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PHIL 421E.01: Medical Ethics

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Philosophy 421: Medical Ethics

Fall Semester, 2001
TTh 340-500
LA 205

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Course Description and Objectives: This three-credit course examines the moral dimensions
of health care as they are manifest in select issues, including the doctor-patient relationship,
medical decisionmaking, the definition of death, the right to refuse treatment, euthanasia and
assisted suicide, abortion, procreation, assisted reproduction, genetic technologies, medical
research, and medical resource allocation. Numerous cases will be used to highlight moral
issues. The purpose of the course is to:
1. Provide students with a basic understanding of moral dimensions of health care and
   biotechnology and
2. Provide students with an understanding of ethical decisionmaking generally
3. Advance students’ skills in critical thinking and writing in ethics through the consideration of
   medical ethics issues and cases

Prerequisites: A lower-level ethics course, or permission of instructor

Requirements

1. Mid-term examination, Thursday, October 25 (30 percent of grade)
2. Ethical analysis paper, due November 30 (30 percent of grade)
3. Participation in case discussions (10 percent of grade)
4. Final examination, Tuesday, December 11 (30 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.
- The required paper should analyze central arguments of a particular medical ethical issue and
  put forward your normative position on the issue. It should utilize at least two outside
  sources. Students are encouraged to discuss topics and ideas with the instructor in advance.
  Graduate students taking the course for graduate credit should see the instructor for
  additional requirements.

Required Reading

John D. Arras and Bonnie Steinbock, eds., Ethical Issues in Modern Medicine, 5th edition, 1999
(paper). Used copies may be available.
Aldous Huxley, Brave New World (pb). Used copies may be available.
Other articles and cases as assigned (electronic reserve at Mansfield Library)

Format

Typically, lectures will be given on Tuesday and the first 20-30 minutes of the Thursday session.
Discussion of cases will occur during the latter part of the Thursday sessions.
Topics and Reading Assignments

Introduction: Moral Reasoning in the Medical Context
Sept. 4, 6 A&S, pp. 1-40

Foundations of the Health Professional-Patient Relationship
Sept. 11, 13 A&S, pp. 41-44, 51-55, 59-76, 85-100

Forgoing Life-Sustaining Treatment
Sept. 18 Defining Death
A&S, pp. 131-134, 143-169
Sept. 20 No Class
Sept. 25, 27 Decisional Capacity & Advance Directives
A&S, pp. 135-139, 177-201 205-206, 216-231

Oct. 2, 4 Euthanasia & Physician-Assisted Suicide
A&S, pp. 139-142, 250-253, 274-280, 292-301
Callahan, “When Self-Determination Runs Amok” (electronic reserve)

Abortion and Procreative Choice
Oct. 9, 11 The Morality of Abortion
A&S, pp. 308-313, 330-374

Oct. 16, 18 Procreative Autonomy and Responsibility
A&S, pp. 313-315, 375-401

Catch Up and Review
Oct. 23

Mid-term Examination
Oct. 25
Brave New World: A Vision of Our Future?

Oct. 30, Nov. 1  Huxley, *Brave New World*

Reproductive Technologies and Genetics

Nov. 6, 8  *Assisted Reproductive Technologies*
A&S, 407-409, 415-444
Meilaender response to Robertson (electronic reserve)

Nov. 13, 15  *Contract Pregnancy, Commodification, & the Family*
A&S, pp. 409-411, 445-481

Nov. 20  *Cloning*
A&S, pp. 411-12, 481-510

Nov. 20  *Papers Due*

Nov. 22  *Thanksgiving Holiday*

Nov. 27, 29  *Stem Cells and Reprogenetics*
TBA

Experimentation on Human Subjects

Dec. 4, 6  A&S, pp. 544-568

Allocation, Social Justice, and Health Policy

Dec. 11, 13  A&S, pp. 617-621, 630-651

Final Exam

Dec. 19  Final Exam, 3:20-5:20 p.m.