

# Medical Ethics

PHIL 335  
Fall Term 2015

## Syllabus

### 1. Course Description

The French writer Albert Camus opens one of his major writings, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, as follows: “There is but one truly serious philosophical problem, and that is suicide. Judging whether life is or is not worth living amounts to answering the fundamental question of philosophy. All the rest...comes afterwards.” In a biomedical society like ours, the value of life (and our relation to it) becomes one of the most relevant factors for understanding who we are as human beings. The goal of this course is to provide the essential elements for students to assess future difficult life situations in a critical manner.

From the question of informed consent to the very recent debate on health care, this course spans some of the most important social questions of our time: Could an embryo be called a *person*? Is abortion immoral? In a more secular society, are there arguments concerning the morality of abortion (pro and con) that make no appeal to a transcendent form of goodness (God)? Would it be moral to use embryos for the production of basic materials, such as stem cells, for medical research? Is there any moral difference between active and passive euthanasia? Should we experiment on human beings? If so, what are the necessary conditions to ensure the moral permissibility of such procedures? Lastly, do we, as members of an advanced society, have a right to health care? These moral concerns are at the heart of our social contract. Students will develop the philosophical skills to analyze and to evaluate conflicting positions on complex moral issues. In this class, we are not merely interested in what certain people believe, but also, and more to the point, whether the reasons they give for their beliefs are good ones.

The study of Medical Ethics, by the very nature of its subject, concepts, issues, and manner of inquiry promotes open inquiry from a variety of perspectives. In the contemporary context, emerging biomedical technologies, policies, and practices raise some of the most pressing and significant philosophical challenges that we face as a society, returning us to the perennial philosophical question of “the good life.” In analyzing the legal, moral, and philosophical debates that shape current public discourse on a series of controversial topics, this course trains students to approach complex moral issues with analytical precision, moral concern, and reflective judgment. This involves carefully attending to a range of theoretical positions in dialogue with concrete situations and particular contexts.

### 2. Class Meetings

Class will meet **Tuesday** and **Thursday** from **4:00 - 5:20 pm** in **245 STB**.  
Discussion sections will meet on **Friday** with Justin Pack. Here is the schedule.

CRN	TIME	LOCATION	INSTRUCTOR
16555	1000-1050	307 VOL	Pack J
16556	1100-1150	201 CON	Pack J

3. Office Hours and Contact Information

Office: 250 B Susan Campbell Hall  
 Email: nmorar@uoregon.edu  
 Office Hours: TU 1:30 pm - 3:00 pm

GTF: Justin Pack  
 Office: Knight Library 411  
 Email: pack@uoregon.edu  
 Office Hours: TU 2:00 – 4:00 pm

4. Course Requirements and Grading

Grades on papers and exams will be given on the standard 0-100 point grading scale:

100-93:	A
92-90:	A-
89-87:	B+
86-83:	B
82-80:	B-
79-77:	C+
76-73:	C
72-70:	C-
69-60:	D
59-0:	F

Final grades will be weighted as follows:

Attendance/Class Participation	10%
Homework (14)	35%
Quizzes (3)	15%
Midterm Exam (paper)	20%
Final Paper Exam (paper)	20%

**Participation and Attendance (Discussion Section).** You are expected to participate actively in this class, which includes attending class (both lectures & discussion sections), reading all assigned material prior to class, and participating productively and professionally in discussion sections. Missing more than one discussion section FOR ANY REASON will result in a 1/3 of a full grade reduction (e.g. from A to A-). An additional full grade reduction will be made for each additional missed class after the second (e.g. from A to B). Three late arrivals for class will count as one absence. Discussion is crucial to this class, and all instructors will do their best to make you feel at ease and welcome to contribute to the class conversations. Please feel free to contribute any question, objection, or other thought about the topic at hand when such occurs to you. Although no relevant remark is out of bounds in this class, you will be expected to treat all members of the class respectfully and professionally. The quality and quantity of your participation in the class discussion will be evaluated in assigning 10% of your final grade. Obviously, failure to attend class will negatively affect your participation grade.

**Homework** – During the following weeks (1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9), before our lecture meetings on Tuesday and Thursday (see schedule in the syllabus), you will have to submit your homework via

Canvas. Your homework will consist of a series of questions (of various formats: multiple choice, short answers, etc.) on a philosophical issue related to the reading for that day or questions key to understanding that week's topic. The homework is an opportunity to think critically and to engage with the material.

**Quizzes:** On a number of occasions throughout the course, quizzes will be given either at the beginning or end of the course lecture. These quizzes will be unannounced and will cover the assigned reading for that class period and material covered in the previous lectures. The best way to prepare for these quizzes is to read all assigned materials carefully and review notes from the previous lectures before arriving for class. All quizzes will be counted in calculating your final grade. **No makeup quizzes will be given for any reason.**

**One Midterm and One Final Paper Exam:** Midterm and Final Papers will be 4 – 5 pages (double spaced, Times New Roman 12, standard margins, ~1000-1250 words) and paper topics will be posted 1 week before they are due. *Midterm and final papers will be submitted electronically via Canvas.*

Papers and any other assignments not turned in the day they are due are LATE, and will lose one letter grade for each calendar day that they are late. If you are absent on an exam day, you must (1) have contacted me in advance to tell me of the absence, and (2) return with a written excuse (i.e. medical), in order to be permitted to make up the exam.

***Failure to complete any of the two exams will result in an automatic failure in the course (grade F).***

Grading rubric for exam essays (midterm and final):

A = Excellent. No mistakes, well-written, and distinctive in some way or other.

B = Good. No significant mistakes, well-written, but not distinctive in any way.

C = Okay. Some errors, but a basic grasp of the material.

D = Poor. Several errors. A tenuous grasp of the material.

F = Failing. Problematic on all fronts indicating either no real grasp of the material or a complete lack of effort.

## 5. Learning Outcomes

This course has a number of learning outcomes. The instructors are interested in working with you to develop a series of more general skills that you will need during your college education and even after graduation. These include the ability to:

- Explain and summarize different approaches to medical ethics.
- Articulate and evaluate philosophical arguments
- Develop reading skills (from philosophical texts to science oriented texts)
- Develop communication and argumentation skills (especially in your discussion sections)
- Develop writing skills and learn how to manage your thinking-process in a limited amount of time.

## 6. Course Policies

**Incompletes and extensions** will be given *only* in the event of documented emergencies.

**Emergencies:** In the event of a major campus emergency, course requirements, deadlines and grading percentages are subject to changes that may be necessitated by a revised semester calendar or other circumstances.

**Sexual Violence:** The UO is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic and dating violence and gender-based stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences gender-based violence (intimate partner violence, attempted or completed sexual assault, harassment, coercion, stalking, etc.), know that you are not alone. UO has staff members trained to support survivors in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more.

Please be aware that all UO employees are *required reporters*. This means that if you tell me about a situation, I may have to report the information to my supervisor or the Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity. Although I have to report the situation, you will still have options about how your case will be handled, including whether or not you wish to pursue a formal complaint. Our goal is to make sure you are aware of the range of options available to you and have access to the resources you need.

If you wish to speak to someone confidentially, you can call 541-346-SAFE, UO's 24h hotline, to be connected to a confidential counselor to discuss your options. You can also visit the SAFE website at [safe.uoregon.edu](http://safe.uoregon.edu)

**Accessibility:** If you have a documented disability, please contact me in advance. If you need accommodations in this class, I will work with the Accessible Education Center to find a solution for you.

**Academic Misconduct:** With the advent of the Internet, plagiarism has become an increasingly serious problem at universities around the country, particularly in classes like this one, where papers determine a substantial part of the grade.

In order to avoid plagiarizing from a source, both direct quotations and paraphrases or summaries of material found in traditional print media or on the internet must be acknowledged. If you have any questions about how this definition will be interpreted, please do not hesitate to discuss the matter with me.

Plagiarism and cheating on exams undermines the integrity of the academic community. When undetected, it gives the perpetrator an unfair advantage over students who are graded on the basis of their own work. In this class we will do our best to detect plagiarism and cheating. Students who are aware of violations by others should bring this to my attention. This is the right thing to do. It is also in your own self-interest.

**There will be zero tolerance for plagiarism in this course.** Plagiarized papers will receive a 0, the student will automatically fail the course, and their name will be given to the university authorities. For more on the University of Oregon policy on plagiarism, see the following website:

<http://libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students/>

**External Sources:** Using sources not listed on the syllabus in researching and writing your papers is fine, as long as they are both to the point, and are properly cited. And at all times, when in doubt, cite your sources! It is the best way to avoid being accused of plagiarism. This is probably the best place to make this point, too: Wikipedia can be valuable for getting a very broad grasp of positions and debates, but when it gets into details, especially on philosophic topics, it is very often horrible – sketchy, convoluted, misinformed, and often simply wrong. If you wish to consult online resources, I suggest you use some of the other, much better sites. Most prominent is the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, but others are useful as well:

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy - <http://plato.stanford.edu/>  
The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy - <http://www.iep.utm.edu/>

## 6. Website

All the information about this course and other comments or events related to the class will be posted on the course website and on Canvas, which can be reached via Professor Morar's homepage:

[http://pages.uoregon.edu/nmorar/Nicolae\\_Morar/Phil335Fall15.html](http://pages.uoregon.edu/nmorar/Nicolae_Morar/Phil335Fall15.html)

## 7. Textbook & Readings

### **Required Texts:**

- L. Vaughn, Ed., *Bioethics – Principles, Issues, and Cases* – hereafter as **V**  
Oxford University Press, 2013 ISBN: 978-0-19-979623-6 (**2<sup>nd</sup> Edition**)

**A copy of our textbook will be on reserve at the Knight Library.**

- Additional required readings will be posted on Canvas [CAN].

Supplemental readings will be posted on the course website as the term progresses.

*Other Useful (recommended but not required) readings:*

T. Beauchamp and J. Childress, *Principles of Biomedical Ethics* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.), Oxford U Press  
B. Steinbock, A. London, & J. Arras, *Ethical Issues in Modern Medicine*, (2008), McGraw-Hill

## 8. Topics and Readings

Here is a tentative schedule of topics and readings. Amendments and alterations will be announced in class as we go on the course's website and on Canvas.

<p>Week 1: Moral Reasoning: Utilitarianism and Deontological Approaches</p>	<p><b>Session 1</b> Chapter 1. <i>Moral Reasoning in Bioethics</i> V 3-30</p> <p><b>Session 2.</b> Chapter 2. <i>Bioethics and Moral Theories</i> V 33-51 <i>Homework 1</i> (due before class at 3pm)</p>
<p>Week 2: Abortion</p>	<p><b>Session 1. Abortion, Personhood, and Human Nature</b> Abortion – The Legal, Moral, and Political Debate V 291-301 J. T. Noonan, Jr., “An Almost Absolute Value in History,” V 329-333 <i>Homework 2</i> (due before class at 3pm)</p> <p><i>Recommended readings:</i> Congr. for the Doctrine of Faith, “Respect for human embryos” (Q1) V 440 J. Glover, “The Sanctity of Life,” [CAN]</p> <p><b>Session 2. Abortion, Personhood, and Human Nature</b> J. T. Noonan, Jr., “An Almost Absolute Value in History,” V 329-333 M. A. Warren, “On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion,” V 333-343 <i>Homework 3</i> (due before class at 3pm)</p> <p>J. English, “Abortion and the Concept of a Person,” V 348-354 (<i>recommended</i>)</p>
<p>Week 3: Abortion, Cognitive Disability, and Moral Status</p>	<p><b>Session 1. Abortion</b> J. J. Thomson, “A Defense of Abortion,” V 307-317 <i>Homework 4</i> (due before class at 3pm)</p> <p>D. Marquis, “Why Abortion is Immoral,” V 317-329 (<i>recommended</i>)</p> <p><i>Informal Evaluation of the Course</i></p> <p><b>Session 2. Abortion and Cognitive Disability</b> Singer, “Speciesism and Moral Status” [CAN] <i>Homework 5</i> (due before class at 3pm)</p> <p><i>Recommended readings:</i> McMahan, “Cognitive Disability and Cognitive Enhancement” [CAN] E.F. Kittay, “The Personal is Philosophical is Political” [CAN] McMahan, “The Morality of Screening for Disability” V 549-553</p>

<p>Week 4: Human Cloning, Stem Cells, Biotechnologies &amp; Human Nature</p> <p><b>Midterm Exam</b></p>	<p><b>Session 1. Emotions in Bioethics</b> V 400-404 L. Kass, “The Wisdom of Repugnance”, V <b>483-499</b> <i>Homework 6</i> (due before class at 3pm)</p> <p>D. W. Brock, “Cloning Human Beings: An Assessment...” V 441-452 (<i>recommended</i>)</p> <p><b>Session 2. Emotions in Bioethics</b> Kelly, “Disgust and Normative Ethics” [CAN] <i>Homework 7</i> (due before class at 3pm)</p> <p>Salles &amp; al., “Disgust in Bioethics” [CAN] (<i>recommended</i>)</p> <p><b>Midterm Questions will be posted on CAN on Friday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>.</b></p>
<p>Week 5: Genetic Enhancement and (Human) Nature</p> <p><b>Midterm DUE.</b></p>	<p><b>Session 1. Genetic Enhancement &amp; Human Nature</b> Habermas, <i>The Future of Human Nature</i> pp.16-37 [CAN]</p> <p><i>Recommended readings</i> [CAN]: Lewontin, <i>Triple Helix</i> [excerpts] Morar, “An Empirically Informed Critique of Habermas’ Argument from Human Nature”</p> <p><b>Session 2. Beyond Human Nature – Symbiotic Bioethics</b> Beever &amp; Morar, “The Porosity of Autonomy: Social and Biological Constitution of the Individual in Biomedicine” [CAN]</p> <p><i>Recommended readings</i> [CAN]: S. Gilbert et al, “A Symbiotic View of Life: We Have Never Been Individuals” Schneider &amp; Winslow, “Parts &amp; Wholes: The Human Microbiome, Ecological Ontology, and the Challenges to Community”</p> <p><b>Midterm Papers are due on Friday, October 30<sup>th</sup> before 4:00pm on CAN.</b></p>
<p>Week 6: Paternalism, Autonomy, and Informed Consent</p>	<p><b>Session 1. Paternalism and Autonomy</b> Paternalism and Patient Autonomy V <b>71-80</b> G. Dworkin, “Paternalism,” V <b>84-93</b> <i>Homework 8</i> (due before class at 3pm)</p> <p><b>Session 2. Autonomy and Informed Consent</b> Informed Consent V <b>180-185</b> J. Katz, “Informed Consent—Must It Remain a Fairy Tale?” V <b>195-204</b> <i>Homework 9</i> (due before class at 3pm)</p> <p>Cullen &amp; Klein, “Respect for Patients, Physicians, &amp; the Truth,” V 148-156 (<i>recommended</i>)</p>

<p>Week 7: Experimenting with Human Subjects</p> <p><b>Movie Time</b> (11/12)</p>	<p><b>Session 1. Human Subject Research</b> Human Subject Research V 193-208 The Nuremberg Code (1946) V 213-214 The Belmont Report (1979) V 217-220 <i>Homework 10</i> (due before class at 3pm)</p> <p>Passamani, “Clinical Trials: Are They Ethical?” V 238-242 (<i>recommended</i>)</p> <p><b>Session 2.</b> Movie: <i>How to Die in Oregon</i> - <b>to be projected during class-time</b> - 82 out of 147 min) Active and Passive Euthanasia - V 526-542 <i>Homework 11</i> (due on <b>11/14</b> before 3pm)</p>
<p>Week 8: Active and Passive Euthanasia</p>	<p><b>Session 1.</b> <i>Patrick Tandingan, Medical Director, PeaceHealth Hospice Euthanasia and Physician Assisted Suicide</i> - V 526-542 Byock, “Dying with Dignity” [CAN] <i>Homework 12</i> (due before class at 3pm)</p> <p><b>Session 2.</b> <i>Invited Guests from Compassion and Choices of Oregon</i> Slotnik, “Brittany Maynard, “Death with Dignity Ally’, Dies at 29”, <i>NYT</i> <i>Homework 13</i> (due before class at 3pm)</p> <p>Additional readings proposed by our guests might be posted on CAN.</p>
<p>Week 9: Active and Passive Euthanasia</p> <p><b>Session 2 (11/26)</b></p>	<p><b>Session 1.</b> <i>Euthanasia and Physician Assisted Suicide</i> - V 526-542 J. Rachels, “Active and Passive Euthanasia,” V 580-584 <i>Homework 14</i> (due before class at 3pm)</p> <p>D. Brock, “Voluntary Active Euthanasia,” V 545-556 (<i>recommended</i>)</p> <p><b>No Class (Thanksgiving Break)</b></p>
<p>Week 10: Health Care and Justice</p> <p><b>Session 2</b> <b>(12/3)</b></p>	<p><b>Session 1.</b> <i>Guest Lecturer: Susan Stocker</i>, Visiting Assistant Professor of Philosophy Readings <i>TBA</i></p> <p><b>Class Cancelled</b> (use this additional time to work on your final papers).</p> <p><b>Final Exam Questions</b> will be posted on CAN one week prior to the day they are due on the Registrar’s Office schedule.</p>
<p>Week 11: <b>Final Exam DUE</b></p>	<p><b>Final Papers are due on TBA before 5:00pm on CAN.</b></p>