Course code: PHIL 2203  
Course title: Health Care Ethics  
Class hours/credits: 3 class hours, 3 credits  
Prerequisite: ENG 1101  
Pathways: Individual and Society  
Note: Students may take PHIL 2103 or PHIL 2203 but not both for credit

**Catalog Description:** An examination of the major ethical theories on what is morally right and wrong, and the meaning of moral concepts (e.g., the concepts of right and duty). Focus is on ethical problems associated with the practice of medicine and biomedical research. (Available to health science students as an alternative to PHIL 2103).

**RECOMMENDED/TYPICAL/REQUIRED TEXTBOOK (S) and/or MATERIALS***

***Suggested text; instructors may choose their own.

**COURSE INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES/ASSESSMENT METHODS**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEARNING OUTCOMES</th>
<th>ASSESSMENT METHODS*</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Learn key theories and principles from philosophical ethics and health care ethics, and gain an appreciation for how philosophy can shed light on issues in health care.</td>
<td>1. Reading quizzes and homework assignments; objective questions and essays on exams.</td>
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<td>2. Acquire skills in philosophical reasoning, including constructing and analyzing arguments, recognizing ethical issues, and gaining an ability think critically about their own values and assumptions.</td>
<td>2. Class participation grade; term paper; reflection assignments in homework.</td>
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<td>3. Integrate a variety of disciplinary perspectives, including the findings of science and the methods of philosophy, to arrive at practical answers for health care ethical problems and issues</td>
<td>3. Objective elements of the midterm and final exams; research requirement for term papers; homework and in-class assignments involving case analysis.</td>
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<td>4. Reflect critically on personal values and assumptions, work together with other students to find mutually agreeable resolutions to ethical issues.</td>
<td>4. Homework assignments requiring personal reflection; case analysis, in homework, on tests, and in class; class discussions.</td>
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### LEARNING OUTCOMES

<table>
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<tr>
<th>1. KNOWLEDGE: Develop knowledge from a range of disciplinary perspectives, and develop the ability to deepen and continue learning.</th>
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<td>1. Lectures and in class discussion; class readings and homework/quizzes testing comprehension; mid-term and final.</td>
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<th>2. SKILLS: Acquire and use the tools needed for communication, inquiry, analysis, and productive work.</th>
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<td>2. In class discussion; reading comprehension quizzes; term paper.</td>
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<th>3. INTEGRATION: Work productively within and across disciplines.</th>
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<td>3. Term paper project; mid-term and final exams. Case analysis and other discussions in class.</td>
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<th>4. VALUES, ETHICS, AND RELATIONSHIPS: Understand and apply values, ethics, and diverse perspectives in personal, civic, and cultural/global domains.</th>
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<tr>
<td>4. Class discussion on each of these individual topics; opportunities for reflection in homework; case analysis, in class and in homework.</td>
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*may vary slightly per instructor to suit their own needs*

### SCOPE OF ASSIGNMENTS and other course requirements*

Assignments should test students’ comprehension of assigned readings; critical thinking skills; ability to analyze cases; ability to verbally communicate ideas and facts; and retention of theories, concepts, principles, and cases discussed in class. Assignments should also give students an opportunity to reflect on their own beliefs and values.

*may vary slightly per instructor to suit their own needs*

### METHOD OF GRADING – elements and weight of factors determining the students’ grade*

- Participation: 15%
- Paper: 25%
- Midterm: 15%
- Final: 20%
- Homework and quizzes: 25%

*may vary slightly per instructor to suit their own needs*

### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY STATEMENT

Students and all others who work with information, ideas, texts, images, music, inventions, and other intellectual property owe their audience and sources accuracy and honesty in using, crediting, and citing sources. As a community of intellectual and professional workers, the College recognizes its responsibility for providing instruction in information literacy and academic integrity, offering models of good practice, and responding vigilantly and appropriately to infractions of academic integrity. Accordingly, academic dishonesty
is prohibited in The City University of New York and at New York City College of Technology and is punishable by penalties, including failing grades, suspension, and expulsion. The complete text of the College policy on Academic Integrity may be found in the catalog.

COLLEGE POLICY ON ABSENCE/LATENESS

A student may be absent without penalty for 10% of the number of scheduled class meetings during the semester as follows:

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<tr>
<th>Class Meets</th>
<th>Allowable Absence</th>
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<tr>
<td>1 time/week</td>
<td>2 classes</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 times/week</td>
<td>3 classes</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 times/week</td>
<td>4 classes</td>
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It is the responsibility of the instructor to keep accurate records of every student’s attendance and to inform each class orally and in writing of the applicable attendance policy during the first two weeks of class meetings each semester.

Excessive Absence
If a student’s class absences exceed the limit established for a given course or component, the instructor will alert the student that a grade of “WU” may be assigned. If a student remains officially registered for a course and never attends that course, a final grade of “*WN” will be assigned. If the student withdraws officially from the course, he/she will be assigned a grade in accordance with the existing withdrawal policy of the College.

Appeals
A student wishing to appeal the excessive absence status and the impending grade should request a meeting with the chairperson of the department in which the course is offered. The chairperson will consult with the instructor to render a decision. A student wishing to appeal a “WU” grade may do so through the Committee on Course and Standards.

Lateness
It is the responsibility of the instructor to keep a record of lateness and to inform each class orally and in writing of the lateness policy during the first two weeks of class meetings each semester.

SAMPLE SEQUENCE OF TOPICS AND TIME ALLOCATIONS*

WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION TO HEALTH CARE ETHICS.
In the introductory classes the student will be exposed to basic questions arising in the health care field. Just what is an ethics? What is the relation of ethics to philosophy? What is its relevance to the health care profession? What are the limits of responsibility for health care? Can we guarantee health? Should health care be universal? What of mental health? The student will be exposed to theoretical situations and questions relating to the ethics of health care and delivery of health care services. Specific situations that may give rise to ethical dilemmas and “hard cases” not covered by principles or where principles may conflict will be discussed.

WEEK 2: INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS
I. Values and Ethics (definitions)
A. Normative Ethics, including criticisms of each theory:
  1. General normative ethics:
     a. teleological theories
        i. perfectionist (virtue) ethics
        ii. consequentialist ethics: Utilitarian and pragmatic
     b. nonteleological theories
        i. deontological
        ii. axiological
     c. relativism and scepticism
        i. Cultural Relativism
        ii. Ethical Relativism and Cynicism
     d. Naturalism, NonNaturalism,
        Aquinas’s natural law theory of ethics and criticisms
     e. contract Theory ( e.g., Rawls)
     f. Metaethics (analytic ethics) and Noncognitivism,
     g. Nonnormative (Descriptive) Ethics
  2. Applied normative ethics (Biomedical Ethics)

WEEK 2: MORAL REASONING AND MORAL PRINCIPLES FOR MEDICAL PRACTICE:
Beginning with an introduction to moral reasoning, the student will be exposed to principles and virtues especially appropriate to medical practice and research.
A. Moral reasoning
   1. Reasoning vs. emotionalism
   2. The use of arguments in both general and applied ethics. Fallacies in reasoning.
   3. Casuistics, examining individual issues in detail with only background appeal to major theories
B. Major Moral Principles derived from or justified by ethical theories and relevant to medical practice and research:
   a. Principle of Nonmaleficence
   b. Principle of Beneficience
   c. Principle of Utility
   d. Principle of Distributive Justice:
      e. Equality, Need, Contribution, Effort
      f. Principle of Autonomy
   g. Principle limiting autonomy/liberty: public harm, offense, paternalism, social welfare

WEEK 3: PROFESSIONAL ETHICS
The goal of the study of professional ethics is to acquaint the student with the history of medical arts and sciences as a continuum aiming at healing and its philosophical roots as well as cultural context. It will include major developments in codes of ethics for doctors, nurses and other health professionals. Professional ethics will be placed within the context of philosophic ethics as well as a broader societal ethic: duties to society as members of society. The ultimate goal is to explain the role of ethical principles in health care delivery and have the students develop a critically informed judgement on ethical problems in medicine.
   1. The Hippocratic Oath and the ANA Code for Nurses.
   2. Is the Hippocratic Oath dated? Contemporary Codes.
   3. Professionals’ obligations, including areas of responsibility and lines of authority.
   4. Conflicts of Interest, economic aspects of Medicine.
   5. The place of personal and professional honesty, integrity, accountability, competence and other virtues.
6. Examining a system of determination and clarification of alternatives within medicine, and decision making for addressing basic ethical questions.
7. Legal rights, responsibilities and resources for health care professionals, including liability and malpractice.
8. The importance of accurate, complete and correct methods of documentation as a legal and ethical obligation.
9. How professional ethics is different from legal responsibilities and surpasses it in scope and rigor.
10. The responsibility to keep up with new developments in the field: continuing professional education.

WEEK 4: PATIENTS’ RIGHTS AND PROFESSIONALS’ OBLIGATIONS; THE PHYSICIAN-PATIENT RELATIONSHIP
The goal is to examine ethical issues and concepts embodied in the principles of patients’ rights, the doctrine of informed consent and other issues relating to patients’ rights, e.g. confidentiality in medicine. Some attention will also be paid to the legal implications of professional liability, malpractice, professional negligence and carelessness and other legal doctrines applicable to professional practice. Certain specific legal terms will be covered.

A. Patient Rights
1. Privacy and Confidentiality
2. The Legal and Philosophical Foundations of Right to Privacy
4. The basis of confidentiality in Ethical Theories
5. Arguments for and against confidentiality in medicine

B. The physician-patient relationship (paternalism, truth-telling and informed consent)
1. Paternalism, Truth Telling and Informed Consent
2. The distinction of state and personal paternalism in Medical and Health Care
3. Truth Telling in Medicine
4. Arguments for and against paternalism, and truth telling in medicine
5. The Role of Ethical Theories in truth telling and informed consent
6. The distinction of empathy and compassion for the patient and professional conduct: the virtuous health care professional.
7. Discussion of such medical virtues as sympathy, honesty, integrity and accountability.
8. Cultural factors in patient decisions and respect for patient autonomy in making decisions.

WEEK 5: JUSTICE IN HEALTH CARE DISTRIBUTION AND ALLOCATION OF MEDICAL RESOURCES

A. THE CLAIM TO HEALTH CARE
1. Claim Rights, Legal Rights, Moral Rights
2. Ethical Theories: The Right to Health Care
3. Principles of justice and criticisms
4. Arguments for and against medical care as a right
5. Patient’s rights and the claim to health care

B. ALLOCATION OF MEDICAL RESOURCES
1. Scarce medical resources: organs, dialysis units, etc.
2. Ethical Theories* - Allocation of Scarce Medical Resources
3. Arguments (and criticisms) for criteria for selecting the recipients of scarce medical resources

WEEK 6: Quiz; INFORMED CONSENT and DECLINING TREATMENT.
A. Informed Consent
1. The elements and implications of informed consent. Standards for disclosure.
2. Arguments for and against informed consent in medicine
   a. The “Informed” Part of Informed Consent in Medicine
   b. The “Consent” Part of Informed Consent in Medicine

B. Declining Treatment
1. The elements and implications of declining treatment.
2. Role of ethical theories in declining treatment: patient autonomy
3. Distinction of informing and leading patients in medical alternatives.
4. Cultural factors in patient decisions and respect for patient autonomy in making decisions.

WEEK 7: EUTHANASIA, PHYSICIAN ASSISTED SUICIDE AND END OF LIFE DECISIONS
A. Euthanasia
1. The Distinction of Active and Passive Euthanasia
2. The Distinction of Voluntary and Non-voluntary Euthanasia
3. The Distinction between Euthanasia and (Physician) Assisted Suicide
4. Arguments for Voluntary Passive Euthanasia
5. Arguments against Voluntary Passive Euthanasia
6. Arguments for and against Other Forms of Euthanasia
7. Legal considerations: laws covering euthanasia
8. Ethical Theories in relation to euthanasia

B. End of Life Decisions
1. Living Wills, including their legal context and ethical ramifications.
2. Advanced Directives
3. The ethics of counseling for living wills and advanced directives.
4. Cultural factors in patient decisions and respect for patient autonomy in making decisions.

WEEK 8: ABORTION
1. Biological background
2. Ontological status of the fetus
3. Moral status of the Unborn
4. Pro-Life Arguments (Against Abortion)
5. Pro-Choice Arguments (For Abortion)
6. Legal Considerations: laws covering abortion, esp. Roe vs. Wade and subsequent legal decisions
7. Ethical Theories in relation to abortion

WEEK 9: Midterm Exam. MATERNAL-FETAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES.
1. Rights of pregnant women in the workplace
2. Maternal rights of pregnant women: involuntary hospitalization and the status of the fetus
3. Legal precedents and ramifications

WEEK 10: BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH AND HUMAN RIGHTS: ETHICAL ISSUES IN MEDICAL EXPERIMENTATION
A. Biomedical Research and Human Rights.
1. The practice of medicine and/or biomedical research:
2. Experimentation on humans and the history of cases of abuse of human rights
3. Research subjects - children, prisoners and animals
4. Ethical Theories in relation to medical research and human rights
5. Legal Considerations: laws covering Experiments on Humans and Animals;

B. Stem Cell Research.
WEEK 11: EUGENICS, HUMAN GENOME RESEARCH
1. Define and discuss eugenics, human genome research and their relation.
2. Examine the misuse of eugenics in the past, e.g. by the Nazis.
3. Discuss the Human Genome project in relation to genetically linked diseases and their cause.
4. Explore the ethical issues of genetic screening in relation especially to patient confidentiality and other rights.
5. Explain the genetic counseling responsibilities of health care providers
6. Legal Considerations: laws covering Eugenics, Human Genome Research

WEEK 12: GENETIC TESTING; INFERTILITY AND IN VITRO FERTILIZATION
A. Genetic Testing:
1. Define and discuss genetic testing, human genome research and their relation.
2. Examine the potential for misuse of confidential genetic information, e.g. for discrimination by Insurance Companies
3. Discuss the use of genetic testing in relation to genetically linked diseases and their cause.
4. Explore the ethical issues of genetic screening in relation especially to patient confidentiality and other rights.
5. Explain the genetic counseling responsibilities of health care providers.
6. Discuss the reproductive ramifications that knowledge of a genetic profile provides.
7. Legal Considerations: laws covering genetic information.
B. Infertility and In Vitro Fertilization.
1. Discuss infertility issues and recent techniques for overcoming infertility
2. The ethical and legal ramifications of in vitro fertilization
3. Counseling for in vitro fertilization

WEEK 13: CLONING
1. Define and discuss cloning, genetic enhancement and their relation.
2. Distinction of organ cloning and human cloning
3. Arguments for cloning: organ replacement
4. Arguments against cloning
5. Explore the ethical issues surrounding cloning

WEEK 14: PUBLIC HEALTH and AIDS.
1. Define and discuss the ethical issues that have arisen due to the AIDS epidemic.
2. Distinguish personal and public health issues.
3. Arguments for and against confining AIDS patients
4. Arguments for and against financial aid to poorer countries hit hard by the AIDS epidemic.
5. Explore the ethical issues surrounding AIDS transmission.
6. Legal Considerations.
7. Explain the AIDS counseling responsibilities of health care providers

WEEK 15: REVIEW AND FINAL EXAM
*The order can be changed as can any of the issues. Alternate issues (with a similar format for those given) are, for example: Genetics: Intervention, Control and Research; Involuntary Civil Commitment and Behavior control; Treating or Terminating: The Problem of Impaired Infants