

Phil 2440: Medical Ethics

Tuesdays/Thursdays 11-12:15pm – Strickland Hall #310

Instructor: Kenneth Shields

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 2-3pm; Wednesdays 9-10am

Location: Strickland Hall, #436

Text: All readings will be available through Blackboard.

Other required materials: access to (1) Blackboard, (2) a word processor, (3) a PDF reader.

Course Description

Medical ethics is the intersection of ethical theory and the specific context of medicine and healthcare. In this course, we will be surveying some of the contemporary problems within medical ethics, particularly that of patient/professional relationships, end of life issues, beginning of life issues, and disability. However, I want to emphasize that this course is primarily designed to help you develop a certain skill. This skill is sometimes referred to as one's capacity for critical thinking, or as one's reflective capacity. You already have this capacity to some degree – this course is intended to help you develop it. And just as you can develop your physical strength through proper diet and exercise, you can also develop your critical thinking capacity through proper reading, writing, discussion and argumentation.

Course Goals

After completing the entire course, you should be able to:

- Grasp and explain some of the predominant philosophical positions within contemporary value theory and normative ethics.
- Grasp and explain some of the predominant philosophical issues and problems in medical ethics.
- Distinguish among a variety of different kinds of claims (e.g., metaethical versus ethical; descriptive versus prescriptive; epistemological versus metaphysical), as well as determine what kinds of evidence such claims would require if to be reasonably believed.
- Construct formal arguments from informal written passages and essays.
- Grasp various approaches to handling issues concerning patient/professional relationships, the end of life, the beginning of life, and disability.

What you should expect from this course

For many of you, this may be your first experience with doing philosophy. So it's extremely important that you appreciate just how *difficult* being introduced to something for the first time can be! For example, an introductory course on playing the piano would be quite

challenging if you had no previous experience playing piano. Given that this will likely be your first experience with doing philosophy, you should expect an analogous challenge. But just like learning to play piano, your persistence and diligent practice in this course will be rewarded with the development of your abilities.

What I (and your peers) expect from you

Aristotle once said, “It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it.” It is expected that you will keep this quote in mind, for we will be entertaining thoughts that you might find offensive or morally abhorrent. There will be occasions where you disagree with something I or one of your peers has said, and when that time comes, we expect you to be respectful and temperate when raising your objections. Critical, reflective discussion is practically impossible when tempers are high – try to remember that we are only evaluating thoughts and ideas, not people and their characters.

What you should expect from me

As the instructor for this course, you should expect me to explain the material using clear examples and relevant discussion, to be available during office hours to assist and address any questions you may have, to grade assignments in a timely manner, and to respond to emails within a reasonable time. I plan on offering a questionnaire evaluating how I’m doing as an instructor around mid-semester, but any concerns you have can be discussed with me during office hours.

Course Outline

(Tentative: Material may be added or deleted as time/interest allows or requires. The reading assignments will be given in class and/or on blackboard.)

Week	Topic
1.	<u>Introduction and Moral Reasoning</u> Willingham, “Why Don’t Students Like School?” (Suggested) Blackburn, “What is Philosophy?” Shafer-Landau, “Introduction to Ethics and Moral Reasoning”
2.	<u>Logic / Value Theory</u> Feinberg, “A Logic Lesson” Shafer-Landau, “Hedonism – Part 1” Shafer-Landau, “Hedonism – Part 2”
3.	<u>Value Theory / Ethical Theory</u> Shafer-Landau, “Desire-Satisfaction Theory – Part 1” Shafer-Landau, “Desire-Satisfaction Theory – Part 2” Shafer-Landau, “Consequentialism – Part 1”
4.	<u>Ethical Theory</u> Shafer-Landau, “Consequentialism – Part 2” Shafer-Landau, “Kantian Ethics – Part 1” Shafer-Landau, “Kantian Ethics – Part 2”

5. Basic Principles of Medical Ethics
"Hippocratic Oath"
AMA Principles of Medical Ethics
Four Principles in Medical Ethics
Ackerman, "Why Doctors Should Intervene"
6. Patient/Professional Relationship
AMA – Patient/Physician Relationship
Childress and Siegler – "Metaphors and Models of Doctor-Patient Relationships"
Lipkin, "On Lying to Patients"
Higgs, "Truth Telling"
7. Informed Consent, Competence and Decision-Making
Brody, "Transparency-Informed Consent in Primary Care"
Buchanan and Brock, "Standards of Competence"
Tomlinson, "Who Decides, and What?"
8. Mid-term Exam
9. End of Life: Euthanasia
Quill, "Death and Dignity: A Case of Individualized Decision-Making"
Callahan, "When Self-Determination Runs Amok"
Gay-Williams, "The Wrongfulness of Euthanasia"
10. End of Life: Euthanasia
Rachels, "Active and Passive Euthanasia"
Brock, "Voluntary Active Euthanasia"
11. Spring Break
12. Beginning of Life: Abortion
Marquis, "Why Abortion is Immoral"
Thomson, "A Defense of Abortion"
13. Beginning of Life: Abortion
Sumner, "A Moderate View"
Callahan, "A Case for Pro-life Feminism"
14. Beginning of Life: Perivable Birth
Guest Speaker/Readings - TBA
15. Cochlear Implantation and the Deaf Community
Sound and Fury Documentary
Lane and Grodin, "Ethical Issues in Cochlear Implant"
Levy – "Reconsidering Cochlear Implants"
16. Review for Final Exam

Assignments and Grading Criteria

Your course grade will be determined by your grade on two exams (mid-term and final), daily note-taking assignments (random days), in-class activities (random days) and five critiques (on five readings of your choice).

The grade breakdown is as follows (I've tried to evenly distribute credit across different methods of evaluation):

Mid-term:	20%
Final:	20%
Daily Note-taking:	10%
In-class Activities:	10%
Four Critiques:	40%
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Total:	100%

Course Requirements

- Regular attendance and active participation in class are expected. Failure to attend class on a regular basis or repeated behavior that detracts from the quality of the class will result in a request to the Dean to cancel your enrollment in the course.
- Electronic devices (laptops, cell phones, smart phones, tablets, etc.) are *not permitted in class*. Such devices keep you and your fellow philosophers from fully engaging in discussion. Use of these devices counts as disrupting the class, which will result in your enrollment being cancelled. We won't cover anything so quickly that you won't be able to keep up with just pen and paper. Besides, there's research that suggests that having to copy your notes from paper onto your computer helps with retention and assimilation of the material.
- Daily Note-taking (10%)
Philosophical texts are dense, usually involving a lot of jargon and complex ideas. So grasping the ideas and arguments in these texts will require doing some writing of your own. You should get in the habit of taking notes as you read through the assigned readings. In order to help you develop this habit, I will randomly ask for you to turn in your notes on an assigned reading for a grade. I will grade these note-taking assignments for quality as well as completion using the following grading schema: ✓+ = good, ✓ = average, ✓- = subpar. I will replace your three lowest note-taking assignment grades with your three highest note-taking assignment grades at the end of the semester.
- In-class Activities (10%)
There will be a variety of in-class activities and assignments which are meant to give you a chance to practice the kinds of skills and abilities this course is designed to help you develop. They are always low-stakes (e.g., less than one percentage point of your

course grade), completion graded (e.g., ✓ or no grade), and are all designed to help you achieve the course goals. I will replace your two lowest in-class activity grades with your two highest in-class activity grades at the end of the semester.

- Critiques (40%)
Over the course of the semester, you will be required to write **four** critiques over readings selected for this assignment. I will indicate when a reading can be chosen for critique (e.g., any journal article assigned can be chosen). Critiques must be *at least 250 words*, with a *maximum word count of 500*. Each critique must be submitted electronically via blackboard before 10am on the day that particular reading is assigned. Late work is not accepted (see below). **Two** critiques must be submitted before the mid-term exam. The other two must be submitted before the last day of class. At the end of the semester, I will replace one of your lowest critique grades with your highest critique grades. See the [*Critique Instructions*] tab on blackboard for more information regarding instructions and grading for this assignment
- Exams (40%)
There are two exams for this course. Each exam is made up of multiple choice, true/false, position identification, short answer, and essay questions. The final exam *will* be cumulative. Both exams will be taken in class. For each exam, you are allowed a 3x5 index notecard with hand-written notes on both the front and back.
 1. Mid-Term (Thursday, 3/10) (20%)
 2. Final (Monday, 5/9 – 10am-12pm) (20%)

Mid-term exam grade: I realize that the first exam is usually the hardest, given that you don't know what to expect or how best to study for it. For this reason, you will have the option of replacing your mid-term grade with the grade you make on your final. So suppose you make a 60 on the mid-term, but an 80 on the final. In this scenario, I will change your mid-term grade to a 80. But be careful – it would clearly be unwise to blow off the mid-term since you don't know how well you will do on the final. The best course of action is to do your very best on both.

Grades and Other Concerns

- Plus/minus grading will be used: A+ (100%-97%), A (96%-94%), A- (93%-90%) and so on. Grades will not be curved. There will be no extra credit assignments.
- *Late work is not accepted. Missed exams and assignments may be made up only if there is a verified medical excuse or the equivalent and the request is made within one day after the exam or assignment due date.*
- Concerns about grades or any other “business” aspects of the course should be reserved for my office hours. These concerns will not be addressed during class sessions. If the concern remains unresolved, the next step is to contact the Philosophy Department chair, Professor Robert Johnson (438 Strickland Hall).

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is fundamental to the activities and principles of a university. All members of the academic community must be confident that each person's work has been responsibly and honorably acquired, developed, and presented. Any effort to gain an advantage not given to all students is dishonest whether or not the effort is successful. The academic community regards breaches of the academic integrity rules as extremely serious matters. Sanctions for such a breach may include academic sanctions from the instructor, including failing the course for any violation, to disciplinary sanctions ranging from probation to expulsion. When in doubt about plagiarism, paraphrasing, quoting, collaboration, or any other form of cheating, consult the course instructor.

ADA

Students with Disabilities

If you anticipate barriers related to the format or requirements of this course, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need to make arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please let me know as soon as possible.

If disability related accommodations are necessary (for example, a note taker, extended time on exams, captioning), please register with the [MU Disability Center](#), S5 Memorial Union, 573-882-4696, and then notify me of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations.

Intellectual Pluralism

The University community welcomes intellectual diversity and respects student rights. Students who have questions or concerns regarding the atmosphere in this class (including respect for diverse opinions) may contact the departmental chair or divisional director; the director of the [Office of Students Rights and Responsibilities](#); the [MU Equity Office](#), or equity@missouri.edu.

All students will have the opportunity to submit an anonymous evaluation of the instructor(s) at the end of the course.