaging in the process of making ethical judgments and defending them in speech and writing.
4. To further cultivate student's own intellectual and moral virtues by engaging in moral reflection.

Course Requirements

Class preparation and participation: Please do the readings according to the schedule below. Students are required to attend every class and participate in the class discussion. We are a very small group so this course will be a discussion/tutorial course and not a lecture course.

Attendance: **Like in a job, this course gives you two sick-days to use at your discretion.**

Students missing *three* classes will have their final grade reduced by 5%, *four* classes by 10% and so on. I will take attendance each class after the first two. I will assume that all absences are for good reasons such as illness, so you do not need to provide excuses or notes for such absences (unless it causes you to miss an assignment). *I urge you to use your sick-days for when you really need them.* Exceptions will be made only for illness or other extraordinary circumstances that are severe enough to make these limits unreasonable.

Homework: I expect each student to **bring one question for discussion based on the readings for that day.** Questions can be about parts that you didn't understand, parts that were unclear or parts you disagree with. Other homework questions may be assigned.

Ethical Committee Reports: Three times during the class we will meet as if we were a hospital ethics committee to discuss ethically difficult cases and treatment decisions. You will then prepare a position paper in which you will explain and justify your position on what should be done in the case and engage with the positions of your colleagues. For each meeting one student will be

randomly selected as the discussion leader. This student will also be responsible to summarize the positions of all the other group members in his or her paper. Length: 4-6 pages double-spaced (6-8 pages for group leaders).

Class Lead: Students will pick one of our class days to be class lead. You will be responsible for giving a short opening presentation motivating the moral importance of that day's topic and summarizing the positions presented in the reading. You will also be responsible for preparing questions to lead the discussion that day.

Exams: There is one final exam in this class. The exam will include definitions/short answer questions and short essays to test your understanding and synthesis of the material. If a student is unable to take the exam, he or she must contact me **in advance**. If a student does not contact me in advance and does not write the exam, no make-up will be possible and you will receive a grade of 0.

Classroom Policies

Technology: Please silence your phones. You may use an electronic device in class solely to view the readings. Electronic devices are not to be used for any other purpose.

Turning in work: All work must be submitted in **hardcopy** the class that it is due, unless you have made other arrangements with me in advance. **For each day a paper is late, I will deduct 5% of the grade up to four days, after which the paper will receive an F.**

Academic Honesty: Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Work must be your own and any quote or idea you take from another must be cited. I will always take appropriate measures if a student is caught cheating or plagiarizing. See <http://www.slu.edu/x12657.xml> for SLU's policy.

Disabilities: Please see me if you have a disability that has been documented by the university's Office of Student Disability Services. I strongly believe in an open and accessible classroom and will work with you to ensure this. Students with disabilities needing documentation should visit the SLU Disability Services website at <http://www.slu.edu/x24491.xml>.

Etiquette: Extremely rude behavior can result in expulsion from the classroom and course.

Syllabus: I reserve the right to revise this syllabus in any way but changes will be communicated to students and made on the course website.

Grade Concerns: I encourage you to talk with me if you feel a grade was unfair, but you must do so within a week after I return graded work to the class.

Student Evaluation

Grading Criteria:

1. Committee Reports: 55% (1st is 12%, 2nd is 17%, 3rd is 26%)
2. Class Lead: 15%
3. Final Exam: 25%
4. Participation, Preparation, Professionalism: 10%

Reading and Assignment Schedule

M6/29 - Intro

6/30 - The ethical tradition in medicine: "What is Bioethics?," "Professional codes," "On Personal Integrity in Medicine," "Not Just about QOL" (**emailed**)

7/1 - Utilitarianism and Autonomy - "Utilitarianism", "On Liberty", "Paternalism"
Watch Dax video

7/2 - 1st committee meeting: "Dax case file," "Washington PAS ruling"

M7/6 - Deontology - "Kant"

7/7 - Principlism- "Principlism" - **1st report due**

7/8 - Natural Law Ethics and Moral Theology - "Natural Law Ethics"

Personhood

7/9 - Personhood, Performances - "Warren, On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion," (**emailed**), "Singer, What's Wrong With Killing?"

M7/13 - Personhood, Capacities or Endowments - "Kavanaugh - The Endowments of Embodied Persons" (**emailed**)

7/14 - 2nd committee meeting, Patrick and Taylor - FDNH to page 120

7/15 - When does personhood begin? - "Some Major Normal Stages in Fetal Development," "Statements from *Human Cloning and Human Dignity*, The President's Council on Bioethics"

Genetic Testing and Therapy

7/16 - Video: Unlocking the Code

M7/20 - Gene Modification - "Genetic Therapy," "Position Paper on Human Germ Line Manipulation," "Elias and Annas, Somatic and Germline Gene Therapy" - **2nd report due**

7/21 - Therapy v. Enhancement - "From Chance to Choice"
Watch PGD video

7/22 - 3rd committee meeting, Gene Testing, Abortion and PGD - "Genetic Screening," "PGD Case Studies"

7/23 - Remaking Human Nature - "Transhumanist Declaration," "Human Genetic Enhancement"

Justice and Health Care

M7/27 - What is justice? - "Beauchamp and Childress, Justice" - **3rd report due**

7/28 - Is there a right to health care? - "Daniels - Is There a Right to Health Care," "Engelhardt - Health Care and Fairness"

7/29 - Allocating Organs - "Allocating Organs," "Ethics of Paid Organ Donation"

7/30 - 4th committee meeting (no committee report): Landon and Armando - finish FDNH

Ethical Issues at the End of Life

8/3 - Is there a difference between killing and letting die? - "Rachels, Active and Passive Euthanasia," "Callahan, Can We Return Death to Disease?"

8/4 - Physician Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia - "PAS in the US," "PAS in the Netherlands," "Callahan, When Self-Determination Runs Amok"

8/5 - Film: The Suicide Plan

8/6 - **Final Exam**