

Philosophy 214

Honors Biomedical Ethics

MWF 1:00 – 1:50 PM

Literatures, Cultures, and Linguistics Building 1032

Instructor: **Jonathan Livengood**
Office: Gregory Hall 403
Office Hours: MWF 10:00 - 10:50 AM or by appointment
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Action indeed is the sole medium of expression for ethics.
--Jane Addams

If it is not right, do not do it; if it is not true, do not say it.
--Marcus Aurelius

Course Overview and Objectives

Biomedical Ethics (PHIL 214) teaches students to think critically about ethical problems that arise in the fields of medicine and bio-engineering. These typically include topics such as euthanasia, cosmetic surgery, genetic modification, involuntary psychiatric commitment, informed consent, vaccination and other public health initiatives, organ transplantation, non-human animal research, and state provision of healthcare. This semester, the course will focus on ethical, legal, and policy issues related to abortion.

Course Requirements and Grading

Grades: Grades are based on a 400 point scale. Those points are available as follows:

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| 100 | Policy Project |
| 100 | 10 Argument Summaries * 10 Points per Summary |
| 100 | Midterm Argument (20) & Midterm Essay (80) |
| 100 | Final Argument (20) & Final Essay (80) |
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| 400 | Total Points |

Final grades will be determined as follows:

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| A | 376-400 | 94-100% | C | 296-307 | 74-77 |
| A- | 360-375 | 90-94 | C- | 280-295 | 70-74 |
| B+ | 348-359 | 87-90 | D+ | 268-279 | 67-70 |
| B | 336-347 | 84-87 | D | 256-267 | 64-67 |
| B- | 320-335 | 80-84 | D- | 240-255 | 60-64 |
| C+ | 308-319 | 77-80 | F | 0-239 | 0-60 |

Policy Project: Members of the class will be divided into groups of four or five people each. These groups will be *policy groups*. Policy group members will be required to work together to develop a coherent and relatively comprehensive set of ethical, legal, and social policies to govern abortion and related biomedical practices in an imaginary state or nation.

Argument Summaries: There will be ten exercises in which I will identify a portion of an assigned reading and ask you to distill from it a quasi-formal argument, like this:

- [1] Physicians are obligated to provide the best available treatment for their patients.
 - [2] If the expected utility of an experimental treatment is less than the expected utility of a standard treatment, then that experimental treatment is not the best available.
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- [3] If the expected utility of an experimental treatment is less than the expected utility of a standard treatment, then physicians are obligated to provide some other treatment.

Midterm Essay: Instead of a midterm exam, students will write a 1,500 word essay (approximately 6 typed, double-spaced pages in 12-pt Times New Roman font with standard margins) on a selected aspect of the ethics of abortion from the first half of the course. The essay should give one argument for a clearly stated thesis and then give reasons for accepting the premisses of the argument. Students will be required to submit a quasi-formal version of the argument they intend to give in their paper **ten (10) days** before the paper is due.

Final Essay: Instead of a final exam, students will write a 1,500 word essay (approximately 6 typed, double-spaced pages in 12-pt Times New Roman font with standard margins) on a selected aspect of the ethics of abortion from the second half of the course or for some aspect of the ethics of abortion not covered in the course. The essay should give one argument for a clearly stated thesis and then give reasons for accepting the premisses of the argument. Students will be required to submit a quasi-formal version of the argument they intend to give in their paper **ten (10) days** before the paper is due.

Class Schedule

This is the schedule of readings and due dates. Each set of readings should be read *by the date it appears in the list*.

| <u>Dates</u> | <u>Readings</u> |
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| Mon., Aug. 26 | None |
| Wed., Aug. 28 | DeMarco & Jones Ch 01, 17 - 44, Moral Theory ... |
| Fri., Aug. 30 | DeMarco & Jones Ch 01, 44 - 65, Moral Theory ... Rachels 2009 Ch 02 Ethical Theory and Bioethics |
| Mon., Sep. 2 | Labor Day! No Class! |

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| Wed., Sep. 4 | <p>Selections from Larsen <i>Human Embryology</i></p> <p>Magee et al. “Preeclampsia”</p> <p>Forrester & Merz “First-Year Mortality Rates ...”</p> <p>Parker et al. “Updated National Prevalence ...”</p> <p>Heinke “Risk of Stillbirth for Fetuses with ...”</p> <p>Kazma et al. “Anatomical and Physiological ...”</p> <p>Tobiasz et al. “The Onerous Consequences of ...”</p> <p>Dickman et al. “Prolonged Unassisted Survival ...”</p> <p>O’Connell et al. “Anencephaly”</p> <p>Derbyshire & Brockmann “Reconsidering Fetal Pain”</p> <p>Harcourt et al. “Opposition to abortion related to ...”</p> <p>Lee et al. “Fetal Pain”</p> <p>Patev & Hood “Towards a Better Understanding ...”</p> <p>Wikipedia “Definitions of abortion”</p> |
| Fri., Sep. 6 | <p>Finer et al. “Reasons U.S. Women Have Abortions”</p> <p>Chae et al. “Reasons why women have ...”</p> <p>Kirkman et al. “Reasons women give for abortion”</p> <p>Diamant & Mohamed “What the data says about ...”</p> <p>Kortsmitt, et al. “Abortion Surveillance ...”</p> |
| Mon., Sep. 9 | <p>Warren “Abortion”</p> <p>Noonan “Deciding Who Is Human”</p> <p>Warren “On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion”</p> |
| Wed., Sep. 11 | <p>Roe v. Wade SCOTUS Opinion</p> <p>Griswold v. Connecticut SCOTUS Opinion</p> |
| Fri., Sep. 13 | <p>Thomson “The Right to Privacy”</p> <p>Dong et al. “Privacy Analysis of Period Tracking ...”</p> <p>Kupfer “Privacy, Autonomy and Self-Concept”</p> <p>Prosser “Privacy”</p> <p>Warren & Brandeis “The Right to Privacy”</p> |
| Mon., Sep. 16 | <p>Planned Parenthood v. Casey SCOTUS Opinion</p> |
| Wed., Sep. 18 | <p>Romanis “Is ‘viability’ viable?”</p> <p>Cohen & Sayeed “Fetal Pain, Abortion, Viability, ...”</p> <p>Fost et al. “The Limited Moral Significance of ...”</p> |
| Fri., Sep. 20 | <p>Warren “The Moral Significance of Birth”</p> <p>Bobier & Omelianchuk “Dilemma for appeals ...”</p> |
| Mon., Sep. 23 | <p>Tooley “Personhood”</p> <p>Dennett “Conditions of Personhood”</p> <p>Frankfurt “Freedom of the Will and ...”</p> |

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| Wed., Sep. 25 | Kittay “At the Margins of Moral Personhood” |
| Fri., Sep. 27 | Menkiti “On the Normative Conception of a Person” King “A Comparison of the Conceptions of God in ...” Ikuenobe “Relational Autonomy, Personhood, and ...” |
| Mon., Sep. 30 | Marquis “Why Abortion is Immoral” |
| Wed., Oct. 2 | Brown “The morality of abortion and the deprivation ...” Olson “Was I Ever a Fetus?” Vogelstein “Metaphysics and the future-like-ours ...” |
| Fri., Oct. 4 | Burkhardt “A Sperm and Ovum Separately!” Kuhse & Singer “Abortion and Contraception” |
| Mon., Oct. 7 | Thomson “Defense of Abortion” |
| Wed., Oct. 9 | McMahan “Self-Defense and the Problem of ...” Otsuka “Killing the Innocent in Self-Defense” |
| Fri., Oct. 11 | Thomson “Self-Defense” Sartorio “The concept of responsibility in the ethics ...” Quong “Killing in Self-Defense” Hecht “Provocateurs and Their Rights to Self-Defence” Ferzan “Provocateurs” Davis “Abortion and Self-Defense” |
| Mon., Oct. 14 | Foot “The Problem of Abortion and the Doctrine of ...” |
| Wed., Oct. 16 | Thomson “Killing, Letting Die, and the Trolley Problem” |
| Fri., Oct. 18 | Rachels “Active and Passive Euthanasia” Schaffer “Causation by Disconnection” Midterm Argument Sketch Due! |
| Mon., Oct. 21 | Hendricks “Even if the fetus is not a person, ...” |
| Wed., Oct. 23 | Blackshaw “The impairment argument for ...” Pickard “Abortion is incommensurable with ...” |
| Fri., Oct. 25 | Blackshaw & Hendricks “Strengthening the ...” |
| Mon., Oct. 28 | Childress et al. “Public Health Ethics” Kass “An Ethics Framework for Public Health” Midterm Essay Due! |
| Wed., Oct. 30 | Freedman “Shoe Leather” |

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| Fri., Nov. 1 | Peipert et al. “Preventing Unintended Pregnancies” McNicholas et al. “Choice Project Round Up” Biggs et al. “Did increasing use ...” Ricketts et al. “Game Change in Colorado” Kavanaugh & Jerman “Contraceptive Method Use ...” |
| Mon., Nov. 4 | Reardon “The Abortion and Mental Health Controversy” Coleman “Abortion and Mental Health” Steinberg et al. “Fatal Flaws in a Recent ...” |
| Wed., Nov. 6 | Moran “A Women’s Health Issue?” Robinson et al. “Is there an ‘abortion trauma ...’” |
| Fri., Nov. 8 | Miller et al. “What Happens After an Abortion Denial?” Rocca et al. “Decision Rightness and Emotional ...” Rocca et al. “Emotions and decision rightness ...” |
| Mon., Nov. 11 | Faúndes & Shah “Evidence Supporting Broader ...” Fawcus “Maternal Mortality and Unsafe Abortion” |
| Wed., Nov. 13 | Brown et al. “Distance to an Abortion Provider ...” Grossman et al. “Change in Abortion Services ...” |
| Fri., Nov. 15 | McDonald “Maternal Mortality, Race, and ...” |
| Mon., Nov. 18 | Dehlendorf et al. “Disparities in Abortion Rates” Thomas “Racial and Ethnic Disparities ...” Garcia & Sharif “Black Lives Matter” |
| Wed., Nov. 20 | Coleman-Minahan “Evaluating the Impact ...” Wolfe & Rodgers “Abortion During the COVID-19 ...” Reverby “More than Fact & Fiction |
| Fri., Nov. 22 | Ploplis “Systematic Racism, Abortion, ...” Reverby “Normal Exposure” |
| Mon., Nov. 25 | Fall Break! No Class! |
| Wed., Nov. 27 | Fall Break! No Class! |
| Fri., Nov. 29 | Fall Break! No Class! |
| Mon., Dec. 2 | Roberts et al. “Out-of-Pocket Costs and ...” Zuniga et al. “Abortion as Catastrophic ...” Daniels “Is There a Right to Healthcare?” |
| Wed., Dec. 4 | Dickman et al. “Affordability and Access to ...” Sachs “Liberty and Universal Healthcare” |

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| Fri., Dec. 6 | Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health SCOTUS Opinion Policy Project Draft Due! |
| Mon., Dec. 9 | Policy Project Presentations & Discussion Final Argument Sketch Due! |
| Wed., Dec. 11 | Policy Project Presentations & Discussion |
| Fri., Dec. 19 | Final Essay Due! Policy Project Due! |