

PHILO 365: Medical Ethics

Professor: Josh DiPaolo

Office: Dickens 308A

Spring 2018

Email: jdipaolo@ksu.edu

Office Hours: MW 2:45-3:45 & By appointment.

Course Description: You bear many important ethical relationships to medicine. You are all recipients of medical care. You may eventually be medical care providers. And many of you are citizens with the ability to shape medical policy. In these and other roles, you are faced with many – sometimes life-altering, life-creating, or life-ending – medical decisions. This course aims (i) to introduce you to some of these decisions and some relevant conceptual and ethical considerations that bear on these decisions and (ii) to provide you with the opportunity to critically reflect on and discuss the ethical dimensions of these decisions.

You will be a **truth-seeker** in this class, **not a mere information consumer**: you will try to answer the questions raised in the course through rational means, rather than just learning what others have thought.

Some Course Questions

1. Is it permissible for doctors to lie to patients?
2. What is epistemic injustice? Are ill patients regularly subjects of such injustice?
3. Are there ethical limits on patients' autonomy?
4. What is mental illness?
5. What is transformative experience? Is illness a transformative experience? Is having a child?
6. When is it ethical for physicians, parents, and other caretakers to make transformative decisions for others?
7. What is disability?
8. When, if ever, is abortion ethical?
9. When, if ever, is euthanasia ethical? Is euthanasia "playing God"?
10. What are physicians' and citizens' responsibilities in ending social disparities in medicine?

Learning Goals: In this course you will:

- Develop basic philosophical skills of argumentation and analysis.
- Critically evaluate medical ethical arguments.
- Apply philosophical ideas about medicine to your life.
- Document personal discoveries and insights you experience throughout the class.
- Search for and critically evaluate medical ethical ideas found in the public sphere (e.g., in the news media, on social media, in popular art, etc.).

A Note about the Course: This course will regularly deal with difficult, uncomfortable, and personally challenging ideas. Enrollment in this course constitutes your acceptance of the right of students and the professor to discuss these ideas in an open manner.

Texts: All texts will be provided on Canvas in the Readings folder.

- There will be around **40 pages of very difficult reading per week**. Please plan accordingly.
 - When reading, you should attempt to go beyond merely understanding the text and/or finding it interesting. You should constantly be asking: Is that true? Is that a convincing argument? How would the author deal with this problem?
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Grading Policy

Exam 1	100 Points
Exam 2	100 Points
9 Reading Memos	90 Points
Presentation Debate	110 Points
Critical Paper	100 Points
	500 Points

A	> 90%	450-500 Points
B	> 80%	400-449 Points
C	> 70%	350-399 Points
D	> 60%	300-349 Points
F	< 60%	0-299 Points

Other Required Assignments

1. Philosophy in Life Post 1 and Comments
2. Philosophy in Life Post 2 and Comments
3. Ethics in Medicine Discussion

To earn a C or better, you must complete **all three** of these assignments.

Grade Changers

- Participation: 25 points will be deducted from your final grade if you do not participate regularly or you are regularly distracting in class.
- Attendance: You have 3 free absences. 2.5 points will be deducted from your final grade for any unexcused absences. Attendance will be recorded starting in the 3rd week of classes.
- Extra Credit: You may complete up to two optional assignments by their due dates for up to 15 points each. I won't offer other extra credit upon request.

Please ask questions about these policies if you're not sure you understand them!

Coursework Descriptions

Attendance: Attendance is required because you won't do well in this course if you don't attend. To find out what you missed when you miss class, come to office hours or ask:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Exams: You will take two take-home exams in this course. Students who have never taken a philosophy class often feel anxiety about philosophy exams: "Isn't philosophy just my opinion? How will I be graded on my opinion?" Exams will test your understanding of course content, not your opinion. They are meant to assess your grasp of the readings and in-class discussions, to provide you with more incentive to reflect on the material, and to allow you to demonstrate what you've learned.

Reading Memos: 9 memos/10 points each. To help you reflect on the readings, you will write weekly reading memos starting in week 3. On weeks when there is more than one reading assignment, you may choose which reading to write on. The memos are to be turned in on Canvas before the beginning of class on the first day we are scheduled to discuss that reading.

These memos are relatively informal: You'll reflect philosophically on some component of the article. This might mean raising an objection, or summarizing and clarifying some point that seemed obscure,

or providing some additional argument in support of a claim you take the author to be making. The idea is for you to engage philosophically with the texts before you come to class.

If your memo clearly shows me that you made a good-faith effort to carefully read and understand the article, then you will get at least 7 points. If your explanation of the point you discuss is fully accurate, you will get at least 8 points. Scores of 9 and 10 will be reserved for those who offer a cogent critical contribution—who raise some objection or offer some support of their own that challenges or reinforces the author’s argument. At the end of the semester, I will replace your lowest memo score with a 10.

In the event of an *excused* absence, you may turn in a reading memo late without penalty, as long as (i) I receive it within one week of the day it would have been due and (ii) you come to my office to discuss it with me. No late memos will be accepted otherwise.

Presentation Debates: During the last six classes of the semester before dead week, you will tackle six traditional medical ethical issues. You will be split into 12 groups. Each group will read two assigned articles on a relevant medical ethical issue (e.g., Is it moral to conduct stem cell research?), and the pair of groups will teach the class the arguments for and against the relevant positions on their presentation date. Then they will briefly debate the issue between the groups. Then the discussion will open up to the rest of the class. Attendance is mandatory on these days.

Critical Paper: Write a 2-3 page paper that critically engages an argument from a reading. Explain the argument in your own words, then criticize the argument by either (1) arguing against its conclusion, (2) arguing against one of its premises, (3) arguing that its premises do not lend support to its conclusion, or (4) arguing that there is a better argument for that conclusion. (Critiques must differ from ones explained by the professor in class.)

Participation: Participating in class benefits you and others. We often learn while we attempt to express our thoughts. And since you have a unique perspective, everyone else in the class learns when you share that perspective. Here are **some ways to participate:**

1. Ask questions about the readings or lectures.
2. Answer questions when asked.
3. Contribute your perspective to a discussion.
4. Raise objections to arguments.
5. Mention a relevant life experience at an appropriate time.
6. Discuss course material with me outside of class.
7. Participate during small group activities.
8. Complete in-class writing assignments.

Philosophy in Life Posts: To help you get in the habit of approaching your life philosophically, you will complete two “philosophy in life” posts in the discussion forums on Canvas. For these assignments, you will write about connections between your life and what you’ve learned or thought about in this course. You will also read and comment on some of your peers’ posts.

Ethics in Medicine Discussion: For this assignment, you will consult an expert in the medical field (e.g., a physician, nurse, psychiatrist, medical policy maker, etc.) and ask them about which medical ethical issues *they* find pressing. Then you will share this with the class, and the class will discuss a number of these issues. (Get working on this sooner rather than later!)

Optional Assignments

Medical Ethics in the Media: Medical ethical issues frequently arise in the media. For this assignment, you will find a news article, video clip, or podcast related to an ethical issue, provide me with access to the piece of news, summarize it briefly (in about 1 paragraph), and critically engage with the issue. You will offer your opinion on the issue, providing your **reasons** for believing what you do—these reasons should be convincing to someone who has not made up their mind about the issue. If applicable, you should explain why you disagree with the author—again, explaining why the author’s reasons are unpersuasive.

Philosophy, Medicine, and Art: Find a passage in a poem, novel, play, song, or some visual piece of art that relates to course material. Provide the passage, a link to the song, a picture of the visual art, etc., and explain how it relates to the course. (Submitting your own art is welcomed and encouraged!)

Change of Mind: During your time in this course, you may change your mind about some course-relevant issue. Explain the issue, describe your previous opinion and why you used to think it, and then explain what you now think and why your opinion changed. When appropriate, be sure to explain the argument, theory, or reading that caused you to change your mind.

Other: You may propose another “Optional Assignment.” If you do, you’ll need to explain to me how it helps meet the course learning objectives.

Communication

Office Hours: I will have regular office hours on Mondays and Wednesdays throughout the semester. This means I will be available in my office to discuss course material (or other issues). If my scheduled office hours aren’t convenient, feel free to schedule a different time to meet.

“I wish I had come to office hours all semester!”

You can benefit from discussing course material outside of class. **True story:** One semester, a student of mine who never came to office hours earned one of the lowest grades on the midterm. Then he started regularly attending office hours. Right before the final, he told me, “I wish I had come to office hours all semester.” He ended up getting one of the highest grades on the final. Don’t wait! The course material is difficult. Come discuss it with me.¹

I would like each student to visit my office once during the 6th - 8th weeks of the semester.

Contact Policy: Outside of office hours, you can reach me at the email address above. I will respond promptly within 24 hours to most emails. If you do not receive a reply within 24 hours, please talk to me in class or send another email as a reminder. **If you have a question about the course mechanics or schedule, please check the syllabus before emailing.**

Your Responsibilities: I expect you to regularly check your email and Canvas for announcements.

Electronics

Electronic devices are permitted in class, but must be used solely for class purposes. Browsing Facebook, catching all of the Pokemon, and captioning animal pictures are not class purposes. I will prohibit devices if they are not being used appropriately.

¹ Why should you go to office hours? <http://college.usatoday.com/2015/11/28/office-hours/> What are some things you might say in office hours? <https://studentlife.uoregon.edu/node/381050>

Cheating and Plagiarism

If you are caught cheating or plagiarizing in this course, you will receive an XF as your final grade for the course. You'll also be required to take the K-State Development and Integrity Course.

Completing this course will remove the X from your record, but not the F. Here is the university's official statement on Academic Honesty:

Kansas State University has an Honor and Integrity System based on personal integrity, which is presumed to be sufficient assurance that, in academic matters, one's work is performed honestly and without unauthorized assistance. Undergraduate and graduate students, by registration, acknowledge the jurisdiction of the Honor and Integrity System. The policies and procedures of the Honor and Integrity System apply to all full and part-time students enrolled in undergraduate and graduate courses on-campus, off-campus, and via distance learning. The Honor and Integrity System website can be reached via the following URL: www.k-state.edu/honor. A component vital to the Honor and Integrity System is the inclusion of the Honor Pledge which applies to all assignments, examinations, or other course work undertaken by students. The Honor Pledge is implied, whether or not it is stated: "On my honor, as a student, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this academic work." A grade of XF can result from a breach of academic honesty. The F indicates failure in the course; the X indicates the reason is an Honor Pledge violation.

Feel free to ask before completing assignments whether some behavior counts as cheating or plagiarism.

Disabilities

I will do my best to help students with disabilities or learning challenges succeed in this course. Students with disabilities who need classroom accommodations, access to technology, or information about emergency building/campus evacuation processes should contact the Student Access Center and/or their instructor. Services are available to students with a wide range of disabilities including, but not limited to, physical disabilities, medical conditions, learning disabilities, attention deficit disorder, depression, and anxiety. If you are a student enrolled in campus/online courses through the Manhattan or Olathe campuses, contact the Student Access Center at accesscenter@k-state.edu, 785-532-6441; for K-State Polytechnic campus, contact Academic and Student Services at polytechnicadvising@ksu.edu or call 785-826-2974.

Tentative Schedule

<u>Week 1</u> 1/17: Introduction 1/19: Introduction	Logic Lecture
<u>Week 2: Arguments and Ethical Theory</u> 1/22: Philosophical Argumentation 1/24: Utilitarianism and Kantianism 1/26: Virtue Ethics, Religion, & Hippocratic Oath	Logic Lecture Crash Course Videos on Utilitarianism and Kant Crash Course Video on Virtue Ethics; Hippocratic Oath

<u>Week 3: Truth-Telling, Paternalism, and Epistemic Injustice</u>	
1/29: Truth-Telling	Collins “Should Doctors Tell the Truth?”
1/31: Truth-Telling	Higgs “On Telling Patients the Truth”
2/2: Epistemic Injustice	Kidd & Carel “Epistemic Injustice and Illness”
<u>Assignments</u>	
Weekly Reading Memo 1	

<u>Week 4: Autonomy and Mental Illness</u>	
2/5: Unrestricted Autonomy?	<i>Schloendorff v New York Hospital</i> ; Elliott “Amputees by Choice” Watch in class: <i>Complete Obsession</i>
2/7: Unrestricted Autonomy? What is Mental Illness?	Ramirez “Philosophy of Mental Illness”
2/9: What is Mental Illness?	Ramirez (cont’d)
<u>Assignments</u>	
Weekly Reading Memo 2	

<u>Weeks 5-6: Transformative Experience</u>	
2/12: What is Transformative Experience (TE)?	Paul <i>Transformative Experience</i> (selections)
2/14: TE & Health	Paul <i>Transformative Experience</i> (selections); Carel et al. “Illness as Transformative Experience”
2/16: TE & Surrogate Decision-Making	Shupe “Transformative Experience and the Limits of Revelation”
2/19: TE, Social Identity, & Disability	Barnes “Social Identities and Transformative Experience”
2/21: Catch-up Day	
2/23: Catch-up Day	
<u>Assignments</u>	
Weekly Reading Memo 3 & 4	

<u>Week 7-8: Abortion</u>	
2/26: Introduction	<i>Roe v Wade</i>
2/28 The Famous Violinist	Thomson “A Defense of Abortion”
3/2: Feminism & Abortion: It’s complicated	Schouten “Fetuses, Orphans, and a Famous Violinist”
3/5: Feminism & Abortion	Schouten (Cont’d)
3/7: Abortion and Miscarriage	Berg “Abortion and Miscarriage”
3/9: Catch-Up/Exam 1 Discussion Day	
<u>Assignments</u>	
Weekly Reading Memo 5 & 6	
3/1: Philosophy in Life Post 1	
3/2: Philosophy in Life Comments	

<u>Week 9: Ethics in Medicine Discussion Week</u>	
3/12-3/16 Discussion of Findings	
<u>Assignments</u>	
Ethics in Medicine Discussion	
3/13 Exam 1 Due by 3pm on Canvas	

<u>Week 10: Break</u>	
3/19-3/23: SPRING BREAK!!!	

<u>Week 11: Euthanasia</u>	
3/26: Introduction	Watch in Class: Right to Die
3/28: Defense of Active of Euthanasia	Rachels “Active and Passive Euthanasia”
3/30: Euthanasia and Playing God?	Feldman “Playing God”
<u>Assignments</u>	
Weekly Reading Memo 7	

<u>Week 12: Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Healthcare</u>	
4/2: Physicians’ Responsibilities	Bostick et al. “Physicians’ Ethical Responsibilities...”
4/4: Citizen’s Responsibilities	Anderson “Segregation and Material Inequality”; “Poor Health: When Poverty Becomes Disease”
4/6: Citizen’s Responsibilities	
<u>Assignments</u>	
Weekly Reading Memo 8	
4/3: Medical Ethics in the Media	

Week 13: Obesity and Personal Responsibility

4/9: Obesity and Libertarian Paternalism

Skipper “Libertarian
Paternalistic Publish Health
Interventions”

4/11: Obesity, Gender, and Personal Responsibility

Reiheld “All Due Caution”

4/13: Catch-Up/Presentation Prep

Assignments

Weekly Reading Memo 9

4/12: Philosophy in Life Post 2

4/13: Philosophy in Life Comments

Weeks 14-15: Presentation Debates

4/16-4/27: Presentation Debates

Assignments

Presentation Debates

4/19: Critical Paper (for Groups Presenting During Second Week)

4/26: Critical Paper (for Groups Presenting During First Week)

Week 16: Dead Week

4/30-5/4: Catch-Up & Review

Assignments

5/2: Change of Mind

Week 17: Finals Week

Exam 2