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Office Hours: 11 AM–12 noon Mon., 2–3 PM Wed., 11 AM–noon Fri., and by appointment
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Textbook: Thomas, John; Waluchow, Wilfrid; Well and Good 3rd ed. (Peterborough, Ontario, Canada: Broadview, 1998)

Course Content
This course will address some of the important ethical questions that arise for individual physicians, nurses, and other healthcare providers and for the medical profession as a whole. We shall also discuss some of the ethical issues concerning recent and future developments in biomedical science and technology. We shall study some general philosophies of ethics in order to see what light they can shed on these questions. We shall also examine and evaluate the codes of ethics of some of the professional medical organizations. A great deal of our time will be devoted to examining cases (both actual and fictional) that highlight important areas of biomedical ethics, including the doctor–patient relationship, abortion, euthanasia, physician-assisted suicide, surrogate motherhood, research involving human subjects, and distribution of medical resources.

Examinations
We shall have an exam on the philosophical foundations of biomedical ethics sometime during the first part of the semester. There will also be an optional final exam during final exam week.

Cases and Presentations
We shall spend a great deal of time discussing cases in biomedical ethics. Most of these cases are described in your textbook. For some of these cases, different students will be assigned to initiate class discussion by presenting arguments on opposing sides of some important ethical issue in the case. Each student will initiate 2 or 3 case discussions.

Course Paper
Your will write a formal course paper on some topic in biomedical ethics. You will choose your topic from a list of topics that I shall provide. In your paper, you will identify and examine arguments on both sides of the ethical question(s) you are addressing. To a large extent, your grade will depend on how thoroughly and insightfully you explore those questions. Your paper should be no longer than is needed to cover your topic adequately—to present and critically examine the relevant arguments. Typically this requires about 6 double-spaced typewritten pages. However, there is no required length for your paper.

Specific directions and guidelines for your final course paper will be provided later. You may, if you choose, show a draft of your paper to me for my comments and suggestions before you turn in your final paper.
Informal Writing Assignments

You will occasionally be asked to complete short assignments that involve writing of some sort. For example, you may be asked to complete a questionnaire on some topic we are going to discuss in class. Or you may be asked to take a few minutes of class time to write down your ideas on some issue we are going to discuss. Generally speaking, assignments of written work to be done during class will not be announced in advance of that class.

Class Attendance and Participation

You are expected to attend class regularly and take part in class discussions and other class activities. I shall assume that you have done the assigned readings and that you are prepared to discuss the topic(s) of the day. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to determine what material was covered and what announcements were made.

You will be allowed 3 absences for the course. If you miss more than 3 classes, then your excess absences must be excused in order for you to avoid penalty. Refer to your MTU Student Handbook for the criteria used to determine whether an absence is excused or unexcused.

Final Course Grade

Your final grade in the course will depend on the following: (1) your grade on the exam on the philosophical foundations of bioethics, (2) your course paper grade, (3) your grades on the informal writing assignments, (4) your class presentations (initiating discussions of cases), (5) your class attendance and participation grade, and (6) your final exam grade, if you choose to take the final exam. If you choose not to take the final exam, then the percentages for your final course average will be as follows:

- Exam on the Foundations of Biomedical Ethics: 30%
- Course Paper: 30%
- Informal Writing Assignments: 10%
- Class Presentations: 20%
- Class Attendance and Participation: 10%

If you choose to take the final exam, then your final exam grade will determine 40% of your final course grade and the 5 items above—exam, course paper, informal writing assignments, class presentations, class attendance/participation—will determine the other 60% (in the same proportions as above).

In order to calculate your final course average, I shall first convert your letter grades to numbers. After calculating your final course average in accordance with the percentages above, I shall then use it to determine your final course grade by applying the following scale: A: 93–100, AB: 88–93, B: 83–88, BC: 78–83, C: 73–78, CD: 68–73, D: 63–68, F: 0–63. I do not grade on a curve.

Records

You should keep all written work affecting your course grade (e.g., graded exams, course paper, informal written work) until after the course is completed and you have received your final grade for the course. This will enable us to resolve any questions about your grades that may come up at the end of the term.

Disclaimer

Although I shall endeavor to follow the above-stated policies and procedures closely, I reserve the right to make reasonable changes if circumstances warrant. I shall announce any such changes in class, and I shall explain why I am making those changes.