

PHILOSOPHY 333 99A/99B Bio-Medical Ethics (Fall, 2025) (Abbreviated Syllabus)

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This version of PHIL 333 is taught as an *Online Learning Course*. This means there are no set lecture times, and all learning is done remotely on Canvas. The course content is almost entirely *text-based*, although I will provide several supplemental video recordings over the term. The schedule for the course, assigned weekly readings, my weekly written lesson summaries, and access to weekly discussion boards are all available through Canvas. All written work, including the final exam, is submitted remotely through Canvas. Although this is an online course, *I am available to meet with you* to support your success. I have regularly scheduled weekly Zoom office hours, and you are welcome to set up one-on-one Zoom meetings to discuss the assignments or any of the course materials. I look forward to meeting you!

Course Description: What, *in general*, makes actions morally right or wrong, people virtuous or vicious, and policies just or unjust? Is euthanasia morally permissible? Under what conditions, if any, should euthanasia or Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) be legal? What is the relationship between patient autonomy, competence, informed consent, and valid consent? When, if ever, is medical paternalism, and paternalism generally, morally justified? Under what circumstances, if any, is abortion morally wrong? For instance, would it be morally wrong to abort because the fetus has Down syndrome? And when, if ever, does the fetus get the moral right to life? What, in general, gives one the moral right to life? And what should we think about how to weigh the autonomy of the pregnant person if it conflicts with the moral right to life of the fetus? What are the morally justified rules of triage, and is it ever morally permissible for a triage nurse to treat one person ahead of another for non-medical considerations, such as a person who is ill or injured through no fault of their own ahead of another person who is at fault for being ill or injured? Under what conditions, if any, should doctors provide alternative, unproven therapies to their patients who request them? Under what conditions, if any, is two-tier MRI morally just? And does Canada's current system of two-tier access to MRI fulfill these conditions for being morally just? In Philosophy 333, we will explore answers to these and to other questions. We will, in short, critically examine some leading normative ethical theories, and some important, and difficult, ethical issues in health care.

Required Readings:

- **Textbook:** **Debating Health Care Ethics: Canadian Contexts**, 3rd edition, Doran Smolkin, Patrick Findler, Warren Bourgeois. Canadian Scholars, 2025

The textbook is available for purchase in print or electronic form through the publisher,
<https://canadianscholars.ca/book/debating-health-care-ethics-third-edition/>

- **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 “Library Online Course Reserve” tab on the Canvas course home page.

Grades: Grades will be based on the following components:

Participation weekly in online Discussions	10%
Completion of 2 Essays	60% (30% each)
Final Exam	30%