

Bioethics

Summer Term 1, 2020

Time: 13:00-13:50, Tuesday & Thursday

Venue:

Lecturer: Irwin Chan

Email: irwinch@mail.ubc.ca

Office Hours: TBA

TAs: Jasper Heaton

Overview

Health policy has a significant impact on different aspects of our lives: our well-being, our finances, our life goals, how we relate to ourselves and others, and so on. What makes health policies desirable? And how should we decide which health policy to adopt?

There are various ways to approach these questions. This course aims to develop your ability to approach these questions from an ethical perspective. In particular, it aims to develop your ability to identify morally relevant factors and make ethical judgements about health policies such as euthanasia, abortion, and drug legalization.

This course therefore begins with a discussion of a few ethical theories and then applies these theories to such health care issues. There will also be plenty of case study discussions throughout the term. These are great opportunities for you to apply the theories to analyze problems and make ethical judgements.

Learning Objectives

At the end of the course, successful students will be able to:

- (1) explain the relevance of ethics to health care policy in terms of the topics covered in this course;
- (2) apply ethical theories to analyze, evaluate, and make ethical judgements on health care issues;
- (3) become a more ethically informed and conscientious member of society.

Attendance & Participation

Attendance is crucial to success in this course. This is not just because participation is part of the assessment (details below), but also because participation is an essential part of the learning process. Participation includes contributing to discussion on the discussion board and during online meetings. **Self-study is important, but you can't learn everything on your own. I therefore strongly encourage you to attend the lectures.**

Although assessment is not based on attendance, it is your responsibility to attend scheduled online tutorials where lots of important information will be given. If you miss any tutorials, please ask your classmates for what you have missed. I will give priority to enquiries that have not already been addressed in tutorials.

Respectful Classroom Policy

Students are expected to respect other participants in the online platform. Public messages during online tutorials are reserved for questions or issues that require immediate attention. For other questions and comments, please use the raise-hand function. Disruption, disrespectful comments, lack of due participation, and other inappropriate behaviours, if repeated, will result in mark deductions and other disciplinary action.

Reading

You do not need to buy any textbooks for this course. Most of the reading materials can be found on the library website in electronic form. Other reading materials can be downloaded from [Canvas] or will be distributed under the fair use provisions.

Please read the assigned reading before coming to class. Doing the assigned reading and familiarizing yourself with the topic can facilitate the learning process.

Schedule

Wk	Reading	Note
1.1	Introduction	
1.2	Moral Theories & Coronavirus Pandemic	
2.1	Resource Allocation & Coronavirus Pandemic: Fleck, Leonard. "Just Caring: In Defense of Limited Age-Based Healthcare Rationing" (sections 1 ["the beginning of Age-based..."], 2, 5, 6 only)	
	Drug Legalization	
2.2	Nutt, David. "How Can We Measure The Harms Done by Drugs?" (Skim; emphasis on p.32-35 & p.38-44) Husak, Douglas. "Reasons to Criminalize Drug Use" (p.41-53; p71-82)	
3.	De Marneffe, Peter. "An Argument for Drug	

1	Prohibition” (p.109-122; p.177-185) Husak, Douglas. “Reasons to Criminalize Drug Use” (p53-63)	
	Euthanasia	
3. 2	Rachels, James. “The Sanctity of Life.”	
4. 1	Guest Lecture on the Opioid Crisis	
4. 2	Brock, Dan. “Voluntary Active Euthanasia.” [From Brock, Dan. 1993. Life and Death.]	
5. 1	Case Discussion/“Debate”	
	Abortion	
5. 2	Marquis, Don. “Why Abortion Is Immoral.”	
6. 1	Thomson, Judith. “A Defense of Abortion.” (Optional) Boonin, David. “The Duty to Save the Violinist Objection.”; “The Tacit Consent Objection.” (emphasis on p.148-150 & 156-164) [From Boonin, David. 2003. A Defense of Abortion.]	
6. 2	Sumner, Wayne. “A Third Way.”	
7	Summary	

Readings:

Fleck, Leonard. Just Caring: In Defense of Limited Age-Based Healthcare Rationing. (sections 1 [“the beginning of Age-based...”], 2, 5, 6 only)

Nutt “How Can We Measure The Harms Done by Drugs?” (Skim; emphasis on p.32-35 & p.38-44)

Husak, Douglas “Reasons to Criminalize Drug Use” (p.41-53; p71-82) [From Husak & De Marneffe. The Legalization of Drugs.]

De Marneffe, “An Argument for Drug Prohibition” (p.109-122; p.177-185) [From Husak & De Marneffe. The Legalization of Drugs.]

Husak, “Reasons to Criminalize Drug Use” (p53-63) [From Husak & De Marneffe. The Legalization of Drugs.]

Rachels, James. The Sanctity of Life. (<http://jamesrachels.org/EOL2.pdf>)

Brock, Dan. “Voluntary Active Euthanasia.” [From Brock, Dan. 1993. Life and Death.]

Marquis, Don. "Why Abortion Is Immoral."

Thomson, Judith. "A Defense of Abortion."

Boonin, David. "The Duty to Save the Violinist Objection." & "The Tacit Consent Objection."
(emphasis on p.148-150 & 156-164) [From Boonin, David. 2003. A Defense of Abortion.]

Sumner, Wayne. "A Third Way."

Assessment

(1) Online Participation (5%)

(2) Guest Lecture Reflection (15%)

(3) Writing Assignments (20 + 25 + 35%)

(1) Online Participation

You will need to regularly participate in 9 online discussions. In each discussion, you need to post your answer to a question and comment on at least one answer posted by another person.

(2) Guest Lecture Reflection

A guest lecture will be held on 2 June, 13:00-16:00. You will need to write a short reflection on the guest lecture. (TBC)

(3) Writing Assignments

There are three short writing assignments. Topic and due date will be announced.

Late Submission Policy

If you cannot submit your assignments on time and require academic accommodations, you are welcome to come and talk to me about your situation, but please do so as early as possible.

Extensions may be given depending on your circumstances. However, late assignments without a legitimate excuse will be subject to penalties (10% per day).

Course Website

Our course website is [Canvas]. You can find the syllabus, lecture slides, and other reading materials there.

Interim Course Evaluation

A short and informal survey will be posted on [Canvas] in **Week 3**. This is to let me know your thoughts and comments on the course materials, the lectures, the assignments, etc., and help me to improve the course. I encourage you to do the survey.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious academic misconduct. It will not and should not be treated lightly. Please cite properly if you take any text from someone else. For details on UBC's plagiarism policy and tips on avoiding plagiarism, please see

<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/Vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,54,111,959> and
<http://learningcommons.ubc.ca/resource-guides/avoiding-plagiarism/>

Diversity and Inclusivity

Philosophy is for everyone. I encourage everyone to participate and contribute. I will also do my best to design the course and arrange the lectures in ways that give everyone a fair chance to participate and contribute. If you have any thoughts or comments on the course arrangements, you are always welcome to come talk to me in person or send me an email.

The University provides academic accommodations for students with disabilities. You can find more details on academic accommodations by contacting Accessibility Services or go to <http://students.ubc.ca/success/student-supports/academic-accommodations#registerad>.

If you have any other concerns about assignment deadlines, missing classes, etc., please come and talk to me in advance, preferably one week in advance if possible.