

PHIL-0360: Introduction to Biomedical Ethics.

Fall 2016

John Lawless, CL 1009A

Office Hours: Tuesday, 12:00 to 1:00; Wednesday, 3:00 to 4:00

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Course summary. In modern societies, a range of industries purport to address our interest in maintaining good health. These industries bringing together people in a complex variety of roles, including patients, doctors and nurses, researchers, pharmaceutical companies, insurance companies, and policymakers. And we face deep moral challenges whenever we occupy any one of these roles.

In this course, we will examine three broad families of moral challenges in the medical domain: those that bear on the relationships between practitioners and patients; those that bear on our conceptions of health, disease, and disability; and those that bear on the distribution of medical attention within our political communities.

- Lecture will meet Tu/Th 11:00-11:50 in CL G24.
- Writing Recitations will meet Mo/We, at
 - 1:00-1:50 in CL 349,
 - 2:00 to 2:50 in CL 221.

Course goals. In this course, we will work to cultivate students' capacities to read philosophical articles, to identify morally significant considerations in medical contexts, to communicate those considerations to others both in conversation and writing, and to engage with others' moral views – even when they apparently diverge from one's own. Students will also become familiar with important domains of biomedical ethics.

Course requirements. In order to pass the course, you must at least complete each of these requirements in a timely fashion.

Three short papers (each worth 10% of the final grade). I will evaluate your papers by attention to three criteria: first, your abilities to present particular philosophical views clearly; second, your comprehension of these philosophical views; and third, your abilities to respond creatively to these philosophical views. These skills build on one another: A strong capacity for moral thinking is nothing without a capacity to communicate one's thoughts to others. A well-written, well-structured paper is a prerequisite for a grade of B- or higher. Good philosophy will boost your grade beyond that.

Revisions of the first two short papers (each worth 5% of the final grade).

Mid-term and final exam (15% and 30%, respectively). These exams will consist in a set of short answer and short essay prompts testing your comprehension of the philosophical views we have discussed in class. If you cannot attend either exam on the dates scheduled, it is your responsibility to reschedule it.

Participation (15%). I take this component of your grade quite seriously. Good philosophy involves the practice of a set of skills that we cultivate best in conversation with others. As a result, your

success in this course will depend on your active engagement with the material during your recitation sections. You will need to be prepared to contribute actively each day, and to help make the environment conducive to everyone's participation – one that is open, respectful, and positive.

Attendance. I expect students' regular attendance, both in lectures and in recitations. I will allow each student one free absence from her or his recitation section per semester. Beyond that, you must speak to me about any absence, preferably beforehand. For each unexcused absence, you will be docked 1 point off of your final grade. For each failure to speak with me, you will lose an *extra* point off of your final grade.

Late work. Papers will be due at midnight on the relevant dates. Unexcused late work will drop one full letter grade for each day past the due date, beginning at 12:01 am. I will waive these penalties at my discretion if you have a good reason for submitting a paper late, but my decisions on these matters will be final.

Required texts. All of the assigned readings will be posted on the course Blackboard site. Notice that the following schedule is tentative. It is subject to change, for instance, if we discover that we need more time to cover particular materials. Moreover, in addition to the following readings, I will post a number of short case studies and commentaries on Blackboard.

Your rights. All students have the right to an environment that is conducive to success. If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and [Disability Resources and Services](#) (DRS), 140 William Pitt Union, (412) 648-7890, drsrecep@pitt.edu, (412) 228-5347 for P3 ASL users, as early as possible in the term. DRS will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course.

Your responsibilities. Academic integrity is essential to all of your work at the University of Pittsburgh. You must do your utmost to ensure that you submit only your own work, and that you do nothing to compromise other students' integrity, or to threaten their opportunities for success. For more information, please visit <http://www.as.pitt.edu/fac/policies/academic-integrity>.

Tentative Schedule

Intro. The Idea of Bioethics

Aug 30 Veatch, Haddad, and English (VHE), “A Model for Ethical Problem Solving.”

Unit 1. The Doctor/Patient Relationship

Sep 1 AMA Council on Ethical and Judicial Affairs, “Fundamental Elements of the Patient-Physician Relationship”
Ladd, Pasquerella, and Smith (LPS), “Clients’ Decisions, Nurses’ Dilemmas.”

Sep 5 No class: Labor Day.

Sep 6 Goldman, “The Refutation of Medical Paternalism” (V).

Sep 8 Ackerman, “Why Doctors Should Intervene” (V).

Topic: Physician-Assisted Suicide

Sep 13 Velleman, “Against the Right to Die.”

Sep 15 Martin, “Physician-Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia: Weighing Feminist Concerns” (FN).

Topic: Abortion

Sep 20 Little, “Abortion, Intimacy, and the Duty to Gestate.”

★ *First paper assigned.*

Sep 22 Cantor and Baum, “The Limits of Conscientious Objection – May Pharmacists Refuse to Fill Prescriptions for Emergency Contraception?”

Topic: Honesty and Trust

Sep 27 Lipkin, “On Telling Patients the Truth” (V).

Sep 29 Cullen and Klein, “Respect for Patients, Physicians, and the Truth” (V).

Oct 4 Goering, “Postnatal Reproductive Autonomy: Promoting Relational Autonomy and Self-Trust in New Parents.”

★ *First paper due.*

Topic: Practitioners’ Rights

Oct 6 Ladd, Pasquerella, and Smith, “Nurses’ Responsibilities, Nurses’ Rights.”

Unit 2. Wellness, Medicalization, and Disability

Topic: The concept of health.

Oct 11 Boorse, “Health as a Theoretical Concept.”

Oct 13 Boorse, continued.

Oct 17 No class: Fall Break.

Oct 18 No lecture: Recitations meet.

★ *First papers returned and discussed.*

Oct 19 ★ *Mid-term during recitation.*

Topic: Medicalization

Oct 20 Reiheld, “Patient Complains of...: How Medicalization Mediates Power and Justice.”
★ *Second paper assigned.*

Oct 25 Nelson, “Medicine and Making Sense of Queer Lives.”

Topic: Disability

Oct 27 McMahan, “The Morality of Screening for Disability.”

Nov 1 Scully, “Disability and Vulnerability: On Bodies, Dependence, and Power.”

Unit 3. Medical Justice

Nov 3 Daniels, “Is There a Right to Health Care and, if So, What Does It Encompass?” (V).
★ *Second paper due.*

Topic: Rationing

Nov 8 Daniels, “Rationing Fairly: Programmatic Considerations” (V).

Nov 10 Rescher, “The Allocation of Exotic Medical Lifesaving Therapy” (V).

Nov 15 Harris, “QALYfying the Value of Life” (V).

Nov 16 ★ *Second paper returned.*

Nov 17 Srinivasan, “Stop the Robot Apocalypse.”

Nov 21 ★ *Third paper assigned.*

Topic: Commodification

Nov 22 Anderson, “Is Women’s Labor a Commodity?”

Nov 23 *No class: Thanksgiving Break begins.*

Nov 28 *Classes resume.*

Nov 29 Anderson, continued.

Dec 1 Erin and Harris, “An Ethical Market in Human Organs.”

Dec 5 ★ *Third paper due.*

Dec 6 “Body Values: The Case against Compensating for Transplant Organs.”

Dec 8 *Conclusion.*

Final exam: Dec 13, 12:00-1:50 (location TBD).