

**WESTERN UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
Undergraduate Course Outline 2017-18**

Philosophy 2715G: Health Care Ethics

Winter Term
Mon, 1530–1630h; Wed, 1530-1730h
Classroom: SSC 2032
Instructor: Professor Charles Weijer

Office Location: Stevenson Hall 2150B
Office Hours: Mon, 1630–1730h;
Thurs, 1300–1400h
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DESCRIPTION

Ethical issues in health care represent some of the most pressing issues faced by Canadians. In this course, students will learn about the most important bioethical issues across the human life span, from conception to death. At what point in development do human beings acquire moral status? Is it ethical to select human embryos for desirable features? When patients and physicians disagree about treatment, who has the final say? What do we owe the global poor? And can we harvest organs for transplantation from the dead? Diverse philosophical approaches to these—and other—bioethical problems will be considered with an emphasis on the role of moral reasoning. Readings and in-class lectures will be supplemented with discussion of real-world bioethics cases. The course is recommended for students considering a career in the health professions, or those who seek a deeper understanding of contemporary social issues. No prior background in philosophy is assumed.

TEXTS

Weijer C, Skelton A, Brennan S (eds.). *Bioethics in Canada*. Oxford University Press, 2013.

OBJECTIVES

The course has three main objectives. First, the course will familiarize students with important topics in bioethics across the human lifespan. Second, it will expose them to a variety of philosophical approaches to key bioethical problems. Third, it will give students the opportunity to apply these differing philosophical approaches to real cases in bioethics.

REQUIREMENTS

Your grade for the course will be based on two written case analyses, 5 in-class quizzes and a final exam. Each paper is worth 25% of the final grade, each quiz is worth 4% of the final grade and the final exam is worth 30% of the final grade.

1. Case analysis 1

Due date: February 14

Length: No more than 1250 words

Format: Write an ethical analysis of a contemporary ethics case, drawing on course readings.

Value: 25% of final grade

2. Case analysis 2

Due date: April 4

Length: No more than 1250 words

Format: Write an ethical analysis of a contemporary ethics case, drawing on course readings.

Value: 25% of final grade

3. In-class quizzes

When: January 24, February 7, February 28, March 14, and March 28.

Value: 20% of final grade

Format: Quizzes are based on both the lectures and readings. You will be asked, for example, to define a term, to outline an argument, or to detail an objection to an argument.

4. Final exam

When: During exam period

Value: 30% of the final grade

Format: Similar format to the quizzes, plus analysis of one case.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1 (January 8): **Organization and Introduction**

Readings: *Bioethics in Canada*, pages xi–xvii

Week 2 (January 15): **Conception and Embryos**

Readings: *Bioethics in Canada*, pages 1–20

Week 3 (January 22): **Fetuses**

Readings: *Bioethics in Canada*, pages 21–36

NOTE: The first in-class quiz will be held on Wednesday, January 24

Week 4 (January 29): **Procreation and Child Rearing**

Readings: *Bioethics in Canada*, pages 37–55

Week 5 (February 5): **Adults and Decision-making**

Readings: *Bioethics in Canada*, pages 56–73

NOTE: The second in-class quiz will be held on Wednesday, February 7

Week 6 (February 12): **Conflict about Appropriate Treatment**

Readings: *Bioethics in Canada*, pages 74–92

NOTE: First case analysis assignment is due on Wednesday, February 14

Week 7 (February 19): Reading Week: No Class

Week 8 (February 26): **Equipoise and Clinical Research**

Readings: *Bioethics in Canada*, pages 93–110

NOTE: The third in-class quiz will be held on Wednesday, February 28

Week 9 (March 5): **Justice and Access to Health Care**

Readings: *Bioethics in Canada*, pages 111–126

Week 10 (March 12): **Obligations to the Global Poor**

Readings: *Bioethics in Canada*, pages 127–144

NOTE: The fourth in-class quiz will be held on Wednesday, March 14

Week 11 (March 19): **Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia**

Readings: *Bioethics in Canada*, pages 145–162

Week 12 (March 26): **Defining Death**

Readings: *Bioethics in Canada*, pages 163–179

NOTE: The fifth in-class quiz will be held on Wednesday, March 28

Week 13 (April 2): **Harvesting Organs from the Dead**

Readings: *Bioethics in Canada*, pages 180–193

NOTE: Second case analysis assignment is due on Wednesday, April 4, 2017

Week 14 (April 9): **Review**

AUDIT

Students wishing to audit the course should consult with the instructor prior to or during the first week of classes.

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY POLICIES

The **Department of Philosophy Policies** which govern the conduct, standards, and expectations for student participation in Philosophy courses is available in the Undergraduate section of the

Department of Philosophy website at <http://uwo.ca/philosophy/undergraduate/policies.html>.

It is your responsibility to understand the policies set out by the Senate and the Department of Philosophy, and thus ignorance of these policies cannot be used as grounds of appeal.

ACCOMMODATION

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the Office of the Dean of the student's Faculty of registration, together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested.

The UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness and further information regarding this policy can be found at

http://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf.

ACADEMIC OFFENCES

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

PLAGIARISM CHECKING

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Student Development Centre <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help. Immediate help in the event of a crisis can be had by phoning 519.661.3030 (during class hours) or 519.433.2023 after class hours and on weekends.