Course Description

This is a discussion-centered course that will examine selected ethical theories and problems in medical ethics. The purpose of this course is to introduce the basic language, concepts and principles of biomedical ethics. The approach taken is a case-study method, designed to develop skills in the analysis of case problems in clinical medicine and biomedical research.

Course Objectives

1. Students will be able to identify and describe major ethical theories in attempting to resolve ethical conflicts.

2. Students will be able to identify and describe major ethical principles used in analyzing problems in health care ethics including autonomy, paternalism, beneficence, and justice.

3. Students will be able to access the bioethics literature, identify some of the major contemporary issues in bioethics, and develop awareness of various bioethical perspectives and positions held by ethicists related to current controversies in biomedical ethics.

4. Students will be able to write a research paper that addresses a current bioethical issue: they will define the nature of the issue or conflict, consult and utilize concepts from the literature that addresses the issue, and demonstrate their ability to apply principled reasoning to the issue and its resolution.

5. Students will be able to discuss their perspectives in open class discussion and demonstrate appropriate respect for other students including those whose values and perspectives differ from their own.

Required Texts

Contemporary Bioethics, Pierce & Randels, ed

Additional Reading

Additional assigned articles and essays will be available on the Canvas website under Files: Reading Assignments.
Optional additional reading will be in Files: Supplemental reading.

Course Requirements

Weekly Papers: Short weekly papers, approximately one page long. The question for each paper is posted to Canvas. Weekly papers are intended to spark thought and help you assimilate the readings. 10 papers are required. Weekly papers are due on Canvas by 5pm on Tuesday. Missed papers cannot be made up later. See Canvas for the complete schedule of papers due.
Class Presentation: One class presentation on a selected topic. The purpose of presentations is to enumerate the key questions, and to spark critical discussion. You may take a position on controversial issues — you do not have to agree with the position. Presentations should be 15-20 minutes long, and may include slides, video, and other media in addition to the oral presentation. Students must meet with the instructor in advance to discuss the presentation.

Papers: One short analysis paper, 3-5 pages. One research paper 6-8 pages.

Class Discussion
All students are encouraged and expected to participate fully in class discussions, and to bring their personal insights to the discourse. Lively, civil conversation and debate have a long and important history in philosophy, and play a crucial role in the development and refinement of philosophical thinking.

Grading
Grading is based on points. The point scale is fixed, i.e. grading is not based on a curve. The scale is posted on Canvas. Your final grade will be determined by the following:
1) Ten Weekly papers (3% each; 30% of grade total)
2) Papers
   Short Analysis paper (20% of grade)
   Research paper (25% of grade)
3) Class Presentation (20% of grade)
4) Class participation (5% of grade)

Tech’s grading standard is used:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade points/credit</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93% - 100%</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td>88% – 92%</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>Very good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>82% – 86%</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC</td>
<td>76% – 81%</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>Above average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70% – 75%</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD</td>
<td>65% – 69%</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>Below average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60% - 64%</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>Inferior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>59% and below</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>Failure</td>
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<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Incomplete; given only when a student is unable to complete a segment of the course because of circumstances beyond the student’s control. A grade of incomplete may be given only when approved in writing by the department chair or school dean.</td>
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<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>Conditional, with no grade points per credit; given only when the student is at fault in failing to complete a minor segment of a course, but in the judgment of the instructor does not need to repeat the course. It must be made up within the next semester in residence or the grade becomes a failure (F). A (X) grade is computed into the grade point average as a (F) grade.</td>
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Policies

Class Attendance
Unexcused absence from class will result in a reduction of your class participation grade.
Late papers and assignments
All papers are due electronically via Canvas at the assigned time on the assigned date. Late assignments will be penalized by one full letter grade for each day (including weekends) they are late. If you know that your paper is going to be late, you must contact me immediately via email to make arrangements for turning your paper in late.

Disabilities
Students with documented physical, learning, or other disabilities are entitled to reasonable accommodations. An individual with a disability will be expected to meet the course or program standards whether or not an accommodation is needed. An individual with a disability who is capable of meeting these standards in a different way than is customary will be provided with a reasonable accommodation to enable the individual to do so.

Cheating and Plagiarism
Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of honesty in their college work. Cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses, and students found guilty of any form of academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary action. A failing grade in this course is the minimum penalty you can expect for academic dishonesty.

Schedule of topics and assignments:

B = Book: Contemporary Bioethics  
C = Canvas (file names begin with section number)

§ 1: Introduction to Bioethics
Jan 14: [No weekly paper] What is a bioethicist? Are science and medicine ethical domains?  
Jan 16: B: 1-28; The ethical foundations  
Jan 18: B: 53-63; C: The case of Mary Northern  
Jan 21: MLK holiday; no classes [no weekly paper]

§ 2: Doctors and patients
Jan 23: Student presentations start.  
B: 29-44; 45-52, 111. CASE: Can a killer be a doctor? (B: 111)  
Jan 25: Who’s in charge? When doctors disagree with patients. C: Mann Ki Lee; CASE: The Texas advance directives act (B: 241)  
Jan 28: C: Lantos; CASE: Pillow Angel (B: 113)  
Jan 30: Conscientious objection. B: 300-304, C: APH A Pharmacist Conscience Clause; CASE: What’s Plan C? (B: 364)

§ 3: Access, allocation, and rationing of healthcare resources
Feb 1: B: 386-411: Is there a right to healthcare? CASE: The health of nations (B: 477)  
Feb 4: B: 412-419, C: Dying Dad Denied Kidney transplant. CASE: Should illegal immigrants have access to health care? (B: 479)

Feb 6: B: 426-439; C: Callahan. CASE: Age-based rationing (B: 481)  
Feb 8: Winter Carnival, no class  
Feb 11: Should we limit care for self-inflicted illness? B: 447-454; C: Liver transplant & alcoholics. CASE: Pat Summerall’s new liver (B: 485)  
Feb 13: B: 455-460; 465-477. CASE: Matchmakers (B: 485). Should priority for organ transplant be given to organ donors?  
Feb 15: B 460-464 CASE: Should we be allowed to sell our organs? Short papers due

§ 4: The end of life
Feb 18: B: 130-146; 155-163; CASE: Not Dead Yet— Pt 1 (B: 237)  
Feb 20: B: 163-169; CASE: Don’t mess with Texas: Cancer, custody, and Katie (B: 242)  
Feb 22: B: 187-197; CASE: Not dead yet — Pt III (B: 243)

Feb 25: No class [no weekly paper]

Feb 27: B: 206-226; CASE: The Groningen Protocol — Euthanasia for newborns (B: 244)  
Mar 1: B 227-237: CASE: A friend in need (B: 245)
§ 5: Life worse than death?
Mar 4: C: Capron, Cranford; CASE: Helga Wanglie’s Ventilator
Mar 6: B: 169-176, C: Sinnott-Armstrong; CASE: Is anybody in there? (Terri Schiavo) (B: 1-2; 239-240)
Mar 8: C: Wendland, Glannon. CASE: Robert Wendland
Mar 11-15: Spring Break [no weekly paper]
Mar 18: B: 177-186, C: Baby Doe; CASE: Baby Doe

§ 6: The beginning of life
Mar 20: B: 245-265 CASE: A person, no matter how small? (B: 367)
Mar 22: B: 305-321; CASE: Amber Alert (B: 367)
Mar 25: Sex selection. B: 283-290; C: Kale, Savulescu. CASE: Where the boys are (B: 363)
Mar 27: B: 335-341, C: Building a baby; CASE: Surrogacy: Building a Baby (B: 368-369)

§ 7: Building better humans
Apr 1: B: 619-625; CASE: Be more than you can be (B: 659)
Apr 3: B 625-639: CASE: Better brains through chemistry (B: 657)
Apr 5: C: Sickle cell screening; Prenatal test puts Down Syndrome in hard focus. CASE: Is prenatal/preconception screening genocide?
Apr 8: B: 639-651; CASE: Williams Syndrome and PGD (B: 656-657)
Apr 10: C: Spriggs, Sheldon CASE: Savior siblings — is it wrong to create a donor baby?
Apr 12: C: Deaf couple. CASE: Deaf couple want help conceiving a deaf child.

§ 8: Biomedical research
Apr 15: B: 507-519, C: Harris, Elliott. CASE: Is there a moral duty to participate in research?
Apr 17: B: 519-530; CASE: Medicare requires heart patients to enlist in research (B: 572-573)
Apr 19: CASE: Dying patients and the right to try experimental drugs (B: 578-579)
Apr 22: Non-therapeutic research on children. C: Ramsey, Kennedy-Krieger lead study. CASE: Kennedy-Krieger lead study (C)
Apr 24: Research on non-human animals. B: 556-571, C: deWaal. CASE: Great Ape Protection Act (B: 580)

§ 9: Testing the limits of medicine
Apr 26: The strange case of BIID. B: 101-106; C: Ryan; CASE: Amputating healthy limbs [last day of class]
April 29: Final papers due by noon