

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
Undergraduate Course Outline 2015–2016

Philosophy 2715G: Health Care Ethics

Winter Term Mon, 1530–1630h; Wed, 1530-1730h Classroom: Arts and Humanities Building (AHB) 1R40 Instructor: Professor Charles Weijer	Office Location: Stevenson Hall 2150B Office Hours: Mon, 1630–1730h; Thurs, 1300–1400h Telephone: 519-661-2111 x80090 E-mail: cweijer@uwo.ca
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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? What do we owe the global poor? 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 in-class 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.

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.

TEXTS

Weijer C, Skelton A, Brennan S (eds.). *Bioethics in Canada*. Oxford University Press, 2013.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1 (January 4): **Organization and Introduction**

Readings: *Bioethics in Canada*, pages xi–xvii

Week 2 (January 11): **Conception and Embryos**

Readings: *Bioethics in Canada*, pages 1–20

Week 3 (January 18): **Fetuses**

Readings: *Bioethics in Canada*, pages 21–36

NOTE: The first in-class quiz will be held on Wednesday, January 20, 2016

Week 4 (January 25): **Procreation and Child Rearing**

Readings: *Bioethics in Canada*, pages 37–55

Week 5 (February 1): **Adults and Decision-making**

Readings: *Bioethics in Canada*, pages 56–73

NOTE: The second in-class quiz will be held on Wednesday, February 3, 2016

Week 6 (February 8): **Conflict about Appropriate Treatment**

Readings: *Bioethics in Canada*, pages 74–92

NOTE: First case analysis assignment is due on Wednesday, February 10, 2016

Week 7 (February 15): Reading Week: No Class

Week 8 (February 22): **Equipoise and Clinical Research**

Readings: *Bioethics in Canada*, pages 93–110

NOTE: The third in-class quiz will be held on Wednesday, February 24, 2016

Week 9 (February 29): **Justice and Access to Health Care**

Readings: *Bioethics in Canada*, pages 111–126

Week 10 (March 7): **Obligations to the Global Poor**

Readings: *Bioethics in Canada*, pages 127–144

NOTE: The fourth in-class quiz will be held on Wednesday, March 9, 2016

Week 11 (March 14): **Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia**

Readings: *Bioethics in Canada*, pages 145–162

Week 12 (March 21): **Defining Death**

Readings: *Bioethics in Canada*, pages 163–179

NOTE: The fifth in-class quiz will be held on Wednesday, March 23, 2016

Week 13 (March 28): **Harvesting Organs from the Dead**

Readings: *Bioethics in Canada*, pages 180–193

NOTE: Second case analysis assignment is due on Wednesday, March 30, 2016

Week 14 (April 4): **Review and Conclusion.**

REQUIREMENTS

Your grade for the course will be based on two written case analyses, 5 in-class quizzes and a final exam. Each paper is worth 25% of the final grade, each quiz is worth 4% of the final grade and the final exam is worth 30% of the final grade.

1. Case analysis 1

Due date: Friday, February 10, 2016

Length: No more than 1500 words

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

Value: 25% of final grade

2. Case analysis 2

Due date: Friday, March 30, 2016

Length: No more than 1500 words

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

Value: 25% of final grade

3. In-class Quizzes

When: January 20, February 3, February 24, March 9, and March 23, 2016.

Value: 20% of final grade

Format: Quizzes are based on the readings. You will be asked, for example, to define a term, to outline an argument, or to detail an objection to an argument.

4. Final exam

When: During exam period

Value: 30% of the final grade

Format: Similar format to the quizzes, plus analysis of one or two cases.

AUDIT

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

REGULATIONS

1. Submission of essays

Please submit your assignments electronically. Do not submit a paper copy.

In order to submit your assignment, simply visit the OWL site for this course. On the left-hand navigation menu you will find the assignment tool. Click on this tool and you will find the assignment guidelines and basic instructions for submitting your assignment. To submit your assignment upload it and click on the submit button at the bottom of the page.

A corrected version of your paper will be returned to you through the OWL site.

2. Turnitin.com

All required papers will 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 will be included as course 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>).

3. Extensions

If you miss a quiz, you will not be permitted to make it up. However, with respect to the remainder of the course work, exceptions to the above work submission dates may be granted only as a result of petition to the Academic Counselor of the student's faculty. **Instructors have no authority to waive this requirement, and any unofficial arrangements they make with students will not be respected by the administration.**

All course work (with the exception of final examinations) must be submitted by the last day of classes. Academic policies on examinations, appeals, absences due to illness, etc. may be found in the 2015–16 Academic Calendar. For further information, contact the Philosophy Undergraduate Counselor, Professor Andrew Botterell, Stevenson Hall 3140, 519-661-2111, ext. 85758, your Faculty's Academic Counselor or the Ombudsperson.

4. Late essays and penalties

An essay will be considered late if it is handed in after the due date without a prearranged extension (or after the extended date, in the case of an extension). Late essays will be penalized at the rate of three percentage points per day late. Essays more than ten days late will not be accepted.

5. Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a form of cheating. Plagiarism is unacknowledged copying or paraphrasing of (other than course lectures or general background knowledge any student of the course could reasonably be expected to have) and then presents that knowledge as their own discovery is considered to have plagiarized, even if the words used to express the ideas are not exactly the same.

Examples of plagiarism include: misrepresenting co-authored or group work as individually done, cutting and pasting copied or paraphrased work by others in with your own work, paraphrasing or otherwise altering the order of words or phrases and/or substituting words or phrases of similar meaning without acknowledgement that you are doing so, aiding and abetting such offences, among others.

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

6. E-mail policy

I am not able to respond to philosophical concerns or questions over e-mail. I will deal with such concerns or questions during my office hours only. If you have a problem turning in an assignment on time or you need to make an appointment with me or you have some private issue you would like to communicate to me, feel free to use e-mail. Otherwise, please attend my office hours or make an appointment to see me.

7. Prerequisites

You are responsible for ensuring that you have successfully completed all course prerequisites and that you have not taken an antirequisite course. Lack of prerequisites may not be used as a basis of appeal. If you are not eligible for a course, you may be removed from it at any time, and you will receive no fee adjustment. These decisions cannot be appealed.

8. 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://www.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.

9. 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.