Meeting Time and Place:

Course Description:

The purpose of this course is to examine the ethical dilemmas associated with the medical profession. We will do that by exploring the most influential ethical schools and then by looking at some of the prevalent debates in the biomedical ethics. This theoretical background provides the philosophical tools necessary for our investigation and reflection on those challenging moral issues.

The syllabus below provides an outline of the course and a list of corresponding readings. Note that the syllabus is subject to change and supplementation, and that it is the responsibility of each participant to follow these changes.

Texts: Beauchamp and Walters (eds), Contemporary Issues in Bioethics 7th ed.

Texts posted moodle

Course Work: 5 Short Memos (25%), Final take-home exam (55%) attendance and participation (20%)

Course Requirements and Policies:

Preparation and participation – students are expected to have carefully read the assigned readings prior to the class meeting in which they are to be discussed, and are expected to participate in discussions regarding the materials. An essential part of this course is critical thought and discussion of philosophical issues – that is, doing philosophy, not just reading about it. Note that a crucial part of participation involves respecting other people in the class as persons and for their views.

Attendance – it is the school policy that attendance would be mandatory in all courses. Each student can have up to 3 absences each semester. That includes both excused and unexcused absences. If you come in late to class it is your responsibility to make sure that your attendance is recorded. This will only be done at the end of the class and not in subsequent classes.

Short Memos – each student will have to turn in 5 short memos in the course of the semester. Each memo should be 2 pages long in which you summarize a reading of your choice. There will be no grades for the memos as it is a pass/fail assignment. In order to
get the full credit for the memos you need to get a pass on all 5 memos that you’ve turned in.

Exam – we will have a final, take-home exam and. Specific details will be provided closer to the exam date.

Plagiarism – plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty will result in a failing grade for the course. Please see me if you have any questions about proper citation or incorporation of other texts into your work.

Course Outline:

**Week 1:** Introduction to Ethics and Biomedical Ethics

Types of Ethical Theory, pp. 12-21

**Week 2:** Ethical Theories

Types of Ethical Theory, cont’d

Ethical Principles, pp. 21-28

**Week 3:** Doctor-Patient Relationship – Confidentiality and Truth Telling

Tarasoff v. Regents of the University of California, pp. 140-144


Thomasma, “Telling the Truth to Patient”, pp. 149-152

Wu, et. al., “To Tell the Truth”, pp. 153-159

**Week 4:** Doctor-Patient Relationship – Informed Consent

Canterbury v. Spence, pp. 160-162


Faden and Beauchamp, “The Concept of Informed Consent” pp. 166-170

**Week 5:** Abortion and Reproduction


Cohen “Give Me Children or I Shall Die!”

**Week 6:** Euthanasia and Physician-Assisted Suicide

Rachels, “Active and Passive Euthanasia” (moodle)

Cohen and Lynn, “Vulnerable People”, pp. 446-452

Hardwig, “Dying at the Right Time”, (moodle)

Velleman, “Against the Right to Die” (moodle)

**Week 7:** Controversies in Medical Research - Humans

The Nuremberg Code, pp 70-71, Declaration of Helsinki, pp. 72-75

Pence, “The Tuskegee Study”, pp. 46-53

Mastroianni and Kahn, “Swinging on the Pendulum” pp. 86-91

**Week 8:** Controversies in Medical Research - Animals

Singer, Animal Experimentation (moodle)

Cohen, Carl. The Case for the use of Animals in Biomedical Research
[https://spot.colorado.edu/~heathwoo/phil1200,Spr07/cohen.pdf](https://spot.colorado.edu/~heathwoo/phil1200,Spr07/cohen.pdf)

**Week 9:** Justice and Health

Buchanan, “The Right to a Decent Minimum of Health Care”, pp. 596-601

Engelhardt, “ Rights to Health care”, pp. 602-609

Ubel, “The Necessity of Rationing Health Care”, pp. 609-616

**Week 10:** Review and Conclusions

Final Exam will be posted on Moodle and due back by