

BIOETHICS

PHIL 1342

I. Course Description

This course examines ethical questions that arise in the context of the practice of medicine, the development of medical technologies, and the management of public health. These questions concern not only healthcare professionals and their patients, or researchers and their subjects, but also citizens interested in the ways in which government policy shapes health outcomes. Our topics will include abortion and surrogate motherhood, euthanasia and assisted suicide, disclosure and confidentiality, research on human subjects, and the distribution of scarce medical resources.

II. Course Objectives

The goals of the course are for you to develop:

- Essential philosophical skills, chief among which is the ability to identify, charitably interpret, and critically evaluate arguments.
- Your expository and critical writing skills.
- An appreciation of how philosophical analysis can help clarify important moral and legal controversies surrounding the practice of medicine, the development of medical technologies, and the management of public health.

III. Teaching Method

Instruction will consist of two main components: biweekly lectures and weekly recitations. In conjunction with these, I may sometimes also host virtual discussions or assign short reflection papers on Canvas.

IV. Evaluation Method

Your final grade will consist of the components described briefly in the following table. *No extra credit will be offered in this course.*

Assignment	Value	Tentative length	Description/Comments
Case analysis	10%	5 pages	An analysis of a complex clinical case, followed by a reasoned defense of a specific course of action based on that analysis.
First argument analysis	10%	3-4 pages	Structured writing assignments meant to train your philosophical skills. They will be based on arguments either in course texts, or in short texts I will make available specifically for the assignments.
Second argument analysis	15%	3-4 pages	
Paper	25%	5-6 pages	A critical philosophy essay on a given topic.
Final exam	25%		TBD
Attendance and participation	15%	-	Based on attendance to both lecture and recitation, and on participation during recitation.

V. Course Materials

The textbook for this course is *Bioethics: Principles, Issues and Cases*, 5th Edition, by Lewis Vaughn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022). It will be available at the Penn Bookstore and is also available from online retailers. Additional readings will be posted on Canvas.