

WESTERN UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
Undergraduate Course Outline 2023-24

PHILOSOPHY 2715F
Health Care Ethics

Fall Term Asynchronous Online	Instructor: N/A
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PREREQUISITE CHECKING

None

DESCRIPTION

Ethical issues in health care represent some of the most pressing issues faced by Canadians. In this course, students will learn about the most important bioethical issues across the human life span, from conception to death. At what point in development do human beings acquire moral status? Is it ethical to select human embryos for desirable features? When patients and physicians disagree about treatment, who has the final say? Should COVID-19 vaccinations be mandatory? And can we harvest organs for transplantation from the dead? Diverse philosophical approaches to these—and other—bioethical problems will be considered with an emphasis on the role of moral reasoning. Readings and online video lectures will be supplemented with discussion of real-world bioethics cases. The course is recommended for students considering a career in the health professions, or those who seek a deeper understanding of contemporary social issues. No prior background in philosophy is assumed.

TEXTS

Required: Weijer C., Skelton A. (eds.). *Bioethics in Canada* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press, 2019.

OBJECTIVES

The course has three main objectives. First, the course will familiarize students with important topics in bioethics across the human lifespan. Second, it will expose them to a variety of philosophical approaches to key bioethical problems. Third, it will give students the opportunity to apply these differing philosophical approaches to real cases in bioethics.

METHOD OF EVALUATION

Your grade for the course will be based on quizzes, argument analyses, case analyses, and a final exam. All assessments are made available in the Tests & Quizzes tab in the OWL website.

1. Quizzes

When: Fives quizzes are given during the term (September 22, October 6, October 20, November 10, November 24)

Format: Definitions and short answer questions based on the lectures and assigned readings. You will be asked four questions about key concepts and arguments. Quizzes are time limited (20 minutes) and closed book. Responses to questions must observe the stated word limit. Responses that exceed the word limit will receive a grade of 0.

Value: The lowest quiz grade will be dropped from the average. 20% of final grade

Late penalty: Late quizzes are not accepted. If you miss a quiz, you cannot take it later. Medical documentation is required for a missed quiz. If medical documentation is provided, the missed quiz will be removed from your grade and the remaining will be reweighted accordingly. If no medical documentation is received, you will receive a grade of 0% on the quiz. Medical “documentation must be submitted by the student directly to the appropriate Faculty Dean’s office, and it will be the Dean’s office that will make the determination whether academic consideration is warranted. Given the University’s Official Student Record Information Privacy Policy, instructors may not collect medical documentation.” DO NOT send me medical documentation directly.

2. Argument analyses

When: Two argument analyses are assigned during the term (September 29, October 27)

Format: Short answer questions based on the video lectures and assigned readings. You will be asked to explicate and critically evaluate arguments. Argument analyses do not have a time limit, other than the due date and time. Responses to questions must observe the stated word limit. Responses that exceed the word limit will receive a grade of 0.

Value: 20% of final grade

Late penalty: Late argument analyses are accepted but there is a late penalty of 5% per day, including weekend days.

3. Case analyses

When: Three case analyses are assigned during the term (October 13, November 17, December 1)

Format: Write an analysis of an assigned contemporary ethics case, drawing on course readings. Case analyses do not have a time limit, other than the due date and time. Responses to questions must observe the stated word limit. Responses that exceed the word limit will receive a grade of 0.

Value: 30% of final grade

Late penalty: Late case analyses are accepted but there is a late penalty of 5% per day, including weekend days.

4. Final exam

When: During exam period

Format: 2-hour exam covering the entire course. Multiple choice questions.

Value: 30% of the final grade

AUDIT

Students wishing to audit the course should consult with the instructor prior to or during the first week of classes.

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY POLICIES

The Department of Philosophy policies that govern the conduct, standards, and expectations for student participation in Philosophy courses are available in the Undergraduate section of the Department of Philosophy website <http://uwo.ca/philosophy/undergraduate/policies.html>.

It is your responsibility to understand the policies set out by the Senate and the Department of Philosophy, and thus ignorance of these policies cannot be used as grounds of appeal.

ACCOMMODATION

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the Office of the Dean of the student's Faculty of registration, together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested.

The UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness and further information regarding this policy can be found at

http://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf.

EVALUATION OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

At least three days prior to the deadline for withdrawal from a course without academic penalty, students will receive an assessment of work accounting for at least 15% of their final grade. For 3000- or 4000-level courses in which such a graded assessment is impracticable, the instructor(s) must obtain an exemption from this policy from the Dean and this exemption must be noted on the corresponding course syllabus. In rare instances and at the Dean's discretion, other courses could receive a similar exemption, which also must be noted in the course syllabus.

COURSE ASSIGNMENT

The last day of scheduled classes in any course will be the last day on which course assignments will be accepted for credit in a course. Instructors will be required to return assignments to students as promptly as possible with reasonable explanations of the instructor's assessment of the assignment.

ACADEMIC OFFENCES

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

PLAGIARISM CHECKING

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Student Development Centre <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help. Immediate help in the event of a crisis can be had by phoning 519.661.3030 (during class hours) or 519.433.2023 after class hours and on weekends.