

PHILOSOPHY 333 **Bio-Medical Ethics**

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Office Hours: By appointment over Zoom

Welcome to PHIL 333. This version of PHIL 333 is taught as a *Distance Learning Course*. This means there are no set lecture times, and all learning is done remotely. The course is broken up into weekly lessons. The schedule for the course, assigned weekly readings, lesson summaries, and access to weekly discussions are available through Canvas. All written work is to be submitted through Canvas. Although there are no “live” lectures, you are welcome to meet with me over Zoom to discuss the course material or any of the assignments. Email me to set up an appointment. I look forward to meeting you.

Course Description

Is euthanasia morally permissible? What is the relationship between patient autonomy, competence, and informed consent? When, if ever, is paternalism morally justified? Under what circumstances, if any, is abortion morally wrong? Is it morally permissible for women to obtain and for doctors to provide medically unnecessary Caesarean sections? Should doctors provide alternative, unproven therapies to their patients who request them? When, if ever, is two-tier health care just? What, *in general*, makes an act morally right or wrong, a person virtuous or vicious, a policy just or unjust?

In Philosophy 333, we will explore answers to these questions from a variety of perspectives. We will, in short, critically examine some leading philosophical theories, and some important, and difficult, ethical issues in health care.

Objectives for this course include:

- Acquiring a critical grasp of leading normative ethical theories;
- Gaining a critical understanding of some important philosophical literature on some moral problems in health care;
- Developing your critical reasoning skills when it comes to identifying arguments in a text, stating those arguments in a precise and clear manner, and raising targeted objections to those arguments;
- Encouraging you to consider your own views on selected moral problems in health care, to consider your reasons for your views, to examine your views and reasons critically, and to rethink your views and arguments in the light of criticism.

More generally, the aim of this course is not to tell you what to think, but to give you the skills to think for yourself, while enhancing your philosophical literacy. By successfully completing this course, you will gain a better understanding of moral theory generally; a greater familiarity with specific arguments on specific ethical issues in health care; a deeper understanding of your own views on these issues, and an enhanced ability to identify, articulate, develop, and critically analyze arguments.

Success in this course will require hard work; consistent participation and engagement with the course materials; writing clearly and carefully; being fair but critical of others' arguments, and of your own arguments; and a willingness to keep an open mind.

Required Readings

- *Debating Health Care Ethics: Canadian Contexts, 2nd edition*, Patrick Findler, Doran Smolkin, Warren Bourgeois. Canadian Scholars, 2019

The textbook is available through the UBC Bookstore, or online:

<https://www.canadianscholars.ca/books/debating-health-care-ethics>

- *Selected Articles*: a selection of influential and important philosophical articles in health care ethics. Copies of these articles are available free of charge through the “Course Readings” tab on Canvas, or online.

Grades

Grades will be based on the following components:

Weekly Participation in online Discussions	10%
Completion of 2 Essays	60% (30% each)
Final Exam (written remotely on Canvas)	30%

University Policies

Support: UBC provides resources to support student learning and to maintain healthy lifestyles but recognizes that sometimes crises arise and so there are additional resources to access including those for survivors of sexual violence. UBC values respect for the person and ideas of all members of the academic community. Harassment and discrimination are not tolerated nor is suppression of academic freedom. UBC provides appropriate accommodation for students with disabilities and for religious observances. UBC values academic honesty and students are expected to acknowledge the ideas generated by others and to uphold the highest academic standards in all of their actions.

Details of the policies and how to access support are available on [the UBC Senate website](#).

Plagiarism, which is intellectual theft, occurs where an individual submits or presents the oral or written work of another person as his or her own. Scholarship quite properly rests upon examining and referring to the thoughts and writings of others. However, when another person's words (i.e. phrases, sentences, or paragraphs), ideas, or entire works are used, the author must be acknowledged in the text, in footnotes, in endnotes, or in another accepted form of academic citation. Where direct quotations are made, they must be clearly delineated (for example, within quotation marks or separately indented). Failure to provide proper attribution is plagiarism because it represents someone else's work as one's own. Plagiarism should not occur in submitted drafts or final works. A student who seeks assistance from a tutor or other scholastic aids must ensure that the work submitted is the student's own. Students are responsible for ensuring that any work submitted does not constitute plagiarism. Students who are in any doubt as to what constitutes plagiarism should consult their instructor before handing in any assignments.

A link about Academic misconduct is below

<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/Vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,54,111,959>

Other Course Policies

Learning Analytics

In this course, I plan to use analytics data to:

- Track participation in discussion forums
- Assess your participation in the course

Copyright

All materials of this course (course handouts, lecture slides, assessments, course readings, etc.) are the intellectual property of the Course Instructor or licensed to be used in this course by the copyright owner. Redistribution of these materials by any means without permission of the copyright holder(s) constitutes a breach of copyright and may lead to academic discipline.

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