

Medical Ethics 100-200

Instructor: Liz Jackson

Course Description:

Medical Ethics is the study of moral issues that arise in medical practice. This includes questions about medical paternalism, patient autonomy, the morality of abortion, the morality of euthanasia, genetic engineering, a right to healthcare, and disability. In this course, we will begin with a brief survey of ethics and the three basic ethical theories. We will then spend the bulk of the course discussing the morality of medically-relevant questions, such as those listed above. This course addresses topics that are practically relevant and inform decisions many of us have made or will make through the course of our lives. It is especially relevant for those who plan to pursue medical careers.

Learning Goals:

At the end of the course, students should be able to...

- 1) Clearly state an argument in premise-conclusion form.
- 2) Properly object to an argument in premise-conclusion form.
- 3) State and describe the main ethical theories.
- 4) State and describe the main *views* on medical paternalism, patient autonomy, informed consent, abortion, euthanasia, cloning, right to healthcare, and disability.
- 5) State, examine, and analyze *arguments* for and against the above views.

Policies:

Technology policy: No screens during class, including phones, laptops, tablets, etc. The reason for this policy is that there is quite a bit of research on this topic, and almost all findings support the idea that screens in class inhibit, rather than enhance, student learning. Further, the main purpose of this class is to *discuss* the philosophical issues at hand. I do not, primarily, want students to memorize facts, but for them to think, converse, and form opinions about the various topics. If you need to use a device during class to aid your learning, feel free to come talk to me.

Late work: Late work will be deducted one-third letter grade for each day late (A to A-, etc.).

Text: *Bioethics: Principles, Issues, and Cases*, 3rd ed., by Lewis Vaughn. (2016). Oxford University Press. We will supplement this textbook with other material, including professional philosophy articles, opinion pieces, podcasts, and video. Each topic will have material students are required to read or consume. Many topics will have further material that students are encouraged to consume.

Grading scale: I will use the following grading scale.

A	94+	B+	87-89	B-	80-82	C	73-76	D	60-69
A-	90-93	B	83-86	C+	77-79	C-	70-72	F	59-

Honor Code: Students are responsible for compliance with the University's honor code at all times. I take academic integrity very seriously. Cheating of any kind will be reported, will result in a failing

grade on the assignment, and might lead to even stronger penalties. Any particular questions about the honor code should be directed to me.

Accessibility: I am committed to making this course accessible to all students. Students who have (or think they may have) a disability, or who have questions about disability, are invited to talk to me.

Assignments:

Attendance: It is impossible for a student to participate if he or she does not attend class. It is also difficult to learn the material without attending and participating. *Students who have more than two unexcused absences will have points deducted from their overall grade.* Students who are consistently tardy will lose participation points.

Participation: 20%

This class is discussion-based, so participation from the students is especially important. Participation is not just talking a certain number of times in class – it also includes quality of contributions, active contribution to group work, and listening and responding appropriately to your classmates. Getting a good participation grade also requires being on time to class and submitting reading responses.

Reading Responses: Students should submit a question about the assigned material 24 hours before the class meeting on the Google Doc. The question should demonstrate that you read (or watched/consumed/etc.) the material (partially because I am doing these instead of pop quizzes). Consistent failure to submit a question will affect one's participation grade.

Three Podcasts, 15% (5% each)

Students will be put in groups and must pick an argument to discuss. Groups will collaborate to record and produce a 5-10 minute philosophical conversation.

Paper 1, Objection and Response Paper: 25% (~3-4 pages)

In this paper, students pick an argument we talked about in class (or write a new argument with my help), defend the argument, then offer an original objection and response. A rough draft is required (and graded as pass/fail).

Paper 2, Paper & Creative Project: 40% (~6 pages)

Part 1- Paper (20%): In this paper, students take their own view on some issue in bioethics. They offer an argument for their view, then give two objections to their argument, then respond to each objection. A rough draft is required (and graded as pass/fail). Students will provide peer feedback on each other's rough drafts. I will give ideas for paper topics, but students can write on any topic that is related to course material.

Part 2- Project and Presentation (20%): Students are required to do a creative project (poster, video, etc.) that explains or illustrates their argument from paper 3. During the final weeks of the semester, students will present their projects to the class.

I have a strict policy of blind grading for papers. Do not include your first or last name on your papers. Instead, merely include your student ID number.

Schedule:

BPIC = Bioethics: Principles, Issues, and Causes

Week 1: Introduction to Ethics

- Introduction to ethics and introduction to arguments (no reading)
- BPIC (chapter 2) "Utilitarianism" section.
 - Recommended: BPIC (chapter 2) "Utilitarianism," by John Stuart Mill.

Week 2: Introduction to Ethics, cont.

- BPIC (chapter 2) "Kantian Ethics" and "Natural Law Theory" sections.
 - Recommended: BPIC (chapter 2) "The Moral Law," by Immanuel Kant.
- BPIC (chapter 2) "Virtue Ethics" and "Ethics of Care" sections.
 - Recommended: BPIC (chapter 2) "Virtue and the Moral Life," by Bernard Mayo.

Week 3: Medical Paternalism

- BPIC (chapter 3) "Shades of Autonomy and Paternalism" section; Case 1 (p. 60) and Case 3 (p. 61-62).
 - Recommended: BPIC (chapter 3) "Paternalism," by Gerald Dworkin.
- BPIC (chapter 3) "The Refutation of Medical Paternalism," by Alan Goldman

Week 4: Patient Autonomy

- BPIC (chapter 3) "Refusing Treatment" section.
 - Recommended: BPIC (chapter 3) "Autonomy, Futility, and the Limits of Medicine," by Robert L. Schwartz.
- BPIC (chapter 3) "Patient Autonomy and Physician Responsibility," in the *Journal of Ethics* (with Commentaries by Patrick C. Beeman and Ryan C. VanWoerkom)

Week 5: Informed Consent

- BPIC (chapter 5) "Autonomy and Consent" section; Case 2 (p. 152) and Case 3 (p. 153).
 - Recommended: BPIC (chapter 5) "The Concept of Informed Consent," Ruth R. Faden and Tom L. Beauchamp
- BPIC (chapter 5) "Conditions of Informed Consent" section; Case 1 (p. 151).
 - Recommended: "Informed Consent: Some Challenges to the Universal Validity of the Western Model" by Robert Levine

Week 6: Euthanasia

- BPIC (chapter 10) "Deciding Life and Death" and "Autonomy, Mercy, and Harm" sections.
- Michael Tooley (2005) "In Defense of Voluntary Active Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide," Ch. 11 in *Contemporary Debates in Applied Ethics* (Cohen and Wellman, Eds.).
 - Recommended: BPIC (chapter 10) "Voluntary Active Euthanasia," by Dan W. Brock

Week 7: Euthanasia, cont.

- Daniel Callahan "A Case Against Euthanasia," Ch. 12 in *Contemporary Debates in Applied Ethics* (Cohen and Wellman, Eds.).
- BPIC (chapter 10) "The Wrongfulness of Euthanasia," by J. Gay-Williams

- Recommended: BPIC (chapter 10) "Physician-Assisted Suicide: A Tragic View," by John D. Arras

Week 8: Abortion is impermissible

- Don Marquis (1989) "Why Abortion is Immoral," in the *Journal of Philosophy*.
 - Recommended: BPIC (chapter 7) "Starting Point: The Basics" and "The Legal Struggle"
- George and Lee (2005) "The Wrong of Abortion" in *Contemporary Debates in Applied Ethics* (Cohen and Wellman, Eds.).

Week 9: Abortion is permissible

- Mary Ann Warren (1973) "On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion," in *The Monist*.
- Judith Jarvis Thomson (1971) "A Defense of Abortion" in *Philosophy and Public Affairs*.
 - Recommended: BPIC (chapter 7) "Roe v. Wade" section.

Week 10: Cloning

- Jeremy Rifkin (2005) "Why I Oppose Human Cloning," Ch. 9 in *Contemporary Debates in Applied Ethics* (Cohen and Wellman, Eds.).
 - Recommended: BPIC (chapter 8) "Cloning" section (p. 362-366), Case 3 (p. 371).
- John Harris (2005) "The Poverty of Objections to Human Reproductive Cloning," Ch. 10 in *Contemporary Debates in Applied Ethics* (Cohen and Wellman, Eds.).

Week 11: Justice and Healthcare

- BPIC (chapter 11) "Health Care in Trouble," "Theories of Justice," and "A Right to Healthcare."
 - Recommended: BPIC (chapter 11) "Is There a Right to Health Care and, if So, What Does It Encompass?" by Norman Daniels.
- BPIC (chapter 11) "Rights to Health Care, Social Justice, and Fairness in Health Care Allocations: Frustrations in the Face of Finitude," by H. Tristram Engelhardt, Jr.

Week 12: Disability

- Elizabeth Barnes (2014) "Valuing Disability, Causing Disability" *Ethics*.
- Vuko Andrić & Joachim Wündisch (2015) "Is It Bad to Be Disabled? Adjudicating Between the Mere-Difference and the Bad-Difference Views of Disability" *Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy*.

Week 13: Thanksgiving Break

Week 14: Student Presentations

Week 15: Student Presentations