HU 361 - BIOMEDICAL ETHICS
Spring 2000

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Office Hours: W 2-4 or by appointment

Syllabus

Mar. 8
Introduction

15
Ethics Review
M 24-36, P 1-25

FOUNDATIONAL ISSUES

22
Physician-Patient Relationship
M 51-84

29
Truth-Telling & Informed Consent
M 85-100, P 247-76

ETHICS AT THE END OF LIFE

Apr 5
Death & Decisions re Refusals
of Life-Sustaining Treatment
M 304-12, 350-55
P 29-55

12
Suicide & Requests to Die
M 368-73, 78-84
P 56-84

19
Physician-Assisted Dying & Voluntary Active Euthanasia
M 385-92, 393-407

26
The Hospice Movement
M 355-65, P 85-116

REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGIES & GENETICS

May 3
Surrogate Motherhood & Assisted Reproduction
M 480-87, P 142-68
P 117-28

10
Human Cloning & Genetic Testing
Arras 488-96 (Reserve)
P 138-41, P 388-416

=============================================================================~: This syllabus is subject to revision to better meet the instructional needs of the class.

NOTE: If anyone requires accommodations under the Americans With Disability Act, please see me as soon as possible so that I can address the situation.

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Required Texts and Readings

M = Biomedical Ethics by Mappes & DeGrazia
P = Classic Cases in Medical Ethics by Gregory Pence
Arras = On Reserve in Library (copy and bring to class)

Course Requirements

Attendance

Students are expected to attend all classes. Two absences will lower your grade. Three absences or more will constitute grounds for failure of the course. If your situation merits special consideration, you should discuss this with me.

The 'being there' mark (20%)

The 'being there' mark is a reflection of your physical, mental and verbal 'presence' in the course. Regular attendance, the quality and frequency of participation in discussion, as well as other modest indicators (such as staying awake, bringing and doing required readings, coming prepared with questions for discussion, etc.) are all taken into consideration here. To encourage you to keep up with the course readings, I will not rely solely upon volunteers and will regularly call upon members of the class to answer questions based on the readings.

Regular participation in full class and small-group discussion is encouraged and expected. PLEASE NOTE: You cannot actively participate without appropriate materials, i.e. texts, readings on reserve, and written assignments. These are to be brought with you to each class meeting. FAILURE TO DO SO WILL LOWER YOUR GRADE.

Class Files (80%)

A class file will be submitted at the last class meeting. It will contain all the written work you have done in the course. This will include your written homework assignments, quizzes, in-class entries, recorder notes as well as any out-of-class discussion entries you would like to include. Class file grades will be based primarily on (1) your written homework assignments (approximately 60%) and (2) quizzes and in-class entries (approximately 20%). You may also include any (optional) recorder notes and out-of-class discussion entries you choose.

You will need to complete 6 of 8 written homework assignments on the dates indicated. These are to be approximately 1000 words in length. (NB: Please single-space and use 10-point type.) Their purpose is to ensure that you have given the readings thoughtful and careful consideration before we deal with them in class, and that you are prepared to engage in well-informed, reasoned discussion of them. The nature of the written assignments may vary, but typically you will be asked to do one or more of the following: (1) provide an exposition, in which you present clearly the central concepts and arguments advanced in the readings; and 2) provide a critical evaluation, in
which you do some of the following: assess the merits of the arguments in the readings, indicating your reasons for agreeing or disagreeing; raise questions concerning the material; suggest further avenues of inquiry; defend and develop your own position, anticipating possible objections and responding to them, etc; or 3) prepare a response statement to the readings, in which you synthesize the main points and comment upon them. Late assignments WILL NOT be accepted, and they must be submitted at the beginning of class.

An indeterminate number of unannounced in-class quizzes will be given. These will be short and relatively simple. If you are conscientiously applying yourself to doing the readings and to following the lectures you should do well on them. They will be given either at the very beginning of class and based on the readings for that day, or at the very end of the class and based on the readings and on the lecture material presented that day, or both. In-class entries will also be made on a regular basis, and will often require reference to the readings. This is another reason you will need to have your text/readings with you.

Please note: 1) Missed quizzes & in-class entries CANNOT be made up and 2) All your written work should be made on loose-leaf (9” x 11”) notepaper. PLEASE DO NOT USE SPIRAL NOTEPAPER FOR ANYTHING YOU HAND IN.

You are urged, but not required, to make unassigned out-of-class discussion entries as well. These will not substitute for any of the required entries, but you can use them to further explore anything which particularly interests you that is relevant to the course. You might, for example, note your response to a class discussion, mentioning the changes it provoked in your own views and/or any new points that came up which you find interesting and worth considering at greater length. Recorder notes, based on discussions, are also optional.

**Presentation Option**

An optional class presentation will be a possibility for a limited number of class members. These will involve four teams of (at most) 3 people each, addressing the course topics covered on May 3 and 10. However, those presenting will be expected to do research on the topic beyond what is available in the text, and to make that research part of their presentation to the class. Presentations should be roughly 45 minutes in length (including class discussion). Presentation requests need to be made by 22 March.

Students electing this option will need to do only 4 of 8 written assignments (but none of these 4 can be due the same day of the presentation.) The written assignment portion of the class file grade will then account for approximately 40% (instead of 60%) of the class file grade, while the presentation will count for 20% of the final course grade. 5% of the presentation grade will reflect the performance of the ‘group’ or ‘team’ as a whole, and the remaining 15% will reflect your individual contribution. A one-page outline of the entire group’s presentation together with a two-page outline of your individual contribution, copies of overheads you used, and a bibliography listing sources you consulted, databases used, etc., are due the day of the presentation.
Some Critical Reasoning Goals
In your work, you should consciously attempt to cultivate the following critical reasoning skills:

--> to identify and critically evaluate the arguments of others, as well as to construct and defend your own arguments

--> to uncover and question implicit assumptions and presuppositions in written and spoken discourse

--> to draw legitimate and appropriate inferences from the claims of others and to realize the implications of your own claims and beliefs

--> to introduce relevant distinctions and qualifications in the interests of achieving consistency, precision and clarity of thought and expression

--> to secure for yourselves autonomy of thought by challenging and testing previously unexamined beliefs and values

A Key To Comments On Written Assignments
1) Excellent exposition
2) Excellent critical evaluation
3) Critical evaluation needs development.
4) Exposition needs development.
5) Good work, but you can do even better.
6) Competent, but don’t settle for that.
7) Impressive/First-rate
8) Token/Disappointing
9) You’re capable of better work. Demand more of yourself.
10) Bring this up in class.
11) I’d like to talk to you about this.
12) Put the material in your own words in your exposition of the reading.
13) Your writing is unclear, due to poor sentence structure, grammar, etc.
14) Don’t rely on your spell-checker to do your proof-reading. It doesn’t catch everything.
15) You need to spend more time and thought developing your position/arguments.
16) Please separate and label the separate parts of the assignment.
17) See me if you have any questions.
18) To improve, try to develop your discussion/arguments further.
19) I’m not quite following you hear. Can you make your point more clearly?
20) This is unclear. It is difficult to determine exactly what you mean.
21) This is not a valid argument, or this remark does not follow from your other statements.
22) This is factually false.
23) No, this is a misinterpretation of the argument, position or thesis.
24) These indicated passages are contradictory, inconsistent, or in tension.
25) You are begging the question, i.e. assuming what you claim to prove.
26) You have not really answered the question.
27) This is basically irrelevant to your discussion. Your space is limited; use it effectively.
28) This is redundant.
29) This claim should have been given some supporting argumentation.
30) Unreferred pronoun
31) Your discussion is not well-organized.
32) An interesting point. Can you expand on it?
33) A more thoughtful discussion is needed.
34) ENGAGE the material. DIVE into the issues. Don’t just paddle around on the surface.