

PHIL 6600: Ethics in Health Care

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Office Hours: Mon, Tues, Wed 11-12 am. I'm often in my office, so feel free to call or stop by outside of my official office hours. Email is usually the quickest, most reliable means of getting in touch with me.

Required Text

There is no textbook for this class. All assigned readings will be posted to Moodle.

Course Description & Goals

This class is intended for students in a wide variety of healthcare professions, including (but not limited to) advanced-practice nursing, pharmacy, public health, and healthcare administration. The ethical issues we will consider include interactions between individual patients and clinicians as well as systems-level and “big picture” issues. You will be introduced to some of the dominant ethical theories and principles that have been developed in the Western philosophical tradition, and taught to apply them in various settings. By the end of the course, students should be able to identify ethical issues and apply ethical theories and principles to them.

Course Requirements

This is an asynchronous, online course; there are no set days or times when everyone must be online. However, you must not fall behind on the assigned readings or miss deadlines for graded work. You are expected to participate in on-line discussions of the course material.

You will write 3 short papers (approx. 4 – 6 pages, double-spaced) on topics assigned during the class. There will be more than 3 topics presented, so you do not need to write on every topic. If you decide to write more than 3 papers, only the top 3 grades will be used to calculate your course grade.

Short Papers: 3 @ 20% ea =	60%
Final Paper:	40%
TOTAL:	100%

Netiquette: When posting comments (or interacting with others in any other way), adhere to the same standards one ought to follow in everyday situations. Treat one another politely and respectfully.

- No “flaming” (emotional or insulting ranting). If you’re all worked up about something, walk away from the keyboard, take a deep breath, and think carefully before responding.
 - If someone “flames” you, do not respond.
- Do not attack anyone’s intelligence, moral character, etc. Politely pointing out errors is perfectly acceptable. This is part of learning. The focus should be on presenting a rational position supported by evidence.

- No “ALL CAPS RAGE.”
- Try to avoid profanity.

Letter grades will be assigned as follows:

A	95 – 100%	C+	77 – 79%	D-	60 – 62%
A-	90 – 94%	C	73 – 76%	F	0 – 59%
B+	87 – 89%	C-	70 – 72%		
B	83 – 86%	D+	66 – 69%		
B-	80 – 82%	D	63 – 65%		

Course Schedule

ETHICAL THEORY

Week 1 (Jan 12-16): Introduction to Ethics; Consequentialist Theories

- Moral Realism & Relativism
- Efficiency vs. Justice
- Efficiency vs. Patient Choice
- The Rule of Rescue
- *Read:* Rose AD (2011) Questioning the Universality of Ethics: Dilemmas Raised Performing Surgery around the Globe. *Hastings Center Report* 41(5):18-22.
- *Read:* Menzel PT (1994) Rescuing Lives: Can’t We Count? *Hastings Center Report* 24(1):22-25.

Week 2 (Jan 19-23): Deontological Theories; Moral Rights

- *Read:* Scott C (2008) Belief in a Just World. *Hastings Center Report* 38(1):16-19.

Week 3 (Jan 26-30): Moral Virtues; Feminist Ethics

CLINICAL ISSUES

Week 4 (Feb 2-6): Paternalism in Healthcare

- *Read:* Swindell JS, McGuire AL, Halpern SD (2010) Beneficent Persuasion: Techniques and Ethical Guidelines to Improve Patients’ Decisions. *Annals of Family Medicine* 8(3):260-4.
- *Read:* Wynia MK (2007) Ethics and Public Health Emergencies: Restrictions on Liberty. *American Journal of Bioethics* 7(2):1-5.

Essay Topic 1: A hospital anti-smoking policy *Due Wed Feb 18*

Week 5 (Feb 9-13): Medical Futility

- *Read:* Shim JK, Russ AJ, Kaufman SR (2008) Late-Life Cardiac Interventions and the Treatment Imperative. *PLoS Medicine* 5(3):0344-6.
- *Read:* Fine RL, Mayo TW (2003) Resolution of Futility by Due Process: Early Experience with the Texas Advance Directives Act. *Annals of Internal Medicine* 138(9):743-6.

Essay Topic 2: A demand for futile treatment *Due Wed. Feb 25*

Week 6 (Feb 16-20): Duty to Treat & Conscientious Refusals to Treat

- The Duty to Treat
- The “Usual Compromise” and its Critics
- *Read:* Cantor J, Baum K (2004) The Limits of Conscientious Objection – May Pharmacists Refuse to Fill Prescriptions for Emergency Contraception? *New England Journal of Medicine* 351(19): 2008-12.
- *Read:* Plantz DM (2011) Cynicism, with Consequences. *Hastings Center Report* 41(2):12-13.

Essay Topic 3: A refusal to treat or to refer *Due Wed. Mar 4*

SYSTEMS-LEVEL ISSUES

Week 7 (Feb 23-27): Medical Ethics vs. Business Ethics: Why Do Clinicians & Administrators See Ethics Differently?

- *Read:* News: Rivalry Drives Up Medical Charges in Cape Girardeau. *St Louis Today*, Jan 6/13.
- *Read:* Wielawski IM (2000) A Tale of Two Bills. *Health Affairs* 19(5):180-5.

Essay Topic 4: Unpaid bills at the hospital pharmacy *Due Wed Mar 11*

Week 8 (Mar 2-6): The Ethics & Limits of Prevention & Screening

- Costs & limits of screening
- Screening asymptomatic people
- Prenatal screening
- Genetic screening
- *Read:* Ustun C, Ceber E (2004) Ethical Issues for Cancer Screenings: Five Countries – Four Types of Cancer. *Preventive Medicine*. 39(2):223-9.
- *Read:* Torke AM, Schwartz PH, Holtz LR, *et al.* (2013) Older Adults and Forgoing Cancer Screening. *JAMA Internal Medicine* published online Mar 11/13.

Essay Topic 5: Genetic screening for BRCA1 and BRCA2 *Due Wed Mar 18*

Week 9 (Mar 9-13): Vaccinations: Strategies, Risks, & Refusals

- Which risks are acceptable?
- When should refusals be honored?
- HPV vaccines
- Firing Hospital Employees for Refusing Vaccinations
- *Read:* Zimmerman RK (2006) Ethical Analysis of HPV Vaccine Policy Options. *Vaccine* 24:4812-20.
- *Read:* Marcuse EK (2012) Prudent Personal Belief Exemption Policies. *Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine* 166(12):1093-4.
- *Read:* Dawson A (2005) The Determination of the Best Interests in Relation to Childhood Immunisation. *Bioethics* 19(1): 72-89.

Week 10 (Mar 16-20): Allocating Scarce or Expensive Healthcare Resources

- *Read:* Persad G, Emanuel EJ (2009) Principles for Allocation of Scarce Medical Interventions. *The Lancet* 373:423-31.
- *Read:* Rosenthal E (2013) Is This a Hospital or a Hotel? *New York Times* Sept 21.

Essay Topic 6: Forced transfer to custodial care *Due Wed. Apr 1*

Week 11 (Mar 23-27): Spring Break – No Classes

Week 12 (Mar 30-Apr 3): Evidence-Based Medicine

- *Read:* Kerridge I, Lowe M, Henry D (1998) Ethics and Evidence Based Medicine. *BMJ* 316(7138): 1151-53.
- *Read:* Upshur REG (2013) A Call to Integrate Ethics and Evidence-Based Medicine. *Virtual Mentor* 15(1): 86-9.

Week 13 (Apr 6-10): Disparities in Health Status & in Access to Care

- *Read:* Jones CM (2010) The Moral Problem of Health Disparities. *American Journal of Public Health* Feb 10: e1-e5.
- *Read:* Devi S (2012) Getting to the Root of America's Racial Health Inequities. *Lancet* 380: 1043-44.

Week 14 (Apr 13-17): Humanitarian Aid Programs

- MSF & the Red Cross
- Military involvement in aid programs
- The Murder of Vaccination Program Staff in Pakistan & Afghanistan
- *Read:* Excerpt from Bortolotti D (2004) *Hope in Hell: Inside the World of Doctors Without Borders*. Buffalo, NY: Firefly Books: 262-274.

CONCEPTUAL ISSUES

Week 15 (Apr 20-24): Health, Illness, and the Drive to Medicalize

- *Read:* Szaz TS (1960) The Myth of Mental Illness. *American Psychologist* 15(2):113-8.
- *Read:* Chapter 1 of Conrad P (2007) *The Medicalization of Society*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press: 3-19.

Essay Topic 7: Evaluating a case of medicalizing the normal *Due Wed Apr 29*

Week 16 (Apr 27 – May 1): Closed Week: Complete your final paper

Final Papers Due: Friday, May 1, 5 pm.