

PHIL 333: Bio-Medical Ethics

University of British Columbia, Vancouver

Winter Term 1, 2024

Instructor Information

- Jade Hadley
- jade.hadley@ubc.ca
 - I will respond to emails within 2 working days.
- **Office hours:** Tuesdays 11:00am-12:00pm and Thursdays 2:00pm-3:00pm
(BUCH E274)

Lectures

- Tuesdays and Thursdays: 12:30pm-2:00pm.
- Brock Commons South (BRCS): Floor 2 – Room 2070.
 - Lectures will be delivered **in person**; attendance is **strongly** encouraged.

Course Information

[Source: <https://philosophy.ubc.ca/section/phil-333-2023w-001/>]

Overview

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

these questions from an ethical perspective and aims to develop your ability to identify morally relevant factors and make ethical judgements on healthcare issues.

This course begins with an introduction to various ethical theories applied to various health care issues. It delves into in-depth discussions of topics such as drug legalization, euthanasia, and abortion. Throughout the term, there will be plenty of case study discussions, enabling you to apply your knowledge and thinking skills to analyze problems.

Some of the topics discussed in this course may be emotionally challenging (e.g. addiction, suicide, and mental illness). Remember to be gentle with yourself and others. Do not hesitate to seek support if you need it.

There are plenty of resources available (e.g. <https://students.ubc.ca/health>).

Learning Objectives

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

- (1) Explain, compare, and apply various ethical theories to analyze and evaluate health care issues;
- (2) Present arguments, raise objections, and reply to objections in a clear and logical manner;
- (3) Make ethical judgements based on relevant and reliable information, realistic understanding of the situation, and sound reasoning;
- (4) Explain the relevance of ethics to healthcare policy in terms of the topics covered in this course.

Course Materials

The **textbook** for this course is:

Vaughn, Lewis. *Bioethics*. Oxford University Press, 1st Edition, 2010.

Any other materials used will be made available as PDFs on the Canvas page.

Readings from the textbook and any others specified in the schedule below are mandatory.

Other optional readings will be made available on the Canvas page, grouped by topic.

Course Schedule

Note: Specific deadlines and topic dates are provisional, this schedule is subject to change at the instructor's discretion (students will be notified of any such changes).

Day	Topic	Reading	Assignments
Tuesday, September 3rd	Syllabus and Introduction to Philosophy	Chapter 1	
Thursday, September 5th	Ethical Theories: Utilitarianism	Chapter 2	
Tuesday, September 10th	Ethical Theories: Deontology		
Thursday, September 12th	Ethical Theories: Virtue Ethics		
Tuesday, September 17th	Physician and Patient:	Chapter 3	

	Paternalism and Patient Autonomy		
Thursday, September 19th	Physician and Patient: Paternalism and Patient Autonomy		
Tuesday, September 24th	Physician and Patient: Truth-Telling and Confidentiality	Chapter 4	
Thursday, September 26th	Physician and Patient: Truth-Telling and Confidentiality		Note: office hour cancelled this day.
Tuesday, October 1st	Physician and Patient: Truth-Telling and Confidentiality		
Thursday, October 3rd	Physician and Patient: Human Research	Chapter 6	
Tuesday, October 8th	Physician and Patient: Human Research		
Thursday, October 10th	Life and Death: Abortion	Chapter 7	
Tuesday, October 15th	Life and Death: Abortion		Essay topics released
Thursday, October 17th	Life and Death: Abortion		

Tuesday, October 22nd	Life and Death: Genetic Choices	Chapter 9	
Thursday, October 24th	Life and Death: Genetic Choices		
Tuesday, October 29th	Life and Death: Euthanasia	Chapter 10	Essay due <i>before</i> the start of class
Thursday, October 31st	Life and Death: Euthanasia		
Tuesday, November 5th	Life and Death: Euthanasia		
Thursday, November 7th	Midterm Review		
Tuesday, November 12th	No Class: Midterm Break		
Thursday, November 14th	Midterm Exam		
Tuesday, November 19th	Justice and Health Care: Dividing up Health Care Resources	Chapter 11	
Thursday, November 21st	Justice and Health Care: Dividing up Health Care Resources		
Tuesday, November 26th	Justice and Health Care: Dividing up Health Care Resources		

Thursday, November 28th	Justice and Health Care: Two-Tier Healthcare	Krohmal and Emanuel: <i>Tiers Without Tears: The Ethics of a Two-Tier Health Care System</i>	
Tuesday, December 3rd	TBA		
Thursday, December 5th	Review		

Assessment

- Participation: **15%**
- Essay: **25%**
- Midterm Exam: **25%**
- Final Exam: **35%**

Participation

You will be expected to participate in group exercises which take place during class time (roughly one per week, so every other meeting or so). You will be divided into groups of 4-5 students and given a worksheet to complete. These assignments will be open book and graded for participation only—you will score full marks if your group makes a good faith effort to complete the tasks.

Participation in group exercises is worth **15%** of your final grade.

Essay

You will be required to write a three-page philosophical essay. These essays are meant to be argumentative, not merely expository. This means that you are expected not merely to show understanding of the material, but also to critically engage with it by producing original arguments and observations.

Essay topics will be distributed 2 weeks before the due date of October 29th (12:30pm).

The essay is worth **25%** of your final grade.

Midterm and Final Exam

The midterm exam could include anything that has been covered up to that point in the course and will account for **25%** of your final grade.

The final exam will be cumulative (covering all course material) and will account for **35%** of your final grade.

Information about the format of the exams will be provided in due course.

Additional Information and Policies

Respectful Classroom

This course will address some sensitive topics and you may have strong opinions concerning the material we cover. It is therefore necessary that we all make a conscious effort to conduct our discussions in an open-minded and respectful manner.

Late Assignments

I am happy to consider reasonable requests for extensions or other concessions, provided that the request is approved **before** the relevant assignment is due. Otherwise, students will need to apply for a concession via Arts Advising. Late work for which a legitimate concession has not been granted will be subject to a late penalty (of 2% per day late).

Illness and Absence

It is very important that you do not attend class if you are ill or have reason to believe you may be ill. If you are unable to attend class because of illness or suspected illness, I will take steps to ensure that this does not adversely affect your mark for the course.

I recommend that you attempt to find at least one fellow student who you can communicate with in case of missed classes, so that you can get notes and other relevant information from them.

Intellectual Property

Instructor-generated course materials – this syllabus, assignments, slides, etc. – are my own intellectual property and may not be copied or distributed without my explicit permission.

Academic Misconduct

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: <https://vancouver.calendar.ubc.ca/campus-wide-policies-and-regulations/student-conduct-and-discipline/discipline-academic-misconduct>