

NEW YORK CITY COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY
The City University of New York School of Arts & Sciences
Department of Social Science Course Outline

Course code: PHIL 2203ID

Course title: Health Care Ethics

Class hours/credits: 3 class hours, 3 credits

Prerequisite: ENG 1101 or ENG 1101CO or ENG 1101ML

Pathways: Individual and Society

College Option: Interdisciplinary

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).

Interdisciplinary Course: This course explores the contribution of a variety of disciplinary perspectives to decision making in health care ethics. The course focuses particularly on the unique contribution of philosophical ethics, examining this contribution by exploring the differences and similarities between philosophical methods and other disciplinary methods (especially scientific and clinical disciplines) in approaching health care ethics problems and issues.

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

Contemporary Issues in Bioethics, 6th ed. Beauchamp, Tom L. and LeRoy Walters. Belmont, Ca.: Wadsworth Pub. Co., 2002

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

COURSE INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES/ASSESSMENT METHODS

LEARNING OUTCOMES	ASSESSMENT METHODS*
1. Learn key theories and principles from philosophical ethics and health care ethics, and gain an appreciation for the contribution of philosophical ethics to ethical problems in health care.	1. Reading quizzes and homework assignments; objective questions and essays on exams.
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.	2. Class participation grade; term paper; reflection assignments in homework.
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	3. Objective elements of the midterm and final exams; research requirement for term papers; homework and in-class assignments involving case analysis.
4. Reflect critically on the role and importance of various disciplinary contributions in health care ethics decisionmaking.	4. Homework assignments requiring personal reflection; case analysis, in homework, on tests, and in class; class discussions.

PATHWAYS INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY LEARNING GOALS

1. Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and methods of a discipline or interdisciplinary field exploring the relationship between the individual and society, including, but not limited to, anthropology, communications, cultural studies, history, journalism, philosophy, political science, psychology, public affairs, religion, and sociology.
2. Examine how an individual's place in society affects experiences, values, or choices.
3. Articulate and assess ethical views and their underlying premises.
4. Articulate ethical uses of data and other information resources to respond to problems and questions.

GENERAL EDUCATION LEARNING OUTCOMES/ASSESSMENT METHODS

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

** 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: 10%

Paper: 25%

Midterm: 20%

Final: 20%

Homework and quizzes: 25%

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

ATTENDANCE POLICY

It is the conviction of the Department of Social Science that a student who is not in a class for any reason is not receiving the benefit of the education being provided. Missed class time includes not just absences but also latenesses, early departures, and time outside the classroom taken by students during

class meeting periods. Missed time impacts any portion of the final grade overtly allocated to participation and/or any grades awarded for activities that relate to presence in class.

Instructors may including a reasonable “Participation” grade into their final grade calculations for this course.

STUDENT ACCESSIBILITY

City Tech is committed to supporting the educational goals of enrolled students with disabilities in the areas of enrollment, academic advisement, tutoring, assistive technologies, and testing accommodations. If you have or think you may have a disability, you may be eligible for reasonable accommodations or academic adjustments as provided under applicable federal, state, and/or city laws. You may also request services for temporary conditions or medical issues under certain circumstances. If you have questions about your eligibility and/or would like to seek accommodation services and/or academic adjustments, please email the [Student Accessibility Center](#).

COMMITMENT TO STUDENT DIVERSITY

The Department of Social Science complies with the college wide nondiscrimination policy and seek to foster a safe and inclusive learning environment that celebrates diversity in its many forms and enhances our students’ ability to be informed, global citizens. Through our example, we demonstrate an appreciation of the rich diversity of world cultures and the unique forms of expression that make us human.

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 Beneficence
 - 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
6. Patient Rights and Truth Telling.

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
6. Legal Considerations: laws covering 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.

Written by: Dr. D. McKinney. Date: August 1988

Reviewed/Revised by: Dr. D.R. MacDougall Date: February 2016

Revised by Peter Parides, Spring 2021