

1-2014

PHL 321E.01: Philosophy and Biomedical Ethics

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PHL 321E: Philosophy and Biomedical Ethics

Spring Semester, 2014

TTh 12:40 – 2:00

LA 337

Office Hours: M, W 2:10-3:00; T 2:10 – 3:10 Office: LA 152

and by appointment

University of Montana

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Course Description: This three-credit course examines the moral dimensions of the health professions in select issues, including the professional-patient relationship, medical decisionmaking and caregiving, treatment obligations, decisionmaking at the end-of-life, assisted suicide, defining health and the goals of medicine, prenatal genetic testing and abortion, and human subjects research. Numerous cases will be used to highlight moral issues.

Course Objectives:

1. Students will develop a basic understanding of major traditions and theories of ethics.
2. Students will develop a basic understanding of moral dimensions of health care and medical decisionmaking generally.
3. Students will learn about the relationships between medical ethics and ethical values in the larger society.
4. The course will advance students' skills in critical thinking and writing in ethics through the consideration of medical ethics issues and cases in class and in a writing assignment.

Prerequisites: None

Requirements

1. Mid-term examination, March 13 (25 percent of grade)
 2. Ethics case/issue analysis paper, April 15 (25 percent of grade)
 3. Quizzes/short writing assignments TBA (15 percent of grade)
 4. Final examination, Wednesday, May 14, 1:10 – 3:10 p.m. (35 percent of grade)
- Examinations will likely be a combination of a choice among short answer questions and a longer essay and/or case analysis. The final examination will not be comprehensive but may be longer than the mid-term. Exams must be taken at scheduled times unless prior permission of the instructor is obtained, otherwise the exam receives a failing grade.
 - The ethics analysis paper should analyze central arguments of a particular case study or issue and argue your normative position on the central issue(s).
 - Short quizzes or short ethics analysis exercises may be assigned throughout the course

Required Reading

The *Death of Ivan Ilych* is available in the UC Bookstore. Other readings for this course are available electronically on the course website.

Topics and Reading Assignments**Introduction: Moral Reasoning in the Medical Context**

- Jan. 28 Class Introduction
- Jan. 30, Feb. 4, 6 “Introduction: Moral Reasoning in the Medical Context”

Foundations of the Health Professional-Patient Relationship

- Feb. 11, 13 “The Refutation of Medical Paternalism”; “Four Models of the Physician-Patient Relationship”

Decisional Capacity and the Right to Refuse Treatment

- Feb. 18 In-class video: “Dax’s Case” (optional reading: “A Chronicle: Dax’s Case as It Happened,” with commentaries by White and Engelhardt)
- Feb. 20 “Deciding for Others: Competency”

Choosing for Others and Advance Directives

- Feb. 25, 27 “The Severely Demented, Minimally Functional Patient”

Obligations to Treat or Not Treat

- March 4, 6, 11 “Erring on the Side of Theresa Schiavo”; “Human Non-Person: Terri, Bioethics, and Our Future”

March 13 Mid-term Exam**End-of-Life Decisionmaking & Physician-Assisted Suicide**

- March 18 *The Death of Ivan Ilych*
- March 20 In-class video: “On Our Own Terms”
- March 25, 27 “Physician-Assisted Suicide: A Tragic View”; “Is There a Duty to Die?”

March 31 – April 4 Spring Break

Defining Health and the Goals of Medicine

April 8, 10 C. Elliott, “Is Ugliness a Disease?”; “Anyone for Tennis, At the Age of 150?”; “The Case Against Perfection”

Prenatal Genetic Testing and Abortion

April 15 In-class video: “The Burden of Knowledge”
Case Analysis/Issue Paper Due April 15

April 17 “The Presumptive Primacy of Procreative Liberty”; “Disability, Prenatal Testing, and Selective Abortion”

April 22, 24 “A Defense of Abortion”; “Why Abortion is Immoral”; “Why Most Abortions are Not Wrong”

Stem Cell Research

April 29 Meilaender, “The Point of a Ban”

Experimentation on Human Subjects

May 1 In-class video: “Susceptible to Kindness”

May 6 “Of Mice but Not Men”; “A Response to a Purported Ethical Difficulty with Randomized Clinical Trials”

May 8 Course Conclusion and Evaluation

Final Exam Wednesday, May 14, 1:10 p.m. – 3:10 p.m.

Grading Policy

Assignments: Assignments are due in class on or before the date listed in the syllabus. I will take off one half-grade level for each class day an assignment is late (unless you have made a prior agreement with me). Papers with an undue number of errors of punctuation, spelling, or grammar will be returned ungraded for correction and marked down half a letter grade. Papers should be typed and double-spaced, with standard margins, roughly five to six pages in length. All outside sources should be cited with a standard and consistent reference style.

Exams: Exams must be taken at the scheduled time unless prior permission has been obtained from me for an alternate time. The final exam may only be rescheduled if you have two other exams scheduled for the same day. Failure to take the exam at the scheduled time will result in no credit given for the exam with no make-up possibility.

Attendance and Participation: More than three absences will result in losing any benefit of the doubt on your final grade. Four to five absences will result in one half-grade level reduction. six to seven absences will result in a full grade level reduction (e.g., A to B), and eight or more absences may result in a failing course grade (F). **Late arrivals in class may count as an absence.** (Note: If you have a valid reason for missing several classes, such as illness, disability or other conflicting commitments, you still must speak with the instructor. Documentation may be required.) Lack of regular, active participation will also result in a grade level reduction. **Sleeping in class will count as an absence and will not be tolerated.** Participation grades are based on demonstrated willingness to answer questions and contribute comments that reflect a good-faith effort to read, understand, and develop a personal perspective on and critical questions about the readings and lectures.

Academic Misconduct and Plagiarism: All work submitted is expected to be the student's own. Any acts of plagiarism or academic misconduct will result in automatic failure of the course, and may result in further academic punishment. If you have any doubts about definitions of plagiarism or academic misconduct, please review the relevant sections of the University Catalog.

Classroom Etiquette

- Please arrive on time and do not walk out on classes early or in the middle of discussion without prior permission. Doing otherwise is disrespectful.
- Give the class full attention: no side discussions, newspaper reading, crossword puzzles, or use of electronic devices. Anything other than full attention will count as an absence.
- Cell Phones: Please turn off all cell phones prior to class unless you have informed me that you have a legitimate reason: for example, you are an EMT or a firefighter, parent of a young child, or are expecting an emergency call. If you are expecting a call, please keep the phone on the vibrate mode and step outside to take the call.
- Sleeping is not permitted and will be counted as an absence.