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Class # 11403
Summer 2016
Session M (July 11 to August 19, 2016)
Location: Online

PHILOSOPHY 237: SOCIAL AND ETHICAL VALUES IN MEDICINE

Course Description

In this course, we will survey several issues in biomedical ethics, particularly issues at the margins of life (e.g. embryonic stem cell research, human cloning, abortion, euthanasia, physician-assisted suicide, death, and organ donation) and issues pertaining to the relationship between patients and healthcare providers (patient autonomy, informed consent, advanced directives, the nature and goals of medical practice, and conscientious objection). We will also look at arguments concerning how technological advances in medicine (e.g. embryo selection, serotonin inhibitors) affect how we think about ourselves and respond to others. Before addressing these issues, we will briefly survey standard philosophical approaches to ethical theory and questions of personal identity. No prior knowledge of philosophy is required. Coursework will include readings, participation on a discussion forum, short assignments, online reading quizzes, two papers (4-5 pages each), and two exams.

Instructions

This is an online course and so you won't be required to come to campus. This is certainly convenient, but it means you won't have an instructor in front of you to whom you can ask questions and get quick responses (though I'll do what I can via e-mail). At the same time, this is a summer course, and so we don't have much time to learn a semester's worth of philosophy. This means you will need be even more responsible for staying active and engaged. *Plan to spend 2-3 hours per day in a quiet place, carefully reading the material, and preparing assignments.*

Every day during the course, you will need to visit the Blackboard course page and look under the assignments tab. There, you'll see the day's date, with a number of activities that will have become available. These will include readings, short essays and response questions, short quizzes, possibly a video, and other activities. You will need to thoroughly read the materials for that day and perform the assignments. All assignments are due by midnight of the day they are made available (unless otherwise specified). Assignments turned in late will lose a letter grade.

Required Readings

No textbook required. All readings will be posted to UB Learns.

Recommended (but Not Required) Reading

[The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#): This is a valuable tool for clarifying ideas, but should ***not*** be used as a source in papers. Wikipedia can be very good, but the Stanford Encyclopedia is curated by experts and its articles are edited by philosophers. This is also true of the [Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#).

Learning Outcomes

COURSE GOALS	METHOD OF EVALUATION
Demonstrate comprehension of important articles in the bioethics literature.	Weekly Online Quizzes and Exams
Actively analyze and critique textual arguments	Online participation
Develop clear, original criticisms of the arguments and positions we read.	Assignments, Papers

Grade by Percentage

40%	Participation, Assignments, and Quizzes
15%	Exam 1
15%	Exam 2
10%	Paper 1
20%	Paper 2

Grading Scale

A = 92-100%
A- = 90-91%
B+ = 88-89%
B = 82-87%
B- = 80-81%
C+ = 78-79%
C = 72-77%
C- = 70-71%
D+ = 68-69%
D = 60-67%
F = 59% and below

Participation on the Discussion Forum

For every article we read, you will need to provide at least one online comment on the UBLEarns wiki (and if we read two articles, then you will need to provide one comment for each). These comments might take the form of 1) a criticism of the author, 2) an informed question you have about how to interpret the author, 3) or a comment or suggestion for another student. I will post there occasionally as well.

You should understand that I will be monitoring this wiki to award participation points, as well as to monitor the discussion. If you find yourself having a debate with other students about the arguments in the text (which is encouraged), make sure you assume a respectful tone and avoid personal attacks (this will not be tolerated). Always try to make yourself as clear as possible, stating your reasons clearly and citing evidence. We are not here primarily to convince one another, but to learn, to analyze, and to become better listeners, and this happens best when there is a safe environment in which we all feel comfortable participating.

Online Reading Quizzes

Every article we read will be accompanied by an online reading quiz. These quizzes are meant to ensure that you are reading carefully, and to help you focus on the main issues and arguments in the text. Some quizzes may ask you to provide a definition from the text, while others might ask you to spell out the author's argument in your own words.

Examinations

There will be two exams at the end of each three-week period. These will cover only the material within those three week periods. These examinations will consist of short-answer questions, where you will be provided with a list of five possible questions and you will need to answer four (i.e. you will need to choose an answer to leave blank). This means each answer will be worth 25% points. Answers should be clear, concise, and complete, and should range between 1-3 paragraphs.

Papers

Students will need to write two short papers of 5-6 pages (not including the reference page). In the first paper, you must explain one of the arguments or positions from one of our readings and then present your own clear criticism of it. In the second paper, you may repeat this format, or you can choose to present an original argument of your own that engages in the issues we address in the class. All papers will need to use [MLA format](#) and include a separate page for references. See the paper topics and instruction handout for more details.

Accessibility Resources

Students who require accommodation should contact me within the first three days of the session, so that we can make appropriate arrangements with the accessibility office. To contact Accessibility Resources, please follow [this link](#).

Academic Honesty

As the world is increasingly online, it has become very easy to present the words and ideas of others as our own. This can be particularly tempting in an online course like this. *Resist this temptation*. All student work may be scanned by online plagiarism checkers, which are remarkably good at catching plagiarized work. Students who are discovered to have plagiarized will be dealt with according to the university's academic integrity policy. In particular, no work that includes plagiarism will be graded or allowed to be made up, and evidence of plagiarism may be grounds for filing a report with the academic integrity office. It is your responsibility to know what plagiarism is and to avoid it. There will be no exceptions. To educate yourself on what counts as plagiarism, please visit [this link](#) or reach out to me if you have specific questions. For more information on the University at Buffalo's policy on academic integrity, visit [this link](#).

Why Philosophy?

I find a majority of students love philosophy, but increasingly, I encounter students who forego majoring because they are worried about paying student loans and getting a job. Contrary to their reputation, philosophy undergraduates do very well on the job market compared to many other majors. See [this link](#) for further information about pursuing philosophy. You don't need to choose between studying what you love and getting a job.

Course Schedule

Week 1 – Philosophical Ethics and Personal Identity

7/11 Read: Otte, "What is philosophy?"; Otte, "Philosophical Methods"
Also: Complete the Course Survey; Reading Quiz; Assignment 1

7/13 Read: Mill, "Utilitarianism"; Kant, "The Categorical Imperative"
Also: Reading Quiz; Assignment 2

7/15 Read [Personal Identity Piece TBD]
Also: Reading Quiz; Assignment 3

Week 2 – Abortion and Stem Cell Research

7/18 Read: Thomson, "A Defense of Abortion"
Also: Reading Quiz; Assignment 4

7/20 Read: Marquis, "Why Abortion Is Immoral"
Also: Reading Quiz; Assignment 5

7/22 Read: David Shoemaker "Souls, Embryos and the Fourth Dimension"
Also: **Exam 1**; Reading Quiz; Assignment 6

Week 3 – Euthanasia, Physician-Assisted Suicide, and Authenticity

Also: Reading Quiz; Assignment 7

8/1 Read: Velleman "A Right of Self-Termination?"
Also: Reading Quiz; Assignment 8

8/3 Dworkin "Dying and Living" and "Life Past Reason"

Also: Reading Quiz; Assignment 9

8/5 Read: Kolber “Ethical Implications of Memory Dampening”; Elliott “Prozac as a Way of Life”

Also: Reading Quiz; Assignment 10; **Paper 1 Due**

Week 4 – Human Cloning and Organ Procurement

8/8 Read: Kass “Why We Should Ban the Cloning of Humans”; Nussbaum, “Danger to Human Dignity”

Also: Reading Quiz; Assignment 11

8/10 Read: Sandel “The Case Against Perfection”; Hershenov “A Defense of Limited Cloning”

Also: Reading Quiz; Assignment 12

8/12 Read: Veatch and Pitt, “The Myth of Presumed Consent”; Dworkin “Markets and Morals: The Case for Organ Sales”

Also: Reading Quiz; Assignment 13

Week 5 – The Nature of Medicine, Neuroscience, and Punishment

8/15 Read: Boorse “The Goals of Medicine”; Beauchamp and Childress “Respect for Autonomy”

Also: Reading Quiz; Assignment 14

8/17 Read: President’s Council on bioethics “An Overview of the Impact of Neuroscience Evidence in Criminal Law”; Greene and Cohen “For the Law, Neuroscience Changes Nothing and Everything”

Also: Reading Quiz; Assignment 15

8/19 **Paper 2 Due / Exam 2 Due by 11:59pm**