

**WESTERN UNIVERSITY**  
**DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY**  
**Undergraduate Course Outline 2019-20**

**Philosophy 2715F: Health Care Ethics**

**Fall Term**

**Mon, 3:30–4:30pm; Wed, 3:30–5:30pm**

**Classroom: SEB 1059**

**Instructor: Charles Weijer**

**Office: WIRB 7160**

**Office Hours: Mon, 4:30–5:30pm;**

**Fri, 11:00am–12:00pm**

**Email: cweijer@uwo.ca**

**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.

**TEXTS**

Weijer C, Skelton A (eds.). *Bioethics in Canada* (2<sup>nd</sup> 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.

**REQUIREMENTS**

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

1. Case analysis 1

Due date: Wednesday, October 16

Length: No more than 1250 words

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

Value: 25% of final grade

Submission instructions: Please submit BOTH a digital copy to the OWL website AND a hardcopy in class. There is a late penalty of 5% per day.

## 2. Case analysis 2

Due date: Monday, November 25

Length: No more than 1250 words

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

Value: 25% of final grade

Submission instructions: Please submit BOTH a digital copy to the OWL website AND a hardcopy in your tutorial. There is a late penalty of 5% per day.

## 3. In-class quizzes

When: Wednesday, September 25, October 9, October 23, November 13

Value: 20% of final grade (5% for each quiz)

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

Missed quizzes: If you miss a quiz you cannot write it at a later date. If an academic consideration is received from an academic counsellor, the missed quiz will be removed from your grade and the remaining quizzes reweighted accordingly. If no academic consideration is received, you will receive a grade of 0% for the quiz.

## 4. Final exam

When: During exam period

Value: 30% of the final grade

Format: Similar format to the quizzes, plus analysis of one case.

## **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.

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

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](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](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.