

## **PHIL 1008W: Introduction to Medical Ethics, Writing Intensive**

TR 2:45-4:00 in Furman Hall 132

**Professor:** Sarah Raskoff

**Office:** Furman Hall, Room 105

**Office Hours:** TBD

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### **Course Overview**

Ethics is the study of questions such as: How should we live? What should we do? What is good or bad? Medical ethics is the study of ethical issues that arise in the practice of medicine. In this course, we will begin with a brief overview of contemporary ethical theory and its application to medical ethics before exploring a variety of ethical issues in medicine, including informed consent, decision-making capacity, paternalism, public health ethics, vaccination, research ethics, abortion, physician-assisted suicide, and dementia.

As a first-year writing seminar, this course will also focus on developing a suite of writing skills, including argument articulation, analysis, and construction, as well as providing, and revising in light of, constructive comments and feedback.

Learning how to engage in productive ethical discussions is a crucial skill in life, especially for students planning to pursue a career in medicine, where they will sometimes have to work with patients and colleagues to navigate difficult and ethically complex situations. Accordingly, this course will also have a team-based component focusing on developing this skill.

### **Course Goals**

- To read and engage with contemporary philosophical texts.
- To understand important concepts in medical ethics.
- To engage in constructive discussion and analysis of ethical issues with others.
- To apply philosophical arguments and concepts to concrete cases in medical ethics.
- To write clear and reasoned evaluations of philosophical arguments, and to give, receive, and respond to constructive comments and feedback on that writing.

### **Required Course Materials**

**Textbook:** There is no textbook for this course. All readings will be uploaded to Brightspace. Please let me know if you have any issues accessing them!

### **Accessibility and Accommodations**

Vanderbilt University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. If you have a disability or medical condition that you think will impact your ability to complete certain assignments or participate in class and you wish to seek accommodation, you should contact the Student Access Center at [disabilityservices@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:disabilityservices@vanderbilt.edu) or drop by the Baker Building, Suite 108. I also welcome you to contact me about any concerns you have in this regard.

### **Evaluation and Grading Scale**

Readiness Assessments*	10%
Case Study Evaluations	3 x 15%
Argumentative Essay Draft	15%
Argumentative Essay Revision	20%
Participation and Engagement	10%

\* There will be 25 Readiness Assessments over the semester, but only 20 will count toward your grade

\*\* You must participate in the Writers' Workshop to receive higher than 75% on your Argumentative Essay Draft

Letter grade	Numerical equivalent
A	93-100
A-	90-93
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	0-59

### **Teams**

This course will rely on elements of team-based learning. In the first week, you will be assigned to a team for the rest of the semester. Teams will have three members and will be created in a way that ensures each has an even distribution of relevant skills and background experience.

We are using teams in this course because many ethical decisions made in health-care settings or about health-care policy are decisions involving multiple parties. It is important for you to learn how to engage in constructive dialogue about ethical issues with others. Your primary course grade will be determined by performance on individual assignments, but your team's performance in class discussions can enhance your participation grade.

### **Late Work Policy**

The term goes by quickly. It is important to submit work on time. Except in exceptional circumstances, late work will be penalized at a rate of a partial letter grade per day (e.g. a B paper that is one day late receives a B-; a B paper that is two days late receives a C+; etc). Each weekend day counts as a day.

### **Electronic Submission Policy**

Written work should be submitted electronically through Brightspace, and is due by 11:59pm on due dates. Papers received from midnight on are late.

### **Academic Integrity**

All submitted work will be analyzed by Turnitin, which is a plagiarism-detection software. Cases of plagiarism will result in a failing grade on the assignment and will be submitted for review by the Honor Council. To avoid plagiarism, do not:

- (1) Present another's ideas without citing them.
- (2) Present another's words without quoting and citing them.

If you are unclear on what constitutes plagiarism or cheating, please email me. If you feel that your only chance to pass this course is to plagiarize or cheat, please email me. I am here to help!

## Assignments

### **Readiness Assessments (In-Class, Graded):**

Readiness assessments are short quizzes (usually multiple choice but sometimes short answer) on basic concepts from the assigned readings conducted at the start of class. You will complete them individually, then as a team, at which point answers will be discussed as a class. These are to ensure that the basic concepts necessary for class discussion are understood. If you do the readings, these should be easy and should help you learn. I will not offer make-ups for readiness assessments missed due to absence or tardiness, but you can miss or fail 6 without any cost to your grade.

### **Case Study Evaluations (Submitted to Brightspace) Due Sunday of Weeks 5, 8 and 11 by 11:59 PM:**

Class activity on Thursday of Weeks 5, 8, and 11 will be devoted to Case Studies. Case Studies are specific examples of situations requiring ethical analysis. Case Study Evaluations are short, 1000-word essays in which you will do the following:

- Summarize your team's analysis of the main ethical factors in the case, including important facts, stakeholders, and values/principles.
- Present an argument for your evaluation of the correct course of action and indicate whether you agree or disagree with your team's analysis.

The requirements for passing a Case Study Evaluation can be found under the assignment page on Brightspace. The most important part of passing will be the quality of your individual argument and evaluation, but a good team discussion will help you develop this argument and evaluation.

### **Argumentative Essay Draft (Submitted to Brightspace) Due W, 11/8 by 11:59 PM:**

There will be no final exam for this course. Instead, you will submit one 1500-word argumentative essay that has been through at least one set of revisions in response to constructive comments and feedback. You will choose the topic of this essay from the list of four prompts available on Brightspace, where you will also find additional guidance for writing a philosophy paper.

To aid you in your revision process, I will (1) host a Writers' Workshop in class and (2) provide an additional set of comments and feedback on your draft. The Writers' Workshop will take place on Thursday, 11/9. During class, you will read your teammates' drafts and provide constructive comments and feedback. After the workshop, I will provide an additional set of comments and feedback. No later than 11/19, you will receive a "revision packet" from me that includes both sets of comments and feedback.

Please note that you cannot receive higher than 75% on your essay draft if you do not participate in the Writers' Workshop, so please plan accordingly!

### **Argumentative Essay Revision (Submitted to Brightspace) Due R, 12/14 by 11:59 PM:**

You will submit a revised version of your essay. As you revise, keep in mind that I will be familiar with both your original draft and the contents of your revision packet. Your revised paper should incorporate the feedback and comments you received.

## Course Schedule

(subject to change with reasonable notice)

Week 1: Introductions

R, 8/24: Henry L. Roediger III, Mark A. McDaniel, and Peter Brown, "Learning is Misunderstood" (excerpt from *Make it Stick: The Science of Successful Learning*)

Week 2: Ethical Theory for Medical Ethics

T, 8/29: Robert Audi, "Ethical Theory and The Moral Fragmentation of Modern Life"

R, 8/31: Tom I. Beauchamp, "The 'Four Principles' Approach to Health Care Ethics"

Week 3: Informed Consent and Why It Matters

T, 9/5: Ruth Faden and Tom I. Beauchamp, "The Concept of Informed Consent"

R, 9/7: Onora O'Neill, "Some Limits on Informed Consent"; Rebecca Walker, "Medical Ethics Needs a New View of Autonomy"

Week 4: Decision-Making Capacity

T, 9/12: Paul S. Appelbaum, "Assessment of Patients' Competence to Consent to Treatment"

R, 9/14: Mark R. Wicclair, "Patient Decision-Making Capacity and Risk"

Week 5: Paternalism

T, 9/19: Gerald Dworkin, "Paternalism"; Alan Goldman, "A Refutation of Medical Paternalism"

R, 9/21: Case Study

Week 6: Paternalism

T, 9/26: Terrence F. Ackerman, "Why Doctors Should Intervene"; Ezekiel J. Emanuel and Linda L. Emanuel, "Four Models of the Physician-Patient Relationship"

R, 9/28: Cass Sunstein and Richard Thaler, "Libertarian Paternalism"

Week 7: Public Health and Vaccination

T, 10/3: Ruth Faden, Sirine Shebaya, Andrew Siegel, "Distinctive Challenges of Public Health Ethics"; Jessica Flanigan, "A Defense of Compulsory Vaccination"

R, 10/5: Michael Kowalik, "Ethics of Vaccine Refusal"

Week 8: Research Ethics

T, 10/10: Walter Robinson and Brandon Unruh, "The Hepatitis Experiments at the Willowbrook State School"; James Jones, "The Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment"

R, 10/12: Case Study

Week 9: Research Ethics

T, 10/17: National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, *The Belmont Report*; Ezekiel J. Emanuel et al., "What Makes Clinical Research Ethical?"

R, 10/19: FALL BREAK—NO CLASS

Week 10: Puzzles in Research Ethics: Scientific Design and Participant Selection

T, 10/24: Samuel Hellman and Deborah S. Hellman, "Of Mice But Not Men: Problems of the Randomized Clinical Trial"

R, 10/26: Alan Wertheimer and Franklin Miller, "Payment for Research Participation: A Coercive Offer?"

Week 11: Abortion

T, 10/31: Case Study

R, 11/2: Patrick Lee and Robert P. George, "The Wrong of Abortion"; Mary Anne Warren, "On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion"

Week 12: Abortion and Writers' Workshop

T, 11/7: Judith J. Thomson, "A Defense of Abortion"

R, 11/9: Writers' Workshop

Week 13: Physician-Assisted Suicide

T, 11/14: Michael B. Gill, "A Moral Defense of Oregon's Physician-Assisted Suicide Law"

R, 11/16: Ezekiel J. Emanuel, "What Is the Great Benefit of Legalizing Euthanasia or Physician-Assisted Suicide?"; (and brief excerpt from J. David Velleman, "Against the Right to Die")

THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 14: Dementia

T, 11/28: Ronald Dworkin, "Life Past Reason"

R, 11/30: Rebecca Dresser, "Dworkin on Dementia"

Week 15: AI and Algorithms in Medicine

T, 12/5: Ziad Obermeyer et al., "Dissecting Racial Bias in an Algorithm Used to Manage the Health of Populations"

R, 12/7: Emma Pierson et al., "An Algorithmic Approach to Reducing Unexplained Pain Disparities in Underserved Populations"