

WILLIAM RAINEY HARPER COLLEGE
LIBERAL ARTS DIVISION
GENERAL COURSE OUTLINE

PHI Course Prefix	180 Course Number	Biomedical Ethics Course Title	3-0 (Lec-Lab)	3 Semester Hours
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Considers the ethics of the professional-patient relationship (confidentiality, informed consent, paternalism, truth-telling), the ethics of life and death (abortion, euthanasia, suicide), and the ethics of medicine on a social scale (the right to health care, the distribution of medical resources).

TOPICAL OUTLINE

- I. Introduction to Ethical Theory
 - A. The Place of Ethics in Human Action and Human Thought
 - B. The Distinction between Mores and Morals (the aspects of human action which social science studies vs. the aspects of human action which the moral philosopher studies)
 - C. Normative Ethical Theories
 1. Deontological Theories
 2. Teleological Theories
 - D. Rights
 1. Moral
 2. Legal
 - E. The Nature of Biomedical Ethics
- II. The Professional-Patient Relationship
 - A. Characterization of the Relationship (expert/layperson?, social contract between equals?, etc.)
 - B. Confidentiality
 - C. Truth-Telling
 - D. Informed Consent
 - E. Paternalism
- III. Ethical Problems Concerning Life and Death
 - A. The Morality of Killing
 1. Doctrine of the Double Effect
 2. Actions vs. Omissions
 3. Slippery-Slope Arguments (empirical and logical)
 - B. Abortion and Infanticide
 - C. Euthanasia
 - D. Suicide
- IV. Medical Ethics on a Social Scale
 - A. Theories of Distributive Justice
 - B. The Right to Health vs. the Right to Health Care
 - C. Distribution of Medical Resources

METHODS OF PRESENTATION

1. Lecture/discussion format
2. Students encouraged to raise questions/participate

STUDENT OUTCOMES: (Upon successful completion of this course, *the student should be able to...*)

1. Demonstrate an understanding of health care provider/patient relationship including at least confidentiality, informed consent, paternalism, and truth telling, of patient rights v. public policy regarding personal decisions such as abortion, euthanasia, courses of treatment and access to

health care, including whether or not there is a right to health care, rationing according to ability to pay, and the impact of rationing on marginalized populations.

2. Apply at least three philosophical positions to choices of issues listed above and evaluate the results of these applications
3. Write a minimum of 3000 words of college-level writing in support of the above outcomes.

METHODS OF EVALUATION

1. Essay examination and/or short papers. Papers and examinations require students to expound an argument and to evaluate it. Evaluation of an argument may take the form of its logical inadequacies, its moral presuppositions, certain medical facts, etc.
2. Quizzes
3. Exams (may be oral)
4. Written reading responses
5. Debates
6. Homework
7. Class activities
8. Participation

POSSIBLE TEXTBOOKS/INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

Arras, John D. and Bonnie Steinbock, & Alex London. *Ethical Issues in Modern Medicine*, 8th ed., McGraw-Hill, 2012.

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