

**Philosophy 309: Medicine and Human Values
Summer 2008**

Instructor: Lauren Fleming

Class Meetings: Monday – Thursday, 9:30 – 11:45 AM, Robinson Hall room B111

Office Hours: Monday & Thursday, 12 – 1 PM, location TBD; and by appointment

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Course Description

This course will treat moral questions surrounding biomedical therapies and technologies. We will begin the class by examining some philosophical approaches to ethics, and then critically apply the concepts and skills learned to bioethical problems. Topics covered will include the beginning of life (e.g. abortion, stem cells), end of life (e.g. advanced directives, euthanasia), ethical provider-patient relationships, and social policy. In treating these topics, students will be expected to gain familiarity with contemporary problems in bioethics, and learn to analyze and discuss ethical problems from a philosophical perspective.

Evaluation

Attendance and participation are mandatory and will count toward 15% of your overall grade. This class is heavily discussion-based, and you should come to class prepared to share your thoughts on the reading, and/or to ask specific questions about material you did not understand. There are group presentations scheduled for the end of the term, which will be worth 20% of the final grade. You will have three written assignments. The first will be an analysis of an argument from the reading (~ 4 pages), and the second will be an original paper on a topic I have assigned (4-5 pages), each worth 20% of your grade. There will also be a take home final, due on the last day of the course, worth 25% of your final grade.

All assignments are due on time. Assignments will be penalized a 'half-grade' (e.g., from A to A-, A- to B+, etc.) for *each day* they are late. Students are also expected to be familiar with and abide by the George Mason University Honor Code.

Required Texts

The only required text is Mappes & DeGrazia, *Biomedical Ethics*. These readings are marked (M&D). All of the other readings will be available through Blackboard (marked BB, available at <http://course.gmu.edu>).

As this is a summer session class, be prepared for a lot of work, both in terms of assignments and in the reading load. I reserve the right to eliminate or add readings (with sufficient notice to the class) depending on the pace of the course.

Readings

- May 19 First day of class – no reading
May 20 Consequentialism and Deontology (M&D, pp.6-23)
May 21 Principles of Bioethics, Virtue Ethics, and the Ethics of Care (M&D, pp.28-33, 36-37, 40-41, 46-53)

Beginning of Life

- May 22 Reproductive technologies (M&D, pp.532-540, 553-564)
May 26 Memorial Day – no class
May 27 Abortion (M&D, pp.466-482; *New York Times* article on BB)
May 28 Genetic Enhancement and Selective Abortion (M&D, pp.594-606; Nelson, Wendell on BB)
May 29 Stem Cell Research and Cloning (M&D, pp.498-508; Kass, Gillon on BB)

End of Life

- June 2 The Definition of Death (M&D, pp.312-326); Advanced Directives (M&D, pp.350-356; recommended M&D, pp.357-362)
June 3 Physician Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia (M&D, pp.395-403, 417-425)
June 4 Film – *Whose Life is It Anyway?* (No reading)
Argument Analysis Due
June 5 Refusing treatment (M&D, pp.330-340); Is there a Duty to Die? (Hardiwig on BB)

Ethical Medical Care & Health Policy

- June 9 Caretaker-Patient Relationships (M&D, pp. 71-75, 144-149, 173-187)
June 10 Patient Autonomy (M&D, pp.90-95, 106-111, 218-221)
June 11 Non-competent patients and the role of families (M&D, pp.192-200, review pp.306-308; Caplan on BB, optional radio clip linked on BB)
June 12 Research Involving Vulnerable Populations and Developing Countries (M&D, pp.240-246, 251-256, 266-275)
Original Paper Due
June 16 Just Resource Allocation (M&D, pp.639-644, 652-660; Lachs, Moss & Siegler on BB)
June 17 Group presentations
June 18 Group presentations
June 19 Bioethics and the Good Life (M&D, pp.140-144; Juengst, Little on BB)
Take-home Final Due