

Medical Ethics

PHIL 20602—02 & 03

Fall 2018

T/R 9:30am-10:45am—Pasquerilla Center 105

T/R 11:00am-12:15pm—O'Shaughnessy 204

Instructor: Dr. Jonathan Barker

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Office Hours: Wednesday, 9am-11am

Location: Philosophy department lounge, Malloy Hall

Course Description

This course focuses on ethical problems that arise in the practice of medicine. Topics to be discussed include the definitions of life and death, abortion, genetic selection and disability, patient autonomy, euthanasia, physician assisted suicide, and animal testing.

Texts

All articles and texts will be provided under the Resources tab on Sakai.

Course Requirements

Attendance & Participation (20%): Attendance is worth 10% of your overall grade. You may miss two class sessions, but every absence thereafter will negatively impact your attendance grade. Participation, which includes actively and respectfully contributing to class discussion, is worth 10% of your overall grade.

Two Papers (40%) The first paper will be a very short (1-2 pages) reconstruction of the main argument from one of our readings, Thomson's "A Defense of Abortion." The second paper will be longer (6-8 pages); in that paper, you will (1) clearly explain an argument discussed in class and then (2) critically engage with that argument. The first paper is worth 10% of your overall grade, and is due on Thursday, September 13th. The second paper is worth 30%, and is due on Tuesday, December 4th.

Two Exams (40%): There will be a midterm (15%) and a final (25%). The exams will consist of short answer and/or essay questions. I will provide you with brief study guides approximately one week before each exam. You will take the midterm on October 11th, and the final exam during exam week (day, time, and location TBD).

Course Policies

Late Assignment Policy: If a paper is one day late, its grade will be lowered by a full letter (so an A paper will be given a B, an A- paper will be given a B-, and so on). If a paper is two days late, its grade will be lowered by two full letters. If a paper is more than three days late, its grade will be lowered by three full letters. If you know in advance that you won't be able to take the midterm or the final in class on the specified dates, please arrange the time and place for a make-up exam with me beforehand. If you simply don't show up to an exam without notifying me in advance, your exam will be docked a full letter grade per day until I hear from you. Your grade will *not* be lowered if you have a legitimate reason for turning an assignment in late (ex. serious illness, family emergency, disability, etc.)

Laptop Policy: Please don't use your laptops during class.

Disabilities: I am committed to providing accommodations to students with disabilities. If you are eligible for accommodations, please contact me and/or Disability Services (574-631-7157) at the beginning of the semester.

Reading Schedule

Week 1: Introduction

August 21—Introduction

August 23—Moral Relativism: Rachels, "The Challenge of Cultural Relativism"

Week 2: The Badness of Death

Aug. 28—Epicurus: Epicurus, "Letter to Menoeceus"; Nagel, "Death"

Aug. 30—Immortality: Williams, "The Makropulos Case"

Week 3: Abortion

Sep. 4—~~Personal Identity:~~ Olson, "Was I Ever A Fetus?" (skip Section 8)

~~Immortality:~~ Williams, "The Makropulos Case"

Sep. 6—~~Abortion:~~ Warren, "On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion"

~~Abortion:~~ Olson, "Was I Ever A Fetus?" (skip Section 8); Warren, "On the Moral & Legal Status of Abortion"

Week 4: Abortion cont.

Sep. 11—Abortion: Marquis, “Why Abortion is Immoral”

Sep. 13—Abortion: Thomson, “In Defense of Abortion” (first paper due)

Week 5: Selective Termination & Disability

Sep. 18—Abortion: continued discussion of Thomson, “In Defense of Abortion”

Sep. 20—Disability: McBryde Johnson, “Unspeakable Conversations”; Glover, “Disability and Genetic Choice”

Week 6: Selective Termination & Disability cont.

Sep. 25—Disability: Barnes, “Disability, Minority, and Difference”; Parens and Asch, “The Disability Rights Critique”

Sep. 27—Disability: Barnes, “Valuing Disability, Causing Disability”

Week 7: Enhancement

~~*Oct. 2—Enhancement:* Sandel, “The Case Against Perfection”; Glover, “Human Values and Genetic Design”~~

~~*Oct. 4—Doping:* selections from McNamee, *Sports, Virtues & Vices*~~

Week 8: Review

Oct. 9—Review: No Reading

Oct. 11—Midterm Exam

Week 9: Defining Death & Informed Consent

Oct. 23—Defining Death: Ad Hoc Committee of the Harvard Medical School, 1968, “A Definition of Irreversible Coma”; President’s Commission; Collins, “Reevaluating the Dead Donor Rule”

Oct. 25—Informed Consent: “The Nuremberg Code”; L.W. Sumner, *Assisted Death* (pp. 27-35)

Week 10: The Right to Refuse Treatment

Nov. 1—Informed Consent: Laurie Paul, *Transformative Experience* (selections)

Oct. 30—The Right to Refuse Treatment: Burton, “A Chronicle: Dax’s Case as it Happened” & Buchanan and Brock, *Choosing for Others* pp. 47-55.

Week 11: Choosing for Others

Nov. 6—Autonomy & Paternalism: Mill, “Of Liberty” (selections) & Dworkin, “Paternalism”

Nov. 8—Substitute Decision-Making: Dresser & Robertson, “Quality of Life and Non-Treatment”

Week 12: Killing & Letting Die

Nov. 13—Killing & Letting Die: Rachels, “Active and Passive Euthanasia”

Nov. 15—Double Effect: Phillipa Foot, “Morality, Action, and Outcome” & “Killing and Letting Die”

Week 13: Physician Assisted Suicide

Nov. 20—PAS: Quill, “Death and Dignity” and “Palliative Options of Last Resort”; Patient Request Form for Oregon’s Death with Dignity Act

Nov. 22—Thanksgiving Break

Week 14: Physician Assisted Suicide

Nov. 27—PAS: Velleman, “Against the Right to Die”

Nov. 29—PAS: Arras, “Physician Assisted Suicide: A Tragic View”

Animal Rights:

Week 15: Animal Testing

Dec. 4—Animal Testing: Regan, “The Case for Animal Rights” Kolata, “Why Test Animals to Cure Human Depression?”

Dec. 6—Review for final exam

Final exam date: TBD