Biomedical Ethics -- PHI 110
Section FA
Room M224 (Nassau Hall)

Instructor: Ms. A.J. Favia
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Office: M217 F Office Hours: By Appointment

Course Description:

In this course, we will examine the ethical issues that arise in the field of medicine and related areas of biomedical research. The first part of the course introduces several traditional ethical theories in conjunction with examples from the health care setting. An understanding of these theories will help establish the foundations needed for thoughtful analysis and evaluation of the ethical dilemmas that arise within the context of medical practice. The second part of the course focuses on the application of these foundations to a variety of ethical challenges encountered in the practice of medicine and associated areas of research. Such issues will include: truth-telling, suicide, euthanasia, abortion, cloning, health care policy and more.

Course Objectives:

- Establish a basic understanding of ethical theories used to handle bioethical issues.
- Develop an awareness of the specific ethical challenges that arise in the field of medicine and associated areas of research.
- Articulate and understand alternative approaches to resolving biomedical ethical dilemmas.
- Develop critical thinking skills required to carefully examine and evaluate others, as well as your own, views on what ought to be done when such ethical dilemmas arise.

Required Books:

Thomas A. Mappes and David Degrazia, Biomedical Ethics, 6th Edition, (McGraw Hill, 2006) --- Available at the Campus Bookstore

Photocopies of other readings will be provided for you.
Assessment: Grades will be determined in the following manner:

- Class Participation -- 10%
- Four Case Study Analyses (5% each) -- 20%
- One Position Paper -- 20%
- Two Exams (Exam I: 20% + Exam II: 30%) -- 50%

Course Requirements:

- Class Participation
  Class participation will be calculated based on attendance and participation in class discussions.

  Philosophy may be a difficult subject, but it is the only subject you will probably ever study in school in which your ideas and your reasoning are as important as what is written in the texts. Through thoughtful reading and reflection, and through reasoned arguments, you must form your own ideas and find your own solutions to problems for which, in most cases, there is no one “right” answer. Class discussions, therefore, are particularly important and relevant in this course, and students are encouraged to say what they think is right, to agree and disagree, to present their own ideas and argue for them, but also to listen carefully and respectfully to the ideas and arguments of others.

- Four Case Study Analyses
  A brief analysis of a case study that addresses ethical issues related to the readings. All case study analyses must be typed.

- One Position Paper
  In this paper you will address an ethical issue raised in the readings by discussing opposing positions and defending one side. A list of topics will be provided for you. All papers must be typed, double spaced, standard margins, with font size #12

- All assignments must be handed in ON TIME.

- Two Exams
  The first exam (Exam I) will cover the ethical theories and moral principles covered in the first part of the semester. Exam II will be a cumulative exam. Both exams will be given in class.

- Further details regarding assignments and exams will be provided in class.

- Reading Assignments
  How to Help Yourself: Take notes in a notebook while you are reading, and/or write down a short summary of what you have understood after reading each selection.
Attendance and Lateness Policy:
Your presence in class is vital to your education. Being in class is not just about listening to a lecture. Class time provides you with an opportunity to ask questions and participate in discussions that help you learn the material.

Poor attendance, which includes lateness, will affect your grade negatively. Excessive absences may result in automatic failure of the course.

Academic Integrity:
“Allegations of plagiarism or any form of academic dishonesty shall be dealt with by the appropriate academic department personnel, unless they determine that it goes beyond the scope of departmental sanctions. In such a case the matter will be referred to the Dean of Students' Office in writing. The Dean, Assistant, or Associate Dean of Students will use his/her discretion in determining whether the alleged violation could warrant suspension or expulsion.”
(Student Code of Conduct http://www.ncc.edu/administration/policies/code_conduct.htm)

Cell Phones:
Turn OFF all cell phones and electronic devices (iPod, BlackBerry, etc.) before class begins. Students who do not abide by this may be asked to leave the class and consequently counted as absent from class.

Contact Information:
I can be contacted via email at afavia@gc.cuny.edu. If you do not receive an acknowledgment response from me within a day of your email then I have not received your email.

Class Schedule
(subject to revision)

Week 1:

Introduction

Introduction to Course
Ch. 1 Introduction: The Nature of Biomedical Ethics pp. 1-4
Assessing Competing Ethical Theories pp. 4-6

Ethical Theories

Week 2:

Utilitarianism pp. 6-17
Kantian Deontology pp. 17-23
Week 3:

Prima Facie Duties, The Principles & Virtue Ethics  
Ethics of Care, Casuistry & Reflective Equilibrium  
pp. 23-30  
pp. 30-37

Week 4:

Ethical Relativism & Fundamental Concepts and Principles  
Review for Exam  
pp. 38-58

Week 5:

Exam I

Note: It is suggested that you read the introduction to each chapter we cover along with the assigned readings.

The Physician-Patient Relationship  
pp. 70-76

Week 6:

Physician-Patient Models  
Truth-Telling  
pp. 76-89  
pp. 90-102

Week 7:

Informed Consent  
Decisional Capacity  
Case Analysis #1 Due  
pp. 102-118

Week 8

Families and Medical Decision Making  
Confidentiality  
pp. 192-210  
pp. 211-223

Week 9:

Competent Adults & Refusal of Life-Sustaining Treatment  
Refusal of Life-Sustaining Treatment & Euthanasia  
Advance Directives & Treatment Decisions for Incompetent Adults  
Case Analysis #2 Due  
pp. 327-340  
Copy  
pp. 350-365
**Week 10:**

- Morality of Suicide & Morality of Active Euthanasia  
  pp. 384-403
- Physician Assisted Suicide, Active Euthanasia and Social Policy  
  pp. 417-445

**Week 11:**

- The Morality of Abortion  
  Paper Topic Due  
  pp. 457-483
- Abortion and Social Policy  
  Case Analysis #3 Due  
  pp. 483-493

**Week 12:**

Thanksgiving Break -- No Class!

**Week 13:**

- Research on Embryonic Stem Cells  
  pp. 493-408
- Reproductive Risk, Prenatal Diagnosis and Selective Abortion  
  Case #4 Due  
  pp. 521-532

**Week 14:**

- Reproductive Technologies & Gamete Donation and Surrogacy  
  pp. 532-565
- Human Cloning & Preimplantation Genetic Diagnosis  
  Paper Due  
  pp. 565-586

**Week 15:**

- Justice, Rights and Societal Obligations  
  pp. 628-645
- Rationing, Managed Care, and Health-Care Reform in the United States  
  pp. 645-671

**Week 16**

- Review for Exam
- Exam II