

# Medical Ethics (Honors) Syllabus

Spring 2018

MW 4-5:30pm, M.D. Anderson Library 212L

**Professor:** Dr. Carissa Phillips-Garrett

**Office Location:** M.D. Anderson Library 205A

**Office Hours:** by appointment

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## Course Description

In this course, we will examine how medical practices, technological advancements, and biological and medical research should affect our choices about how we ought to live. After examining the nature of ethical questions, relevant values, and normative ethical theories, we will turn to examining the role of autonomy, consent, and beneficence in considering what responsibilities medical professionals have toward their patients and what informed consent consists in. Using both real-life cases and these concepts, we will turn to examining topics such as the morality of abortion, whether surrogacy is exploitative, the ethical significance of euthanasia, the ethics of vaccination, and the justice of health care distribution.

## Course Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

- (1) Develop sensitivity and an appreciation of the complexity of key ethical problems and issues facing medical practitioners and the healthcare industry.
- (2) Improve skills in listening and analyzing claims and arguments, through careful and critical interactions, both in reading texts and in verbal conversation.
- (3) Increase the capacity to formulate and defend a philosophical position well.
- (4) Develop and practice critically reflection on individual's own beliefs and reasons for holding those beliefs.
- (5) Become more invested and interested in engaging in ethical concerns related to medical practice, healthcare, and biomedical research.

**Text:** Lewis Vaughn (ed.), *Bioethics: Principles, Issues, and Cases* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 2017), Oxford.

**Assignments:** Reading Questions (10%), Medical Lottery Assignment (10%), Debate (20%), Paper (30%), Case Analysis Presentation & Brief (20%), Participation (10%)

- Reading Questions: Questions should indicate that (a) you have carefully read the reading assignment and (b) that you are engaging in a conversation with the ideas, arguments, narrative, and so on found in the texts. The questions should *not* be yes/no or factual questions but questions that would require an argument to answer. Each

question should concern the text selection that we will discuss in class that day, or should relate the text to a previously covered text. You will submit entries before each class via the Blackboard Discussion Board feature, beginning with the **Monday, January 29<sup>th</sup>** discussion. They will be due before midnight on the day before each class (e.g., for Monday's class, they will be due by 11:59pm on Sunday, and for Wednesday's class, they will be due by 11:59pm on Tuesday). Each entry should concern the text that we will discuss in class that day. Each entry will be worth *one* point. Since there are more class periods than allocated points, each extra entry will count as one extra credit point (up to a maximum of 3 points). This also means you may skip a certain number without penalty.

- Medical Lottery Assignment: Each student will be asked to take on the role of a person with a particular medical condition, disease, or genetic marker throughout the semester. This will be both an imaginative and research assignment; you will be asked to both research the details of your assigned condition, as well as develop a rich narrative of the life of one person with the condition. Throughout the semester, you will be expected to embody the person you create, and to convey this embodiment through short oral presentations, exercises in class, and a final report, which will be due on **Monday, April 30<sup>th</sup>** in class.
- Debate: There will be several in-class debates over the course of the semester, and each student will participate either as a debater or a judge. Students will be able to express a preference for a role (debater or judge) and/or topic. Each debate will have student judges (in addition to the instructor) who will determine the winner. Debate participants will be graded both on their individual performance in the debate and also on the team's research brief. Judges will offer brief verbal explanations for their votes in class, but afterward, a more detailed, written explanation of the rationale will be required. Additionally, judges will also be asked to examine the arguments for the side they voted against, and to assess the single most compelling argument available to that side (whether the team on that side argued for that position or not), and include this at the end of the written assessment.
- Paper: Students will write a paper over the course of the semester in stages, with the paper topic proposal and the paper outline due near the end of March and a draft to be workshopped completed by the second week of April. The final draft will be due on **Sunday, April 22<sup>nd</sup> by 11:59pm** online (with a paper packet copy to be turned in at class on **Monday, April 23<sup>rd</sup>**). The paper is a critical exploration of one of the issues covered in the course. Students are encouraged to meet in advance of the initial draft to discuss the paper with me. Two links on writing a good philosophy paper are below:  
(1) A Prezi with a sample annotated paper:

[http://prezi.com/z4h1\\_fwilbxj/a-sample-philosophy-paper/](http://prezi.com/z4h1_fwilbxj/a-sample-philosophy-paper/)

(2) A written guide to the kind of argument and structure required in a philosophy paper: <http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>

- **Case Analysis Presentation & Brief:** In lieu of a traditional written final exam, each student will be assigned to a team that will act as an ethics consulting team. Together you will be assigned a case and must come to a conclusion about how to handle the case. You must prepare a brief explaining the case, the ethical considerations raised by the case, and the conclusion that your team came to. Since we are only covering a narrow range of topics in the course, these cases will concern issues in medical ethics that we are not exploring in depth. Each group will present their conclusions and respond to questions during the final exam period on **Wednesday, May 9<sup>th</sup> from 5-8pm.**
- **Participation:** When we come together, we are engaged in analyzing and seeking to understand the texts that we read together, so active participation in class discussion is expected. This is a seminar, not a lecture, so reading (and thinking about) the texts we will discuss that day in class beforehand is essential for having a good discussion. If you find you are having difficulty participating, please come talk with me about it. I recognize that some students are less comfortable than others speaking in class, but thinking in advance about the topic and reflecting on the texts before class should enable all students to have something to contribute regularly. You will be expected to keep a log of your participation which will be submitted and graded.

## **Grading Scale**

I use an “accumulated points” model of grading. There are 100 possible points to be earned over the course of the semester: 10 for participation, 10 for reading questions, 10 for the medical lottery assignment, 20 for the debate, 30 for the paper, and 20 for the case presentation and brief.

A+ = 98-100	A = 93-97	A- = 90-92
B+ = 87-89	B = 83-86	B- = 80-82
C+ = 77-79	C = 73-76	C- = 70-72
D+ = 67-69	D = 63-66	D- = 60-62
F = 59 and below		

## **Attendance Policy**

As conversational partners, we all have a responsibility to participate in pushing the discussion forward in the classroom. This only happens if we are all engaged, however, and a necessary (but not sufficient!) condition of this is being present for the discussion. Thus, three absences for any reason are allowed without penalty but after that, each absence will result in a two-point drop in the final grade (e.g., if your grade without counting absences is a 90, an A-, and you have a total of four unexcused absences, your final grade would become 86, a B). It's up to you how you use your absences, so it would be wise to reserve an absence for something

unexpected that may happen late in the semester (e.g., being too sick to come to class or getting a flat tire on your way to class). If an unexpected or chronic issue comes up that will affect your ability to get other work done or will cause more than one absence in a row (e.g., a family tragedy or chronic illness), please speak with me directly as soon as possible.

### **Late Policy**

No late reading questions will be accepted. Late papers will lose 0.3% of the total points as a late penalty per day, and after one week, no credit will be given. Given the university's deadlines for turning in final grades, the final assignment must be presented and submitted at the appointed time. If you have extenuating circumstances, please speak with me as far in advance as possible.

### **Classroom Expectations**

- Please use language that is respectful and inclusive. I expect and encourage disagreeing with the views expressed (either by the readings, other students, or me), but please target the argument you disagree with, not the person.
- Come to class prepared for discussion of the readings assigned for that day.
- While in the classroom, remain focused on the discussion for this class.
- Please arrive on time. I will respect your time by ensuring that we finish class on time, so please respect the rest of the class by arriving on time so that your entrance is not disruptive. Although I will not “call roll” every class period, I do keep track of attendance, and if you are often not there at the beginning of class, you may be marked absent even if you show up later.
- Please arrive at class prepared to remain in the classroom for the duration of the class period. Sometimes unexpected things come up that may require you to leave the classroom (e.g., an emergency phone call, a sudden illness, or needing to use the restroom), but prepare for those things that you can (e.g., leaving the classroom simply to refill your water bottle is disruptive, and could be remedied by refilling it before class).

### **Communication**

- Feel free to email me at any time, but please first check that the answer is not found in the syllabus.
- I will respond to emails within 24 business hours, which does not include weekends (so if you email me by Thursday evening, expect an email back by late Friday, but if you email me on Friday evening, don't expect a reply until sometime on Monday).
- It is every student's responsibility to regularly check his/her official UH email, which will be used for all communication. If you have a problem accessing this (e.g., if you forward your UH email, for instance, your email provider may block incoming UH emails, as happened with Yahoo! and Hotmail last fall), it is your responsibility to resolve this as soon as possible.

## Electronics Policy

Cell phones, tablets, and other non-laptop electronic devices must be put away during the class. **If you use your phone or your computer for non-classroom business during class, you may be counted as absent for the day.** Although there is no formal policy banning the use of laptops in class, it is worth noting that recent research (such as this study: <http://pss.sagepub.com/content/25/6/1159>) has found that taking hand-written notes improves learning more than taking typed notes on a laptop or other electronic device. If you do choose to use a laptop, please remember that you will still need notebook paper and writing instruments, since I will need a hard copy when I collect writing assignments in class. Additionally, if you do use a laptop, I expect that you will refrain from doing tasks not relevant to the class discussion (e.g., checking email or working on homework for another class). It is not only distracting for you, but also distracting and disrespectful to the other students around you (one recent study that illustrates this point is found here: [www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0360131512002254](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0360131512002254)).

## Academic Honesty

All students will be expected to follow UH's Academic Honesty Policy, found at [http://www.uh.edu/provost/policies/honesty/\\_documents-honesty/academic-honesty-policy.pdf](http://www.uh.edu/provost/policies/honesty/_documents-honesty/academic-honesty-policy.pdf). This document outlines the University's expectations for the integrity of your academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. While it is expected that you will discuss the issues in the course with other students both in and out of class, *all written work you turn in must be your own*. Passages taken from another source must be *explicitly quoted and cited*, and simply changing the phrasing while retaining the structure of another's idea(s) is also unacceptable. It is not acceptable to submit for credit in this class work previously submitted for another class, even if it is your own work. You can learn more about what constitutes plagiarism by reading <http://guides.lib.uh.edu/plagiarism>, and any questions about its scope should be addressed prior to handing in your written assignments. Ignorance of what is required will not be accepted as an excuse.

## Disabilities

If you have a documented disability that will impact your work in this class, please contact me to discuss your needs in the first two weeks of class. Additionally, you will need to register with the Center for Students with DisABILITIES (you may contact them via phone at 713-743-5400, or via email at [uhcsd@central.uh.edu](mailto:uhcsd@central.uh.edu)).

## Student Well Being

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) can help students who are having difficulties managing stress, adjusting to college, or feeling sad and hopeless. You can reach CAPS ([www.uh.edu/caps](http://www.uh.edu/caps)) by calling 713-743-5454 during and after business hours for routine appointments or if you or someone you know is in crisis. No appointment is necessary for the

“Let's Talk” program, a drop-in consultation service at convenient locations and hours around campus. [http://www.uh.edu/caps/outreach/lets\\_talk.html](http://www.uh.edu/caps/outreach/lets_talk.html)

The syllabus is subject to change. All participants will be notified of changes in a timely manner.

### Initial Reading Schedule

Most readings will be in the Vaughn textbook; those that are not will be uploaded to Blackboard and are indicated with an asterisk (\*) below.

#### Moral Questions & Theory

**Wed, 1/17: No Class—Class canceled due to weather**

**Mon, 1/22: Introduction: Ethical Questions & Medical Ethics**

**Wed, 1/24: Moral Values, Religion, & Culture** (pp. 3-18)

**Mon, 1/29: Utilitarianism, Kantian Ethics, & Natural Law Theory** (pp. 34-42, 56-61)

**Wed, 1/31: Contractarianism & Virtue Ethics** (pp. 42-44, 62-64)

**Mon, 2/5: No Class—Research Day for Medical Lottery Assignment**

**Wed, 2/7: Medical Lottery Presentation #1**

**Mon, 2/12: Ethics of Care, Feminist Ethics, Moral Argument & Comparative Moral Criteria** (pp. 19-29, 44-53, 65-70)

#### Paternalism, Informed Consent, & Truth-Telling

**Wed, 2/14: Paternalism & Patient Autonomy** (Ch. 3: pp. 91-93 plus Alan Goldman, “The Refutation of Medical Paternalism” & Terrence F. Ackerman, “Why Doctors Should Intervene”)

**Mon, 2/19: Professional Autonomy** (Ch. 3: Robert L. Schwartz, “Autonomy, Futility, and the Limits of Medicine”; Patrick C. Beeman & Ryan C. Vanwoerkom, “Patient Autonomy and Physical Responsibility”; California Court of Appeal, *Bouvia v. Superior Court*)

**Wed, 2/21: Truth-Telling** (Ch. 4: pp. 144-152 plus Mack Lipkin, “On Telling Patients the Truth”; Susan Cullen & Margaret Klein, “Respect for Patients, Physicians, and the Truth”; \*Atul Gawande, “Letting Go: What Should Medicine Do When It Can’t Save Your Life?”)

**Mon, 2/26: Informed Consent** (Ch. 5: pp. 196-208 plus Ruth R. Faden & Tom L. Beauchamp, “The Concept of Informed Consent”; Howard Brody, “Transparency: Informed Consent in Primary Care”)

**Wed, 2/28: Human Research, Consent, & Ethical Codes** (Ch. 6: pp. 239-272 plus Allan M. Brandt, “Racism and Research: The Case of Tuskegee Syphilis Study”)

**Mon, 3/5: Randomized Clinical Trials & Consent** (Ch. 6: Samuel Hellman & Deborah S. Hellman, “Of Mice but Not Men”; “A Response to a Purported Ethical Difficulty with Randomized Clinical Trials Involving Cancer Patients”; Don Marquis, “How to Resolve an Ethical Dilemma Concerning Randomized Clinical Trials”)

**Wed, 3/7: Debate #1**

Spring Break (3/12-16)

### Genetic Enhancement & Disability

**Mon, 3/19: Medical Lottery Presentation #2**

**Wed, 3/21: Conserving Disability** (\*Liza Mundy, “A World of Their Own”; \*Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, “The Case for Conserving Disability”)

**Fri, 3/23: Paper Draft DUE**

**Mon, 3/26: Disabilities & Harm** (Ch. 9: Laura M. Purdy, “Genetics and Reproductive Risk: Can Having Children Be Immoral?”; Dena S. Davis, “Genetic Dilemmas and the Child’s Right to an Open Future”; Dan W. Brock, “The Non-Identity Problem and Genetic Harms”)

**Wed, 3/28: Genetic Enhancement & Eugenics** (Ch. 9: John Harris, “Is Gene Therapy a Form of Eugenics?”; Walter Glannon, “Genetic Enhancement”; and \*Michael Sandel, “The Case Against Perfection”)

**Mon, 4/2: Debate #2**

### Euthanasia

**Wed, 4/4: Euthanasia & Autonomy** (Ch. 10: Vaughn, pp. 625-641; Dan W. Brock, “Voluntary Active Euthanasia”; and \*Brittany Maynard, “My Right to Death with Dignity at 29”)

**Mon, 4/9: Self-Determination & the Right to Die** (Ch. 10: Daniel Callahan, “When Self-Determination Runs Amok”; John Arras, “Physician-Assisted Suicide: A Tragic View”)

**Wed, 4/11: Refusing Treatment vs. Suicide** (Ch. 10: James Rachels, “Active vs. Passive Euthanasia”; John Hardwig, “Dying at the Right Time”)

**Mon, 4/16: Debate #3**

### Global Health

**Wed, 4/18: Global Health as a Right** (TBA)

**Mon, 4/23: Global Pharmaceutical Access; Paper (hard copy) DUE** (\*David B. Resnik, “Developing Drugs for the Developing World”; \*Dan W. Brock, “Some Questions about the Moral Responsibilities of Drug Companies in Developing Countries”; \*Norman Daniels, “Social Responsibility and Global Pharmaceutical Companies”)

**Wed, 4/25: Research & Vulnerable Populations** (Ch. 10: Marcia Angell, “The Ethics of Clinical Research in the Third World”; Baruch Brody, “Ethical Issues in Clinical Trials in Developing Countries”)

**Mon, 4/30: Debate #4**

**Wed, 5/2: Medical Lottery Report DUE**

**Wed, 5/9 (5-8pm): Ethics Case Presentations**