

HPS 0613 Morality and Medicine

Instructor: Dr. Nora Mills Boyd

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Class: Tues and Thurs 12-3:15pm, 221 Cathedral of Learning

Office hours: Tues and Thurs 11am-noon, and by appointment, 901J Cathedral of Learning

Course Description

Ethical dilemmas in the practice of health care continue to proliferate and receive increasing attention from members of the health care profession, ethicists, policy makers, and the general public as health care consumers. In this course we will examine a number of ethical issues that arise in the context of contemporary medical practice and research by analyzing articles and decision scenarios. Topics to be covered typically include the physician-patient relationship; informed consent; medical experimentation; termination of treatment; genetics; reproductive technologies; euthanasia; resource allocation; and health care reform. Students who successfully complete this course will be able to identify and analyze different philosophical approaches to selected issues in medical ethics; have gained insight into how to read and critically interpret philosophical arguments; and have developed skills that will enable them to think clearly about ethical questions as future or current health care providers, policy makers, and consumers. This course is part of a core sequence leading to certification in the Conceptual Foundations of Medicine Certificate Program and is a companion course to HPS 0612 (Mind and Medicine) but may be taken independently. The course is of particular interest to pre-medical and pre-health care students.

Readings

Many readings will be distributed through Courseweb. In addition, the following textbook is required:

Steinbock, Bonnie, Alex John London, John D. Arras, eds. 2013. *Ethical Issues in Modern Medicine: Contemporary Readings in Bioethics*. Eighth Edition. McGraw Hill. [Abbreviated "EI" below]

Assignments

Detailed instructions and rubrics for the assignments will be posted to Courseweb.

10% Moral Compass (3 pages)

10% Evidence of active reading x2 at 5% each

20% Leading discussion

10% First Essay (5 pages)

35% Final Essay: Topic of Your Choice (10 pages)

5% Reflection upon Revisiting Your Moral Compass (2 pages)

10% Participation (12 possible)

5% Extra Credit Option: Current Events Presentation (10 minutes)

Submitting Assignments

All assignments are due by noon on the day indicated. Please email them to me at nb.teaching@gmail.com To the extent feasible I will practice anonymized grading. To facilitate this, include your Peoplesoft number on your assignments rather than your name. Late assignments will typically not be graded, but please contact me if you run into trouble. You are welcome to schedule one extra credit current events presentation any time during the term except for the last class and before. Please email me by the day before the class in which you would like to present (at the latest) so that I know to expect it.

Preparing for Class

This class will involve a lot of student-lead discussion. It is therefore essential that you carefully and thoroughly prepare for class. Please do the assigned readings. Philosophically rich material is often best digested in multiple iterations. A good strategy would be to read the material at least twice, marking it up and taking notes as you go. Please bring topics, questions, reflections that arise for you as you are reading to class so that we can discuss them as a group. Your participation grade will be based on in-class activities and small-group work. These are to be completed during class and cannot be made up in the event of absence. If you run into trouble that prevents you from attending class, please contact me.

Class Environment

Note that in this course we will discuss topics that are both intellectually and morally challenging. You and/or your classmates may feel strong emotional responses to some of these topics. Please do your part to maintain a respectful and supportive classroom environment. We will formulate a list of classroom norms together on the first day of class.

Course Schedule

Please note: I may change the syllabus if I think it will help you succeed in this course. I will give you ample warning of any such changes.

Date	Topics	Readings	In-class Media	Assignments
5/15	Ethical frameworks	EI: pp. 1-41 "Moral Reasoning in the Medical Context"	<i>Videos on utilitarianism, Kantian ethics (deontology), virtue ethics, and Rawls' Original Position</i>	
5/17	CLASS WILL NOT MEET Watch two documentaries on your own, available through pitt.kanopy.com Care: Care Workers, Their Clients, and a Coming Crisis (57 min)			Blackboard Discussion Board post on the documentaries

	How to Die in Oregon (107 min)		(due before Friday 5/18 @ 10pm)	
5/22	Autonomy, consent, and the professional-patient relationship	EI: pp. 43-58 “Foundations of the Health Professional-Patient Relationship” Beauchamp “Autonomy and Consent” (23 pages)	Podcast by O’Neill on medical consent	Due: Moral Compass essay
5/24	Mistrust and medical research	Scharff et al. “More than Tuskegee: Understanding Mistrust about Research Participation” (18 pages)	BBC podcast about the Tuskegee Syphilis	Due: Final essay proposal
5/29	Disparities in health care	Dula “Whitewashing Black Health: Lies, Deceptions, Assumptions, and Assertions—and the Disparities Continue” (20 pages) Roberts “Debating the Cause of Health Disparities: Implications for Bioethics and Racial Equality” (11 pages)	Roberts’ Ted Talk In Sickness and in Wealth	Due: First evidence of active reading (Roberts)
5/31	Jahi McMath case	Dula and Williams “When Race Matters” (14 pages) Aviv “What Does It Mean to Die” (24 pages)	<i>Has death has occurred? listen to this moving and emotional podcast about one family’s struggle with this issue</i>	
6/5	End of life care	Gawande “Letting Go” (31 pages) EI: pp. 437-440, Quill “Death and Dignity: A Case of Individualized Decision Making”	<i>PBS Frontline episode Being Mortal</i>	
6/7	Interventions in the dying process	EI: pp. 441-454, Brock “Voluntary Active Euthanasia” EI: pp. 455-460, Arras “Physician-Assisted Suicide: A Tragic View”	<i>Check out this podcast about the active vs. passive euthanasia distinction.</i>	Due: First essay

6/12	Disability	Barnes “Valuing Disability, Causing Disability” (26 pages)	<i>Barnes’ Philosophy TV discussion of disability with Stramondo</i>	
6/14	Extremely premature infants Abortion	EI: pp. 421-429, Robertson “Extreme Prematurity and Parental Rights After <i>Baby Doe</i> ” Late-term Abortion Interview EI: pp. 556-563, Marquis “Why Abortion is Immoral” EI: pp. 564-573, Jarvis Thomson “A Defense of Abortion”		
6/19	Reproductive injustice	“Reproductive Injustice: Racial and Gender Discrimination in U.S. Health Care, A Shadow Report for the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination” (22 pages)	<i>When the Bough Breaks</i>	Due: Final paper
6/21	Environmental health ethics Medicine’s role in climate change	Resnik and Roman “Health, Justice, and the Environment” (16 pages) Chester Environmental Justice Case Study Jameton “Medicine’s Role in Mitigating the Effects of Climate Change” (5 pages)	<i>Place Matters</i>	Due: Reflection upon Revisiting Your Moral Compass