

WESTERN UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
Undergraduate Course Outline 2021–22

Philosophy 2715: Health Care Ethics

Fall Term
Asynchronous
Instructor: Charles Weijer

Office: WIRB 7160
Office Hours: By appointment
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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

Readings are made available through the Course Readings tab on the OWL website.
Optional: Weijer C., et al. (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.

COURSE STRUCTURE

There are twelve modules to complete in this course, accessible through the Course Content tab on the OWL website. One module is assigned per week and each module follows the same structure. Students are asked to: review learning outcomes; watch a case video; answer two poll questions; watch lectures and complete readings; complete any assigned assessments; and share feedback.

ASSESSMENTS

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

1. Case analyses

When: See weekly schedule.

Length: No more than 750 words.

Format: Write an analysis of an assigned contemporary ethics case, drawing on course readings.

Further instructions can be found on the OWL website.

Value: 30% of final grade (10% for each case analysis).

Late penalty: There is a late penalty of 5% per day.

2. Argument analyses

When: Every week, except weeks in which a case analysis is due

Length: No more than 250 words.

Format: Short answer questions based on the video lectures and assignment readings. You will be asked to explicate and critically evaluate arguments.

Value: 20% of final grade

Late penalty: If you miss an argument analysis, you cannot submit one later. If an academic consideration is received from an academic counsellor, the missed argument analysis will be removed from your grade and the remaining will be reweighted accordingly. If no academic consideration is received, you will receive a grade of 0% on the argument analysis.

3. Quizzes

When: Every week

Format: Multiple choice, true/false, matching, and fill in the blank questions based on the video lectures and assigned readings. You will be asked about key concepts and arguments.

Value: 15% of final grade

Late penalty: If you miss a quiz, you cannot take it later. If an academic consideration is received from an academic counsellor, the missed quiz will be removed from your grade and the remaining will be reweighted accordingly. If no academic consideration is received, you will receive a grade of 0% on the quiz.

4. Final exam

When: During exam period

Format: Similar format to the quizzes, argument analysis, and case analysis questions.

Value: 35% 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** which govern the conduct, standards, and expectations for student participation in Philosophy courses is available in the Undergraduate section of the

Department of Philosophy website at <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. Students will need to provide a Student Medical Certificate if the absence is medical or provide appropriate documentation if there are compassionate grounds for the absence in question. Students are encouraged to contact their Faculty's academic counselling office to obtain more information about the relevant documentation.

For Western University policy on Consideration for Student Absence, see: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_illness.pdf.

For the Student Medical Certificate (SMC), see: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf.

SELF- REPORTED ABSENCE FORM

Students who experience an unexpected illness or injury or an extenuating circumstance (48 hours or less) that is sufficiently severe to temporarily render them unable to meet academic requirements (e.g., attending lectures or labs, writing tests or midterm exams, completing and submitting assignments, participating in presentations) should self-declare using the online Self-Reported Absence portal. This option should be used in situations where the student expects to resume academic responsibilities within 48 hours or less. Students are expected to contact their instructors within 24 hours of the end of the period of the self-reported absence. Students are not able to use the self-reporting option in the following circumstances:

- For exams scheduled by the Office of the Registrar (e.g., December and April exams);
- Absence of a duration greater than 48 hours;
- Assignments worth more than 30% of the student's final grade;
- If a student has already used the self-reporting portal twice during the academic year

The following conditions are in place for self-reporting of medical or extenuating circumstances: http://westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#SubHeading_322

EVALUATION OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

At least three days prior to the deadline for withdrawal from a course without academic penalty, students will receive 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>.

MULTIPLE-CHOICE TESTS AND/OR EXAMS

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

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 Health and Wellness <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.