PA/PHIL 321: Medical Ethics

(Syllabus subject to revision—always check updated version on D2L)

Meeting Time and Location: Social Sciences 206, Tuesday/Thursday 8-9:15am
Instructor: Sarah Raskoff (sraskoff@email.arizona.edu)
Office: Social Sciences 130
Office Hours: Thursday 10-12:15pm, or by appointment
Course Site (updated syllabus, link to textbook, extra readings):
https://d2l.arizona.edu/d2l/home/509082

Course Description:
We will explore ethical questions that arise in health care and the biomedical sciences. We will consider the following issues (perhaps together with others): the allocation of healthcare resources, the justifications for public health interventions, the responsibilities of doctors to patients, the distinction between killing and letting die, medically-assisted suicide, and abortion. Throughout, our focus will be on moral questions about how decisions in these domains ought to be be made.

Objectives:
In this class you will:
• Learn about major ethical questions related to healthcare and biomedical sciences
• Develop an ability to engage critically with moral arguments about those questions
• Improve your writing skills, learning to write clear and persuasive philosophical arguments
• Improve your critical thinking skills, learning to engage in discussion about moral issues with a careful and critical eye

Required Text:
Bioethics: An Anthology, edited by Helga Kuhse and Peter Singer, 3rd edition (2016). I’ve ordered hardcopies to the bookstore, but you can use your NetID to access an electronic version of this text through the university library. Also, the 2nd edition is less expensive, available on Amazon, and contains most but not all of the assigned readings.

Do not confuse this with A Companion to Bioethics, also edited by Kuhse and Singer. You want the anthology, not the companion.

Course Requirements and Grading Basis:
• Active class participation (10%) — I won’t take attendance, but full credit will require being an active participant in class discussion. That means showing up to class and talking. But it also means listening, and making sure that your questions and remarks are responsive to the materials and to your fellow students. And this requires doing the reading carefully in advance and coming to class with developed questions and ideas.
• Shorties (30%) — A short piece (1-3 paragraphs), submitted on D2L by noon on Monday or Wednesday before each class, depending on your group assignment. Find your group assignment on D2L. Members of group 1 must submit by noon on Monday before each Tuesday class. Members of group 2 must submit by noon on Wednesday before each Thursday class. You should discuss something you found interesting, confusing, or otherwise worthy of consideration in writing. The goal is not to summarize the reading but to share your ideas, interests, and confusions with me and to engage critically with the
reading before entering the classroom. You will not get full credit if you just provide a summary. Explaining why you didn't understand something from the reading is fine. Expressing disagreement with the reading is fine, too. What is important to me is that you give reasons for your confusions or disagreements (e.g., "the author's claim that X doesn't seem to fit together with his claim that Y because . . ." but not “the authors claim that X is stupid!”).

- **Essays** (40%)— Two 2000-3000 word papers on an assigned topic. The first is due on 10/13 and the second is due on 12/6. Mark your calendars now.
- **Final Exam** (20%)— Held on 12/15 from 8-10am. The test will be a mix of short and longer answer questions, which will evaluate whether you've done and retained the reading, and ask you to do some critical thinking about the issues we've discussed.

**Criteria to Be Used in Grading Shorties and Essays:**

- Is your reasoning and writing clear and effective?
- Does your work demonstrate a good understanding of the theories, positions, and arguments discussed in class and an ability to apply them?
- Does your work demonstrate knowledge of the readings for the course?
- Does your work display original or thoughtful treatment of the issues?

**Late Work:**
I have a zero tolerance policy for unexcused late work in this class. If you are unable to submit a short assignment or paper on the assigned date, you must let me know by email ahead of time, and must explain why. Otherwise, any work that is submitted late will receive a zero.

**Accessibility and Accommodations:**
It is the University’s goal that learning experiences be as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability or pregnancy, please let me know immediately so that we can discuss options. You are also welcome to contact Disability Resources (520-621-3268) to establish reasonable accommodations.

**Academic Dishonesty:**
Plagiarism is the attempt to present someone else's ideas or writing as one's own. Examples:

- Submitting someone else's paper or a professional article for a grade
- Copying phrases, sentences, or paragraphs from a book, article, or online source and incorporating them into one's paper without quotation marks and proper attribution
- Using someone else's ideas or arguments without attributing them to that person
- Quoting a source without using quotation marks, even if the source is attributed to its author

These cases vary in degree of seriousness and university penalties vary, but academic dishonesty of any form will be cause for failure and will be reported. Please familiarize yourself with the Student Code of Academic Integrity: [http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/codeofacademicintegrity](http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/codeofacademicintegrity)

**Threatening and Disruptive Behavior:**
You are expected to behave courteously to me and to all other students throughout this class. I do not anticipate that this will be an issue, but here are the university’s polices on threatening and disruptive behavior:
[http://policy.arizona.edu/education-and-student-affairs/threatening-behavior-students](http://policy.arizona.edu/education-and-student-affairs/threatening-behavior-students)
Course Topics and Readings:

Course mechanics, moral theory and bioethics

8/23
No Reading

8/25

Week 1: Informed consent and patient autonomy

8/30

9/1

Week 2: Patient confidentiality

9/6

9/8
8. Timothy Murphy, “When It Comes to HIV Infection, Some Are More Equal Than Others,” Hastings Center Report, Sept/Oct 2009 pp. c3 (available on D2L)

Week 3: Conscientious refusal of health care providers

9/13

9/15

Week 4 and 5: Public health, paternalism, and liberty

9/20

9/22
9/27
13. Amy Fairschild, "Diabetes and Disease Surveillance" in Science Magazine July 2006 pp. 175-176 (available on D2L)

9/29
14. Erik Zavrel and Clyde Freeman Herreid, “Sex and Vaccination” (available on D2L)
http://www.slate.com/articles/health_and_science/medical Examiner/2016/07/vaccination should_be_mandatory but_it_isn’t.html

Week 6: Paternalism and healthy eating policy
10/4

10/6
Case Study: New York City portion control policy (a.k.a. soda ban)
17. Sarah Conly, Against Autonomy, pp.162-169 (available on D2L)
20. Lowen Liu, “All Hail the Nanny State: How Michael Bloomberg, with his soda and cigarette bans, created a new social justice movement” Slate Magazine. 23 October 2012
http://www.slate.com/articles/business/the_pivot/2012/10/soda_ban_and_bloomberg how_the_new_york_mayor_is_creating_a_great_new_social.html

Week 7: A universal right to healthcare?
10/11

10/13
23. Robert Nozick, selection from Anarchy, State, Utopia, pp. 233-235 (available on D2L)

Week 8: Health care allocation I
10/18

10/20

Week 9: Health care allocation II
10/25

10/27
   http://www.slate.com/articles/health_and_science/human_nature/2011/01/how_did_steven_jobs_get_his_liver.html

**Week 10: Killing and letting die**

11/1

11/3
31. Winston Nesbitt, "Is Killing No Worse Than Letting Die?" in K&S pp. 252-256

**Week 11: Euthanasia I**

11/8 - 11/10

**Week 12: Euthanasia II**

11/15 – 11/17
33. Dworkin et al. “Assisted Suicide: The Philosophers’ Brief” from the March 27, 1997 issue of
   The New York Review of Books (available on D2L or at
   http://www.nybooks.com/articles/1997/03/27/assisted-suicide-the-philosophers-brief/)

**Week 13: Abortion I**

11/22
34. Roe v. Wade, Section IX, B (available on D2L)

**Week 14: Abortion II**

11/29
37. Don Marquis, "Why Abortion is Immoral" in K&S pp. 49-60

12/6 Conclusion
Second Paper Due (submit to the dropbox on D2L)

12/15 Final Exam
8-10am