

Philosophy 480.500: MEDICAL ETHICS
TR 11:10am-12:25pm
Read Building (East Kyle) 162
Fall 2009

Instructor: Dr. Colleen Murphy
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Office Hours: Wednesdays 3:30-5:30pm and by appointment

Course Description:

This course aims to introduce students to some of the ethical issues that arise in medicine. Among the questions we will address in this course are: How should we think about the inequalities in access to and quality of health care? Is health care a right or a privilege? If a right, to what kind of care are individuals entitled? How should the allocation of medical resources be decided? When, if ever, is physician-assisted death permissible? How should we think about the morality of reproduction? When, if ever, is abortion permissible? When, if ever, is assisted reproduction permissible? How should we evaluate emerging technologies?

Course Prerequisites:

There are no prerequisites for this course.

Required Text:

Ethical Issues in Modern Medicine, Bonnie Steinbock, John D. Arras, Alex John London (eds.), 7th edition (EIMM)

Course Requirements and Expectations:

Attendance and Participation	15%
Paper	25%
In-class Exam	27%
Final	33%

Course Objectives:

In this course, you should:

1. Acquire a basic knowledge of some of the main ethical debates in medicine.
2. Learn how to read and interpret contemporary philosophical texts.
3. Write an effective philosophical research paper.

Grading Scale:

Questions on examinations will be essay questions. Essay questions require you to write reasoned responses to interpretative questions about the views of the philosophers we study. Papers have more extensive requirements and criteria, which will be detailed in each assignment.

In evaluating term papers and the answers to essay questions, I will use the following criteria:

- **Accuracy:** Is the answer accurate about such things as whether a given philosopher expressed a certain view, was associated with a particular philosophical group, was a student of another philosopher, wrote a particular work, etc.? For the term paper, this criterion includes complete and accurate acknowledgment of any other works used.

- **Argument:** Does the answer present a coherently structured argument? This is an important criterion in the case of answers to essay questions.
- **Completeness/Relevance:** Does the answer deal with all the important facts and issues that are relevant to the question? Also, does it spend its time discussing issues that are *not* relevant?
- **Writing:** Is the answer clearly written and free from spelling or grammatical errors? For the term paper: does the paper follow the appropriate format for the paper layout, the citation of sources, etc.?

The following table explains how I apply these criteria in evaluating a particular item (an essay answer on an exam or a term paper). Please note that this is **not** intended as a set of rubrics that can be applied mechanically to determine a grade; it does, however, explain what I look for.

Grade	Accuracy	Argument	Completeness/Relevance	Writing
A	No errors or omissions.	Well-constructed argument that gives a good defense of the point.	Deals with all the relevant material and issues and wastes no time on irrelevant points.	No grammatical errors; clearly written and a pleasure to read.
B	Only minor errors or omissions.	A good argumentative structure overall, but with some problems or weaknesses.	Omits only minor relevant material or includes only minor digressions from the topic.	Reasonably clearly written, with at most a few minor grammatical or spelling errors.
C	Significant errors, but mostly accurate.	The overall structure of the argument can be discerned, but it has significant problems or weaknesses.	Covers most of the relevant issues, but with some significant omissions; sometimes wanders off topic.	Basically readable, with some problems in spelling or grammar.
D	More erroneous than correct; major omissions.	Very poorly constructed argument; argument is inconsistently structured or incoherent.	Fails to cover major relevant issues; has only a little to do with the topic.	Difficult to read; many grammatical and spelling errors.
F	Nothing accurate.	No discernible argument.	Unrelated to question.	Incomprehensible.

Course Readings and Schedule:

Allocation, Social Justice, and Health Policy

Week 1

Tuesday, September 1

First day of class

Introduction

Thursday, September 3

“An Ethical Framework for Access to Health Care” (191-199)

“Equal Opportunity and Health Care” Norman Daniels (200-202)

Week 2

Tuesday, September 8

“Freedom and Moral Diversity: The Moral Failures of Health Care in the Welfare State”

H. Tristram Engelhardt, Jr. (203-212)

Thursday, September 10

“Why the United States is Not Number One in Health” Ichiro Kawachi (222-230)

Week 3

Tuesday, September 15

“Justice, Health, and Healthcare” Norman Daniels (231-234)

“Opportunity is not the Key” Gopal Sreenivasan (235-236)

Allocating Scarce Resources

Thursday, September 17

“Justice and the High Cost of Health” Ronald Dworkin (244-251)

Week 4

Tuesday, September 22

“Imposing Personal Responsibility for Health” Robert Steinbrook (251-254)

“Responsibility in Health Care: A Liberal Egalitarian Approach” Alexander W. Cappellet and Ole Frithjof Norheim (255-261)

Thursday, September 24

“Illegal Immigrants, Health Care, and Social Responsibility” James Dwyer (273-281)

The Definition of Death

Week 5

Tuesday, September 29

“Defining Death” President’s Commission for the Study of Ethical Problems in Medicine and Biomedical and Behavioral Research (339-347)

Thursday, October 1

“The Whole-Brain Concept of Death Remains Optimum Public Policy” James L. Bernat (348-355)

First Paper Due

Week 6

Tuesday, October 6

“An Alternative to Brain Death” Jeff McMahan (356-360)

Physician-Assisted Death

Thursday, October 8

“Physician – Assisted Suicide: A Tragic View” John D. Arras (477-483)

Week 7

Tuesday, October 13

“Assisted Suicide: The Philosophers’ Brief Introduction” Ronald Dworkin (484-487)

“The Philosopher’s Brief” Ronald Dworkin *et al.* (488-495)

Thursday, October 15

“Is There a Duty to Die?” John Hardwig (511-520)

Week 8

Tuesday, October 20

“For Now I Have My Death’: The ‘Duty to Die’ versus the Duty to Help the Ill Stay Alive”
(521-529)

The Morality of Abortion

Thursday, October 22

“The Unspeakable Crime of Abortion” Pope John Paul II (545-546)

“Why Abortion is Immoral” Don Marquis (547-554)

Week 9

Tuesday, October 27

“Why Most Abortions Are Not Wrong” Bonnie Steinbock (555-566)

Thursday, October 29

“A Defense of Abortion” Judith Jarvis Thompson (567-575)

Week 10

Tuesday, November 3

In-Class Exam

Assisted Reproduction

Thursday, November 5

“The Presumptive Primacy of Procreative Liberty” John Robertson (599-609)

Week 11

Tuesday, November 10

“Instruction on Respect for Human Life in its Origin and on the Dignity of Procreation” Vatican
(609-618)

Thursday, November 12

“What are Families For? Getting to an Ethics of Reproductive Technology” (618-623)

Week 12

Tuesday, November 17

“Grade A: The Market for a Yale Woman’s Eggs” Jessica Cohen (623-626)

Emerging Technologies and Enhancement

Thursday, November 19

“Genetic Interventions and the Ethics of Enhancement of Human Beings” Julian Savulescu (879-899)

Week 13

Tuesday, November 24

“The Case Against Perfection: What’s Wrong with Designer Children, Bionic Athletes, and Genetic Engineering” Michael J. Sandel (890-899)

Thursday, November 26

No Class

Week 14

Tuesday, December 1

TBD

Thursday, December 3

TBD

Week 15

Tuesday, December 8

TBD

Last day of class

Final Exam

Friday, December 11, 3-5pm

POLICIES

1. Please read Section 7 of the Texas A&M University Student Rules at <http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule07> for a list of excused absences. In this class we will follow rule 7.1.6.1 for illnesses greater than three days and 7.1.6.2.b for illnesses for no more than three days. Please contact me as soon as you know you will miss a class or an exam so that a reasonable alternative can be accommodated. Unexcused absences will result in a grade of zero for missed work or exams.
2. Plagiarism-
According to the Texas A&M University Definitions of Academic Misconduct, plagiarism is the appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results or words without giving appropriate credit (www.tamu.edu/aggiehonor <<http://www.tamu.edu/aggiehonor>>). You should credit your use of anyone else's words, graphic images, or ideas using standard citation styles. If I should discover that you have failed to properly credit sources or have used a paper written by someone else, I will recommend that you receive an F in this course. The Aggie Honor System Office processes for adjudication and appeals can be found at www.tamu.edu/aggiehonor <<http://www.tamu.edu/aggiehonor>>.
3. Grade complaints-
I will be more than happy to discuss your grade with you on a couple of conditions. First, you must wait at least 24 hours after you get the assignment back. Take this time to carefully read all the comments I have given you. Second, you must come with a written statement about why you think that there is a discrepancy between the quality of the work and the grade it received.
4. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Department of Student Life, Services for Students with Disabilities in Room B118 of Cain Hall or call 845-1637.
5. Academic Integrity Statement

"An Aggie does not lie, cheat, or steal or tolerate those who do."

Upon accepting admission to Texas A&M University, a student immediately assumes a commitment to uphold the Honor Code, to accept responsibility for learning, and to follow the philosophy and rules of the Honor System. Students will be required to state their commitment on examinations, research papers, and other academic work. Ignorance of the rules does not exclude any member of the TAMU community from the requirements or the processes of the Honor System.

For additional information please visit: www.tamu.edu/aggiehonor/

Pledge

On all course work, assignments, or examinations at Texas A&M University, the following Honor Pledge shall be pre-printed and signed by the student:

"On my honor, as an Aggie, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this academic work."