BioMedical Ethics
PHI 240

Professor: David W. Goldberg
Office: Patterson 319
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Meeting Times: 6:00-9:00 M
Meeting Room: Patterson 106
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Course Description:

The aim of this course is two fold. First, the student will be introduced to the theoretical considerations concerning the process of moral decision-making, including traditional ethical theories as promulgated by Western Philosophy. Secondly, we will examine a variety of contemporary moral problems surrounding health care and biomedical sciences. Our goal will be not merely to present opposing opinions, but rather to show that moral decisions, just as any other type of rational decision, demands discussion and justification. Students should expect to develop the necessary methodology needed to rationally analyze ethical decisions within the medical community, both those that they are asked to make, as well as those made by others.

Topics of discussion will include some or all of the following: ethical theory, reproductive issues (including abortion and cloning), genetics, life and death issues, resource allocation, animal experimentation and others. For each topic there will be assigned readings, with classes consisting of an analysis of these readings in which we seek to clarify the moral position of the author, followed by class discussion on the text. Students will be encouraged to participate in this discussion remembering all along that what is sought are rational justifications for moral positions and not merely polemical confrontations.

Required Text:


Course Expectations:

1. Assignments:

You are responsible for coming to class prepared to actively contribute to discussion on the topics at hand. The best way to prepare is to read the assigned material thoroughly. Thorough reading is aided by note-taking: write down questions that occur to you as you read, rephrase the author’s arguments in your own words to ensure that you understand them, etc. Bring these notes to class so you can refer to them during discussion. It is absolutely crucial that you keep up with the readings to enhance the quality of class discussions and to facilitate comprehension. The quality of your reading will directly and substantially affect your course grade.
2. Attendance:

Consistency of attendance is central to the educational process and my experience in the past has shown that students who attend on a regular basis do much better than those who do not. In my older age I have become jaded by attendance policies and consider it your job as an adult learner to avoid missing classes, but let it be known that though I have decided to have no policy, your absences will be noticed and will indirectly affect your grade.

3. Grading criteria:

Grading will be determined via 5 short papers of equal value. Each paper is to be between 900-1500 words and will cover a topic supplied to you. Papers are to expand on the given topic using the material we have covered as grounds for justifying your position. Remember, this is philosophy; hence reason and evidential justification are the cornerstones of a presentation. Do not, and I stress again, do not just fill your pages with mere opinion.

Academic integrity is an issue that I take very seriously. Philosophy papers often rely on other sources for information and substantiation of a position; hence you must be very careful to properly cite your use of a passage or thought derived from someone else. For information on plagiarism see the College Catalogue, or a good writing guidebook such as Diana Hacker Rules for Writers. Also, remember that the Internet has made it both easy to find information, as well as to check for sources. Do not think that because you found information at some obscure WEB site that there is no need to reference the material. One final point, your papers will be submitted to turnitin.com, a subscription site that is both a learning tool and a source for checking for plagiarism.

First, the student will be required to keep abreast with the reading material. I am a believer in dialogue as the best educational tool, dialogue between student and professor, but this is only possible if everyone keeps abreast with the assigned readings. It is much easier to follow class discussion and participate if one has read the material at least once.

4. Classroom expectations:

First, it is desirable that a certain demeanor be maintained in the classroom. Please refrain from holding conversations during the class with other members of the course. This is disturbing for both your fellow students and myself, and distracts from the academic environment. If you have a question about the material ask me, not your classmate, as chances are that others also have the same issue.

Use of cell-phones and laptops in class will not be tolerated. As I have aged I have become more of a curmudgeon in regards to this as they tend to be a disturbance and distraction not only to the user, but to all in the classroom. So, all cell-phones must be turned off during class, no exceptions and notes must be taken the old-fashioned way.

Office hours: My office is Patterson 319 and I will have office hours Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10:30-11:30 or by appointment. If for any reason you are having difficulty please feel free to contact me. I can also be reached via e-mail at goldbedw@westminster.edu and office phone, x7153.
### Tentative Chronology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Intro to Philosophy</td>
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| 2    | **Part 1: Principles and Theories**  
  Chapter 1: Moral Reasoning in Bioethics |
| 3    | Chapter 2: Bioethics and Moral Theories |
| 4    | Chapter: Bioethics and Moral Theories  
  **Short Paper Due** |
| 5    | **Part 2. Medical Professional and Patient**  
  Chapter 3: Paternalism and Patient Autonomy |
| 6    | Chapter 4: Truth-Telling and Confidentiality |
| 7    | Chapter 5: Informed Consent  
  **Short Paper Due** |
| 8    | Chapter 6: Human Research |
| 9    | **Part 3. Life and Death**  
  Chapter 7: Abortion |
| 10   | Chapter 8: Reproductive Technology  
  **Short Paper Due** |
| 11   | Chapter 9: Genetic Choices |
| 12   | Chapter 10: Euthanasia and Physician-Assisted Suicide |
| 13   | **Part 4. Justice and Health Care**  
  The American Medical System  
  **Short Paper Due** |
| 14   | Chapter 11: Dividing Up Health Care Resources |
| 15   | Part XIII Ethical Issues In The Practice of Health Care  
  **Short Paper Due** |