

Course Syllabus

PHILOSOPHY 333

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Course Description:

Is euthanasia morally permissible? What is the relationship between patient autonomy, competence, and informed consent? When, if ever, is paternalism morally justified? Under what circumstances, if any, is abortion morally wrong? Is it morally permissible for women to obtain and for doctors to provide medically unnecessary Caesarean sections? Should doctors provide alternative, unproven therapies to their patients who request them? When, if ever, is two-tier health care just? What, *in general*, makes an act morally right or wrong, a person virtuous or vicious, a policy just or unjust? In Philosophy 333, we will explore answers to these questions from a variety of perspectives. We will, in short, critically examine some leading philosophical theories, and some important, and difficult, ethical issues in health care.

Objectives for this course include:

- Acquiring a critical grasp of leading normative ethical theories;
- Gaining a critical understanding of some important philosophical literature on some moral problems in health care;
- Developing your critical reasoning skills when it comes to identifying arguments in a text, stating those arguments in a precise and clear manner, and raising targeted objections to those arguments;
- Encouraging you to consider your own views on selected moral problems in health care, to consider your reasons for your views, to examine your views and reasons critically, and to rethink your views and arguments in the light of criticism.

More generally, the aim of this course is not to tell you what to think, but to give you the skills to think for yourself, while enhancing your philosophical literacy. As a result of successfully completing this course, you will gain a better understanding of moral theory generally; a greater familiarity with specific arguments on specific ethical issues in health care; a deeper understanding of your own views

on these issues, and an enhanced ability to identify, articulate, develop, and critically analyze arguments.

Success in this course will require hard work; consistent participation and engagement with the course materials; writing clearly and carefully; being fair but critical of others' arguments, and of your own arguments; and a willingness to keep an open mind.

Required Readings

- ***Debating Health Care Ethics***, Doran Smolkin, Warren Bourgeois and Patrick Findler. McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 2010.
- ***Selected Articles***, a selection of influential and important philosophical articles in health care ethics. Copies of these articles are available through the "Course Readings" tab on Connect. Some articles are also available for download on the website that accompanies the textbook (http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0070835403/student_view0/additional_readings.html login: 'objection', 'password: 'objection').

Explanation of the Textbook

Debating Health Care Ethics begins with a brief discussion of philosophical arguments and methodology (Chapter 1), and then turns to a fairly thorough examination of leading ethical theories (Chapter 2). In Chapter 3, the three authors of the text each presents his favoured ethical theory. The remaining chapters of the book focus on moral problems in health care and are written in **debate** format. More specifically, each chapter begins with a **drama** – a fictional case designed to introduce a particular moral issue. The drama is then followed by a **debate** between the three authors of the text. In the debate, you will witness (hopefully) a lively exchange of ideas, as different perspectives are considered, attacked, occasionally abandoned, sometimes refined, and at other times defended. You will see philosophers sometimes coming to agreement, and sometimes agreeing to disagree. You can then decide for yourself whether you agree with any of the authors, why you reject some of the arguments presented, and you can develop your own thoughts on the issues raised in the drama and debate. The format is designed to show you how to develop an argument for a particular position, how to criticize an argument, and how to defend or revise an argument in light of criticism.

Explanation of the Articles

The articles used in this course include some of the leading contributions to the field of medical ethics, on issues like abortion, autonomy, euthanasia, and access to health care. The articles are primary sources – typically, journal articles – which are intended to supplement the debates in the textbook, and to provide students with good examples of professional, philosophical writing.

Grades

Grades will be based on the following components:

Participation in Discussions	10%
Completion of 2 Essays	60% (30% each)
Final Exam	30%

Explanation of Graded Components of the Course

Discussions: At the end of each lesson and throughout the textbook, discussion questions are given. You can go to the Discussion Board through *Connect* and answer one of these questions; also, you can use the discussions to ask your own questions and make your own comments on the readings; or, you can comment on your classmates' postings. Discussions should work in a manner similar to classroom discussions. That is, no one should answer all the questions asked, discussions should be made in a timely manner, and you should not merely repeat answers to questions that were already given. To keep things manageable, please limit yourself to **1 or 2 comments per week**. Also, to keep discussions timely, Discussion Boards will lock two weeks after the material is assigned. At that point, you won't be able to post new discussions on that topic.

Note that these discussions are primarily for student interaction. **Please feel free to email me directly, if you would like me to answer specific questions about the material.**

Essay Questions: The Essay Questions focus on the moral problems raised in the textbook's Drama and addressed in the textbook's Debates. Essays are designed to move us toward realizing the course objectives. To that end, each essay requires you to identify your view on a particular ethical issue in health care; to present your reasons for your view; to consider objections to your argument; to defend your argument against these objections; to consider rival arguments; and to explain their weaknesses.

Essay questions will be given on three topics: Euthanasia; Abortion; and Two-Tier Health Care. **You are required to complete 2 essays.** (You do not have the option of submitting more than 2 essays for grades.)

You are encouraged to contact me with drafts or outlines of your paper. The best way to do this is by email, or by coming to online office hours, or by scheduling an appointment via Skype.

Final Exam: The Final Exam will be based on the material covered in:

- Textbook, Chapter 1: Arguments and Philosophical Methodology

- Textbook, Chapter 2: Ethical Theory
- Textbook, Chapter 5: Autonomy and the Right to Refuse Care
- Textbook, Chapter 7: Caesarean-section by Choice
- Textbook, Chapter 10: Alternative Medications
- The Primary Source Readings (i.e., the philosophical articles on various problems in health care)

The Final Exam will be a combination of definition questions, short-answer questions, and long-answer/essay questions. A comprehensive study guide is included as part of this syllabus.

Course Schedule

Our weeks correspond to UBC Vancouver's schedule. Our course begins and ends the same time as face-to-face courses. Our online course will take the same official breaks as University courses.

Note: each online lesson includes various **tasks**. Tasks include reading the online lesson, reading the textbook, reading supplemental articles, and participating in discussion questions.

Week	Activities	Discussions and Assignments
Week 1 - Module 1 Ethical Theory	<i>Lesson 1: Philosophical Ethics</i> <i>Lesson 2: Arguments and Methodology</i> <i>Lesson 3: Cultural Relativism</i>	Discussions
Week 2 - Module 1 Ethical Theory	<i>Lesson 4: Utilitarianism</i> <i>Lesson 5: Kant's Ethics</i> <i>Lesson 6: Pluralistic Deontology</i>	Discussions
Week 3 - Module 1 Ethical Theory	<i>Lesson 7: Social Contract Theory</i> <i>Lesson 8: Virtue Theory</i> <i>Lesson 9: The Ethics of Care</i>	Discussions
Week 4 - Module 2 Euthanasia	<i>Lesson 10: Euthanasia, Defined</i> <i>Lesson 11: Arguments against the Moral Permissibility of Active Euthanasia</i> <i>Lesson 12: Active Euthanasia vs Passive Euthanasia</i>	Discussions
Week 5 - Module 2 Euthanasia	<i>Lesson 13: An Argument for the Moral Permissibility of Voluntary Active Euthanasia (VAE)</i>	Discussions

	<p><i>Lesson 14: An Argument for the Moral Permissibility of Non-Voluntary Active Euthanasia (NAE)</i></p> <p><i>Lesson 15: Legalizing Active Euthanasia</i></p>	
<p>Week 6 - Module 3</p> <p>Autonomy and the Right to Refuse Care</p>	<p>Lesson 16: Autonomy and the Right to Refuse Care</p>	<p>Discussions</p> <p>Essay 1 on Euthanasia due Thursday of this week, before 6 pm</p>
<p>Week 7 - Module 4</p> <p>Abortion</p>	<p>Lesson 17: The Fundamental Question and Noonan’s Conservative Arguments</p> <p>Lesson 18: Potentiality</p>	<p>Discussions</p>
<p>Week 8 - Module 4</p> <p>Abortion</p>	<p>Lesson 19: Mary Anne Warren’s Liberal Defense of Abortion</p> <p>Lesson 20: Sumner’s Argument for a Moderate View</p>	<p>Discussions</p>
<p>Week 9 - Module 4</p> <p>Abortion</p>	<p>Lesson 21: Thomson’s Defense of Abortion</p> <p>Lesson 22: Marquis’ Argument against Abortion</p> <p>Lesson 23: Virtue Theory and Abortion</p>	<p>Discussions</p>
<p>Week 10 - Module 5</p> <p>C-Section by Choice</p>	<p>Lesson 24: C-Section By Choice</p>	<p>Discussions</p> <p>Essay 2 on Abortion due Thursday of this week, before 6 pm</p>
<p>Week 11 - Module 6</p> <p>Two-Tier Healthcare</p>	<p>Lesson 25: Two-Tier Healthcare</p>	<p>Discussions</p>
<p>Week 12 - Module 7</p> <p>Alternative Medications</p>	<p>Lesson 26: Alternative Medications</p>	<p>Discussions</p>

Week 13	Review for Final, No new material assigned	Discussions Essay 3 on Two-Tier MRI due Thursday of this week, before 6 pm

Online Office Hours

Interaction and consultation with the instructor can be helpful in preparing for assignments and/or clarification of questions as they arise. I will be available via Blackboard Collaborate on Connect for one hour on a regular basis (every other Thursday beginning in Week 1) between 2:00-3:00 pm Pacific Time. Find out more on [how to use Blackboard Collaborate](#).

Also, if you prefer, **email me to set-up an online office meeting at a mutually convenient time.**

Assignment Due Dates

Participation in Discussions: 1 or 2 posts per week

Complete only 2 papers:

Essay 1 on Euthanasia: Week 6, Thursday before 6 pm

Essay 2 on Abortion: Week 10, Thursday before 6 pm

Essay 3 on Two-Tier: Week 13, Thursday before 6 pm

Final Exam: Scheduled by UBC Enrolment Services during the university's exam period.

Policy on Late Assignments

No late assignments will be accepted unless there is a documented medical reason.

Essay Questions

Essay 1 – On Euthanasia

Due: Week 6 before 6 pm Pacific Time

Approximate Word Length: 2,000 words

Submit as a WORD DOC.

Write an essay on the following.

Are voluntary active euthanasia and non-voluntary active euthanasia morally permissible? Should they be legalized in Canada?

In writing this essay, be sure to define key terms; clearly state your thesis; consider (in detail) the most compelling argument for the opposing thesis; explain precisely why that opposing argument fails; develop and explain a clear argument for your thesis; consider a powerful objection to your argument; respond thoughtfully to that objection.

Essays should be clearly referenced (any widely accepted system of referencing is fine), and should draw at least in part on some of the arguments presented in some of the course readings.

It may be helpful to assume that you are writing for an intelligent, open-minded audience, and you are trying to argue why your view of the matter is correct or most rationally justified. Indeed, it might help to assume that your audience is slightly leaning to the opposing side, and so you will need to work hard to explain why the opposing arguments fail and why your side has the better reasons behind it.

You are welcome to contact me with drafts or outlines of your paper. The best way to do this is by email, or by coming to online office hours, or by scheduling an appointment via Skype.

Essay 2 – On Abortion

Due: Week 10, before 6 pm Pacific Time

Approximate Word Length: 2,000 words

Submit as a WORD DOC.

Write an essay on the following:

1. *Do you think it was morally permissible for Deb to obtain an abortion?*

In writing this essay, be sure to define key terms; clearly state your thesis; consider (in detail) the most compelling argument(s) for the opposing thesis; explain precisely why that opposing argument(s) fails; develop and explain a clear argument for your thesis; consider powerful objections to your argument(s); respond thoughtfully to those objections.

Essays should be clearly referenced (any widely accepted system of referencing is fine), and should draw at least in part on some of the arguments presented in some of the course readings.

It may be helpful to assume that you are writing for an intelligent, open-minded audience, and you are trying to argue why your view of the matter is correct or most rationally justified. Indeed, it might help to assume that your audience is slightly leaning to the opposing side, and so you will need to work hard to explain why the opposing arguments fail and why your side has the better reasons behind it.

You are welcome to contact me with drafts or outlines of your paper. The best way to do this is by email, or by coming to online office hours, or by scheduling an appointment via Skype.

Essay 3 – On Two Tier Medicine

Due: Week 13, before 6 pm Pacific Time

Approximate Word Length: 2,000 words

Submit as a WORD DOC.

Write an essay on the following:

1. *In Canada, is two-tier MRI just? Was it morally permissible for Sanders to purchase a private MRI?*

In answering this question, be sure to define key terms, briefly explain the case of Sanders, and clearly state your theses. In addition to giving your arguments for your views, be sure to consider a spectrum of opposing views, and explain why the arguments for those views fail. For example, if you are arguing that 2-tier is sometimes permissible, be sure also to consider arguments from the libertarian and egalitarian perspectives, and explain why they fail. Also, be sure to consider objections to your arguments, and explain why they fail.

Essays should be clearly referenced (any widely accepted system of referencing is fine), and should draw at least in part on some of the arguments presented in some of the course readings.

It may be helpful to assume that you are writing for an intelligent, open-minded audience, and you are trying to argue why your view of the matter is correct or most rationally justified. Indeed, it might help to assume that your audience is slightly leaning to the opposing side, and so you will need to work hard to explain why the opposing arguments fail and why your side has the better reasons behind it.

You are welcome to contact me with drafts or outlines of your paper. The best way to do this is by email, or by coming to online office hours, or by scheduling an appointment via Skype.

Final Exam Study Guide

Scheduled by UBC Enrolment Services during the university's exam period

The final exam aims to test your knowledge of the **ethical theories** and **philosophical terminology** studied in the first part of the course; your critical grasp of the **articles** assigned on issues in medical ethics; and your ability to reason about the ethical issues explored in **chapters 5** (Autonomy and the Right to Refuse Medical Care), **7** (Caesarean-Section by Choice) and **10** (Alternative Medications) in the textbook.

The exam itself will have 4 sections

1. **definitions** from chapters 1 and 2 of the textbook (10 definitions, to be answered in a sentence or two, and worth 1 mark each);
2. **medium-length questions** on ethical theories (3 questions, each to be answered in 2-3 paragraphs, and worth 10 marks each);
3. **a long-answer question** based on the articles assigned in the course (one question, 8-10 paragraphs long, worth 35 marks -- *see below for the questions to prepare*);
4. **a long-answer question** based on the debate chapters in the textbook (one question approximately 5 paragraphs long, worth 25 marks -- *see below for the questions to prepare*).

The exam will run for 3 hours, and will be closed note and closed book.

Here is a list of key concepts to study. You should be able to define key terms precisely, explain theories clearly and fully, apply theories to hypothetical situations, raise objections to these theories.

Argument and Philosophical Methodology

Argument

Valid Argument

Invalid Argument

Sound Argument

Unsound Argument

Moral Argument

Thought Experiment

Counter Example

Reflective Equilibrium

Circular Argument

Straw Man Fallacy

False Dilemma

Normative Ethics

Descriptive Ethics

Ethical (Cultural) Relativism

Definition of Ethical Relativism

Explain two objections to Ethical Relativism

Explain two arguments for Ethical Relativism

Discuss difficulties for these two arguments

Utilitarianism

Definition of Utilitarianism

Definition of Consequentialism

Definition of Hedonism

Definition of Equal Consideration

Situational Ethic

Examples of how utilitarianism challenges traditional moral values

Objections to Hedonism (experience machine, and how not all pleasures are good)

Objections to Consequentialism (justice objection, promises objection)

Objections to Equal Consideration (too demanding objection)

Utilitarian replies to the justice and too demanding objections

Rule Utilitarianism

Objections to Rule Utilitarianism

Kantian Ethics

Deontology

Kant's conception of a Good will

Categorical imperative

Hypothetical imperative

Universal Law Version of the Categorical Imperative Test

Contradiction in thought (conception)

Contradiction in willing

Perfect Duty

Imperfect Duty

Humanity Version of the Categorical Imperative

Kant's Distinction between Rational Beings and Things

Difficulties with the Universal Law Test

Difficulties with the Humanity Test

Pluralistic Deontology

Why Ross thinks that utilitarianism and Kantianism are too simple

Prima facie duties

Duties, all things considered

Two difficulties with Ross' theory

Social Contract Theory (Hobbes)

Conception of moral rules, according to Social Contract Theory

State of nature

4 conditions of the state of nature that make it a state of war, according to Hobbes

Advantages of Social Contract Theory

Two objections to Social Contract Theory (incomplete; morality is prior to the contract)

Social Contract Theory (Rawls)

Original position

Veil of ignorance

Reasoning toward the principles of justice from the original position (maximin)

The Principles of Justice (Maximal Equal Basic Liberty; Fair Equality of Opportunity; the Difference Principle)

Objections to Rawls' theory

Virtue Theory

Virtue, Defined

Eudaimonia

Doctrine of the Mean

Difficulties for Virtue Theory

Long-Answer Questions:

One of the following questions will be on the exam, and you will be required to answer that question. (Each question is worth 35 marks) Recommended length 8-10 paragraphs.

1. Explain Judith Thomson's views on the moral rights of the fetus. What is the conservative argument that she is questioning? What is the violinist analogy, and what exactly is the point of this analogy? Discuss two objections to her analogy (no straw man objections). Consider how she might best reply to those objections. Explain whether you think those replies to the objections are successful. (Defend your answer.)
2. A common argument against active euthanasia is that it is morally wrong because it involves killing, and killing is morally worse than letting die. Explain Jeff McMahan's response to this argument. Explain James Rachels' responses to the argument that active euthanasia is morally worse than passive euthanasia because one involves killing and the other involves merely letting die. What is Philippa Foot's view on the moral difference between active and

passive euthanasia? Explain and evaluate her arguments on the morality of voluntary and non-voluntary active euthanasia.

Longer Essay Questions based on the Text:

Two of the following three questions will be on your final. You will pick **one** to answer. (25 marks)

Recommended length: approximately 5 paragraphs.

1. Questions on the CSBC Debate

Do you think it was morally permissible for Wendy to obtain a CSBC? Why or why not? Consider two objections to your reasoning? Explain why those objections fail.

2. Question on the Autonomy Debate

Do you think it was a moral error for the hospital to discharge Mrs. Edwards from the hospital when they did? Explain your reasoning for your view. Explain two objections to your argument. Explain why the objections fail.

3. Question on the Alternative Medications Debate

Do you think that Anderweg acted morally permissibly in administering *H* to Nolle? Explain your argument for your view. Discuss two objections to your argument. Explain why those objections fail.