INSTRUCTOR: Jason Benchimol

CONTACT INFORMATION

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COURSE TITLE

PHIL365 Biomedical Ethics: Theory & Practice

CATALOG DESCRIPTION

Examine ethical issues that arise in health care, such as provider-patient relations, death and dying, reproductive issues, human and animal experimentation, and bioethics and public policy. Students will develop the knowledge and skills needed to research, analyze, and evaluate positions taken on these or related issues. Special attention will be paid to the practical use of ethics in clinical practice and in public society.

INSTRUCTOR COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is a course in applied philosophy. We use the distinct philosophical methods of argumentation and analysis to examine ethical issues in modern medicine and in biomedical research. The broad aims of the course are: (a) development of ethical sensitivities that are necessary for the identification of ethical dimensions of, and moral reasoning about, particular issues that arise in the medical context; (b) refinement of general philosophical skills pertaining to argumentation and analysis; and (c) application of these sensitivities and skills in written analysis. Students will develop the ability to engage in moral reasoning about issues they are likely to encounter in the course of their own professional lives by consideration of some of the classic ethical issues in modern medicine.

PREREQUISITE

This course has no prerequisites. It is suitable for both veterans and newcomers to philosophy. That is, background in philosophy, while helpful, is neither assumed nor required. All that is required is a willingness to patiently read and digest some rather dense philosophical material, to be prepared to respectfully engage the course material in course discussion, and to spend a good amount of time sharpening your argumentative skills.

CREDITS AND HOURS

5 Credit Hours

The course is designed so that students should expect to spend a total of between 10-15 hours per week doing course-related work.
TEXT(S) AND MATERIALS

All readings are made available to students electronically. These readings will be posted for download on the course's Vista site.

GENERAL TEACHING METHODS

Lecture/Discussion, and other methods that may be adopted to suit student needs.

COURSE OUTLINE

I. Intro to Ethical Theory.
   A. Ethical theories relevant to biomedical contexts
   B. Practical applications of ethical theories in biomedical contexts.

II. Intro to Research in Biomedical Ethics.
   A. Use of research materials
   B. How to write a philosophy analysis paper.

III. Issues and Case Studies in Biomedical Ethics.
   Topics will vary, but may include:
   A. Medical decision-making
   B. Death & dying
   C. Choices in reproduction
   D. Genetics
   E. Public policy
   F. Provider-patient relationships.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Demonstrate knowledge of ethical theories by explaining ethical principles and the philosophical arguments that bear on them. Students will be asked to do this both in writing essay exams and in original research papers, and discussion.

2. Apply ethical principles to a broad range of biomedical issues. Students will demonstrate this ability in short writing assignments and/or essay exams.

3. Recognize and develop strategies for dealing with varying cultural perspectives on ethical issues through, for example, class discussions of cases involving intercultural interactions between patients and care providers.

4. Apply ethical principles in detailed studies of particular cases. Students will write a 6-8 page analysis paper evaluating ethical positions in connection with specific case studies.

5. Evaluate arguments for and against proposed solutions to ethical dilemmas in the practice of medicine and biological research. Students will demonstrate this ability in writing and in class presentations and discussion.
EVALUATION METHODS

This is a “hybrid” course, which includes an online component. The final grade in the course shall be calculated out of a total of points accumulated from the following areas:

- Online component – 30%
- Analysis Paper – 30%
- Short written assignments – 30%
- Participation – 10%

Specific Comments on Grading:

- The online component is intended to constitute 2 credit hours for the course. There will be weekly assignments that you will be asked to complete on the discussion board. Specific information will be provided on a week-to-week basis as we move throughout the course.

- There will be three short (2-3 page) written assignments. Their purpose is to provide you with a forum for practicing the kind of philosophical writing that you will be expected to demonstrate in the analysis paper. The written assignments cannot be turned in late unless we have previously arranged for an extension to be granted.

- There is a medium-length (6-8 page) analysis paper. You’ll be asked to turn in a two-page outline of the paper during the ninth week of the course. I will hand out topics for the analysis paper no later than the seventh week of the course.

- Discussion is essential to learning in philosophy. You can earn participation credit in two ways. One way to do so is to be a respectful, helpful and consistently active contributor to in-class discussion. Another way to do so is to participate in discussion on the online discussion board.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

There is no official “attendance policy”. But I imagine that it will be extraordinarily difficult to do well in the course if one is not in class.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

DO NOT PLAGIARIZE. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes plagiarism. I am morally obligated to report cheating, plagiarism and other conduct that violates rules of academic integrity to administration and student services. You should consult the BCC course catalog for information on academic integrity. If you are unsure what constitutes plagiarism, consult me before you write.

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR

I respectfully request that students do not engage in non-course-related activities during our class sessions. Your classmates will greatly appreciate your willingness to refrain from eating, surfing the web, reading other materials, text messaging, and any other behaviors that will detract from their learning experience.
LIBRARY MEDIA CENTER

The Bellevue College Library Media Center has extensive resources available online for all Distance Education students. Become acquainted with the LMC homepage: http://bellevuecollege.edu/lmc/. By clicking on the Research Help link you will find copies of handouts as well as tutorial help, including the LMC Guide for BAS Students. The BCC Catalog will tell you which books and films the library owns. Full-text journal articles can be found by searching the EBSCOhost and Proquest databases, located under Periodicals / Databases.

Online access to the library is available 24 x 7, but personal help is available via telephone only when the library is open. Those hours are posted under Library Information on the homepage. The Reference Desk phone number is (425) 564-6161. At other times, you may e-mail bccref@bellevuecollege.edu. You will receive an answer as soon as the library opens again.

ACCOMMODATIONS AND SUPPORT SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Bellevue Community College provides reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities. Students who need course accommodations because of a disability, have emergency medical information, or need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, should notify the instructor as soon as possible. The responsibility for determining a student’s eligibility for accommodations rests with Disability Resource Center. For more information, visit the Disability Resource Center in room B132, call (425) 564-2498 (TTY line (425) 564- 4110), or go to bellevuecollege.edu/drc.

AFFIRMATION OF INCLUSION

Bellevue Community College is committed to maintaining an environment in which every member of the campus community feels welcome to participate in the life of the college, free from harassment and discrimination. We value our different backgrounds at BCC, and students, faculty, staff members, and administrators are to treat one another with dignity and respect.

For further information regarding the Bachelor of Applied science program and policies, see the BAS student handbook. For further information regarding BCC policies, programs and services, review the BCC student handbook at bellevuecollege.edu/stupro/handbook_cd2008/programs/default.html.
Topics and Reading Schedule: (Subject to change at instructor’s discretion – any changes will of course be made with timely advance notice. All readings are provided in electronic format available on the BB Vista site for the course.)

**Week 1 (04.07): Course Introduction – Introduction to Argumentation, Reasoning and Critical Thinking**

Reading: none
Recommended reading: Olen, VanCamp, and Barry, “Good Reasoning”

**Week 2 (04.14): Introduction to Moral Theory – Teleological and Deontological Theories**


**Week 3 (04.21): Moral Theory; Applications in Biomedical and Nonbiomedical Contexts**

Reading: (1) Harris, "The Survival Lottery"; (2) Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality"; (3) O'Neill, "Kant's Formulation of the End in Itself and Helping the Poor"

**Week 4 (04.28): Autonomy, Paternalism, and Medical Models**

Reading: (1) Goldman, "The Refutation of Medical Paternalism"; (2) Ackerman, "Why Doctors Should Intervene"; (3) Emanuel and Emanuel, "Four Models of the Physician-Patient Relationship"; (4) "Beneficence Today, or Autonomy (Maybe) Tomorrow?" and Commentaries by Elger and Chevrolet

**Week 5 (05.05): Decisional (In)capacity, Refusal of Life-Sustaining Treatment and Issues of Competence**

Reading: (1) COEJA-AMA; (2) Powell and Lowenstein, "Refusing Life-Sustaining Treatment After Catastrophic Injury: Ethical Implications"; (3) Michel, "Suicide By Persons With Disabilities Disguised as the Refusal of Life-Sustaining Treatment" (4) Cowart and Burt, "Confronting Death: Who Chooses, Who Controls?"; (5) Kucewski and McGruden, "Informed Consent: Does it Take A Village?"

**Week 6 (05.12): Advance Directives and Decisional Surrogacy**

Reading: (1) Fagerlin and Schneider, "Enough: The Failure of the Living Will"; (2) Kuhse, "Some Reflections on Advance Directives"; (3) Dresser, "The Incompetent Patient on the Slippery Slope"; (4) Cantor, 5 Scenarios

**Week 7 (05.19): Euthanasia**

Reading: (1) Rachels, "Active and Passive Euthanasia"; (2) Steinbock, "The Intentional Termination of Life"; (3) Battin, "The Case for Euthanasia"; (4) Gay-Williams, "The Case Against Euthanasia"

**Week 8 (05.26): Physician-Assistance in Suicide**

Reading: (1) Ackerman, "Physician Assisted Suicide, Terminal Illness, and the Double Standard"; (2) Orentlicher, "The Supreme Court and Terminal Sedation"; (3) Hardwig, "Is There A Duty to Die"; (4) Bickenbach, "Disability Issues at the End of Life"

**Week 9 (06.02): Human Reproductive Cloning and Genetic Enhancement**

**Week 10 (06.09): Ethical Issues in Prenatal Testing**

Reading: (1) Robertson, "Extending Preimplantation Genetic Diagnosis: Medical and Nonmedical Uses"; (2) Asch, "Prenatal Diagnosis and Selective Abortion: A Challenge to Practice and Policy"; (3) Steinbock, "Disability, Prenatal Testing, and Selective Abortion"; (4) Bailey, "Why I Had Amniocentesis"

**Week 11 (06.16): Justice in Health Care**

Reading: (1) Engelhardt, "Freedom and Moral Diversity: The Moral Failures of Health Care in the Welfare State"; (2) Kawachi, "Why the United States is Not Number One in Health"; (3) Daniels, "Justice, Health, and Healthcare"; (4) Sreenivasan, "Opportunity is Not the Key"