

## **PHILO 365: Medical Ethics**

Professor: Josh DiPaolo

Office: Dickens 308A

Office Hours: M 2:30-3:30pm, Th 10:30-11:30am & By appointment.

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**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 who can 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 along with 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**: rather than just learning what others have thought, you will try to answer the questions raised in the course through rational means.

### **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 is abortion ethical?
9. When are euthanasia or physician-assisted suicide ethical? Are these things "playing God"?
10. What are medical professionals' 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?

**Photographic, video, and audio recording in class are strictly prohibited.**

## Grading Policy

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Exam 1	100 Points
Exam 2	100 Points
8 Reading Memos	80 Points
Short Paper	20 Points
<u>Presentation Debate</u>	<u>100 Points</u>
	400 Points

A	> 90%	360-400 Points
B	> 80%	320-359 Points
C	> 70%	280-319 Points
D	> 60%	240-279 Points
F	< 60%	0-239 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 10 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

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**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 assess your grasp of the readings and in-class discussions, provide you with more incentive to reflect on the material, and allow you to demonstrate what you've learned.

**Reading Memos:** 8 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.

Memo instructions: You'll reflect philosophically on some component of the article. This might mean raising an objection, or 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.

Late memos will only be accepted in rare circumstances.

**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.

**Short Paper:** I want you to develop a habit of thinking about current medical ethical issues. This paper provides you an opportunity to do that.

You will find a news article, video, or podcast related to a medical ethical issue, provide me with access to the media source (include a link at the end of your paper), summarize it very 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. This paper should be about 2-4 double-spaced pages.

**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

**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 hold regular office hours 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.<sup>1</sup>

**I would like each student to visit my office once during the 5<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> 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.

## 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:

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<sup>1</sup> 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>

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](http://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](mailto:accesscenter@k-state.edu), 785-532-6441; for K-State Polytechnic campus, contact Academic and Student Services at [polytechnicadvising@ksu.edu](mailto:polytechnicadvising@ksu.edu) or call 785-826-2974.

### **Tentative Schedule**

<b><u>Week 1</u></b>	
1/23: Introduction	
1/25: Introduction; Hurricane Katrina Podcast	Logic Lecture
<b><u>Week 2: Arguments and Ethical Theory</u></b>	
1/28: Philosophical Argumentation	Logic Lecture
1/30: Utilitarianism and Kantianism	Crash Course Videos on Utilitarianism and Kant
2/1: Virtue Ethics, Religion, & Hippocratic Oath	Crash Course Video on Virtue Ethics; Hippocratic Oath

<b><u>Week 3: Truth-Telling, Paternalism, and Epistemic Injustice</u></b>	
2/4: Truth-Telling	Collins “Should Doctors Tell the Truth?” Higgs “On Telling Patients the Truth”
2/6: Epistemic Injustice	Kidd & Carell “Epistemic Injustice and Illness” (Focus on §§1-3, skip §4.) <i>Schloendorff v New York Hospital</i>
2/8: No Class	
<b><u>Assignments</u></b>	
Weekly Reading Memo 1	

<b><u>Week 4: Autonomy</u></b>	
2/11: No Class	Elliott “Amputees by Choice” Watch before class: <i>Complete Obsession</i>
2/13: Unrestricted Autonomy?	Ramirez “Philosophy of Mental Illness”
2/15: More on Autonomy	

<b><u>Week 5: Transformative Experience</u></b>	
2/18: What is Transformative Experience (TE)?	Paul <i>Transformative Experience</i> (selections)
2/20: Catch-Up	
2/22: No Class	Watch “Sound & Fury”
<b><u>Week 6: Transformative Experience</u></b>	
2/25: TE & Health	Paul <i>Transformative Experience</i> (selections); Cochlear Implants Fact Sheet;
2/27: TE & Surrogate Decision-Making	Shupe “Transformative Experience and the Limits of Revelation”
3/1: TE, Disability, & Epistemic Injustice	Barnes “Taking Their Word for It”
<b><u>Assignments</u></b>	
Weekly Reading Memos 2 & 3	

<b><u>Week 7: Abortion</u></b>	
3/4: Catch-Up	
3/6: Introduction	<i>Roe v Wade</i>
3/8 The Famous Violinist	Thomson “A Defense of Abortion”
<b><u>Assignments</u></b>	
Weekly Reading Memo 4	
3/6: Philosophy in Life Post 1	
3/7: Philosophy in Life Comments	

<b><u>Week 8: Spring Break</u></b>	
3/11-3/15: Spring Break	
<b><u>Week 9: Abortion</u></b>	
3/18: Feminism & Abortion: It's complicated	Schouten "Fetuses, Orphans, and a Famous Violinist"
3/20: Abortion and Miscarriage	Berg "Abortion and Miscarriage"
3/22: Catch-Up/Exam 1 Discussion Day	
<b><u>Assignments</u></b>	
Weekly Reading Memo 5	
<b><u>Week 10: Ethics in Medicine Discussion Week</u></b>	
3/25-3/29 Discussion of Findings	
<b><u>Assignments</u></b>	
Ethics in Medicine Discussion	
3/28: Exam 1	
<b><u>Week 11: Euthanasia</u></b>	
4/1: Introduction	Watch in Class: Right to Die Rachels "Active and Passive Euthanasia" Feldman "Playing God"
4/3: Defense of Active of Euthanasia	
4/5: Euthanasia and Playing God?	
<b><u>Assignments</u></b>	
Weekly Reading Memo 6	
<b><u>Week 12: Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Healthcare</u></b>	
4/8: Physicians' Responsibilities	Bostick et al. "Physicians' Ethical Responsibilities..." Anderson "Segregation and Material Inequality"; "Poor Health: When Poverty Becomes Disease"
4/10: Citizen's Responsibilities	
4/12: Citizen's Responsibilities	
<b><u>Assignments</u></b>	
Weekly Reading Memo 7	
<b><u>Week 13: Obesity and Personal Responsibility</u></b>	
4/9: Obesity and Libertarian Paternalism	Skipper "Libertarian Paternalistic Public Health Interventions" Sunstein "The Ethics of Nudging"
4/11: Nudging	
4/13: Catch-Up/Presentation Prep	
<b><u>Assignments</u></b>	
Weekly Reading Memo 8	
4/13: Philosophy, Medicine, & Art (Extra Credit)	

**Weeks 14-15: Presentation Debates**

4/22-5/3: Presentation Debates

**Assignments**

Presentation Debates

4/25: Short Paper (for Groups Presenting During Second Week)

5/2: Short Paper (for Groups Presenting During First Week)

5/1: Philosophy in Life Post 2

5/2: Philosophy in Life Comments

**Week 16: Dead Week**

5/6: Medical Ethics Interview Discussion

5/8-5/10: Catch-Up & Review

**Assignments**

5/6: Change of Mind (Extra Credit)

**Week 17: Finals Week**

Exam 2