



# Medical Ethics

Philosophy Department  
PHI 321, Spring, 2013  
OM G24 10:20-11:10 MWF  
3 Credit Hours  
Instructor: Dr. Andrew Fitz-Gibbon

If you need to get in touch with the instructor:

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Office Hours: Old Main 140-A, MW 2:30-4:00 and by appointment

## Course Description

(O) Consideration of ethical issues as they arise in contemporary medical practice and related health-care professions. Readings from philosophy, law and medicine. Prerequisite: Three hours of philosophy or consent of instructor. Fulfills: LASR. (3 cr. hr.)

## Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- a) Give an account of the major concepts and theories used in medical ethics
- b) Apply these concepts and theories to areas of contemporary concern.
- c) Construct a reasoned philosophical argument.

## Required Texts

Tom L. Beauchamp and James F. Childress. *Principles of Biomedical Ethics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.  
Jessica Pierce. *The Last Walk: Reflections on Our Pets at the End of Their Lives*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012.  
Rebecca Skloot. *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*. New York: Broadway Press, 2010.

## Course Requirements

The course has a large discussion requirement, based on the required texts. Set reading and class participation are essential. Classes missed without prearrangement or a medical excuse will have negative consequences on final grade.

Each student will be required to write two 5-7-page critical philosophical book reviews, take part in a student presentation with a 3-4-page presentation paper and write a 7-10 page final paper on a subject in consultation with the instructor.

Final grade will be based on the following:

Class participation/attendance	10%
Class presentation and paper	20%
One 5-7 Page paper	20%
One 5-7 Page paper	20%
One 8-12 Page paper, final take home	30%

Grade Distribution:

A+ = 97-100

B+ = 87-89

C+ = 77-79

D+ = 67-69

A = 94-96

B = 84-86

C = 74-76

D = 64-66

A- = 90-93

B- = 80-83

C- = 70-73

D- = 60-63

E = 0-59

## **Presentations Requirements**

You are required to carry out research in one of the following areas and lead an informed class discussion:

- A girlfriend wants to retrieve her dying boyfriend's sperm
- A man dying of AIDS doesn't want his family to know of his disease
- A dying homeless man refuses treatment
- A woman with terminal cancer tries to commit suicide but fails
- One family member wants to "pull the plug" but the others do not want to

In your presentation you might incorporate:

- An understanding of medical and ethical principles
- A grasp of the issues: What is the argument? What is at stake in this issue?
- Application to today's society
- Personal experience

Each student is required to complete a 3-4-page paper outlining her/his particular research.

## **Writing a Critical Philosophical Book Review**

You are required to write one on Sliot and one on Pierce. Each review is 5-7 Pages. Divide your review into three parts:

- a) Description 1 page
- b) Analysis 2-3 page
- c) Response 2-3 page

### **Description**

Summarize the author's thesis or argument.

### **Analysis**

In your analysis you might want to consider these questions (amongst others): What philosophical positions does the author take? How does the author justify her/his argument? Are the author's premises true, probable or plausible? Is the argument of the book sound? Are there historical comparisons? What was the context of the writing? Which other philosopher's have taken a similar/opposite view to the author? *You will not be able to cover all of this in 3 pages, so careful thought and writing is important.*

### **Response**

Do you agree with the author? Present a reasoned argument why you do or do not? What other philosophy/philosophers would you use to support your response? How would you modify the author's position?

Online helps:

[http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/book\\_reviews.shtml](http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/book_reviews.shtml)

<http://www.lavc.cc.ca.us/Library/bookreview.htm>

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**Final Paper 8-12 pages, choose a subject in consultation with Dr. Fitz-Gibbon**

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## ***The Syllabus***

Discussions in class are based on the readings. **The readings are essential**

### **Week One**

General introduction and Expectations

### **Week Two**

**Beauchamp Chapter 1, Skloot Part 1**

Moral Norms

### **Week Three**

**Beauchamp Chapter 2, Skloot Part 2**

Moral Character

### **Week Four**

**Beauchamp Skloot Part 3**

Moral Status

### **Week Five**

**Beauchamp Chapter 4, Pierce Chapter 1-2**

Autonomy

Presentation #1 Wednesday

### **Week Six**

**Beauchamp Chapter 5, Pierce Chapter 3-4**

Nonmaleficence

Presentation #2 Wednesday

### **Week Seven**

**Beauchamp Chapter 6, Pierce Chapter 5-7**

Beneficence

### **Week Eight**

No Classes Spring Break . . . head for the sun!

No Classes Spring Break

No Classes Spring Break

<b>Week Nine</b>	<b>Beauchamp Chapter 7</b>  Justice Presentation #3 Wednesday
<b>Week Ten</b>	<b>Beauchamp Chapter 8</b>  Professional-Patient Relationships Presentation #4 Wednesday
<b>Week Eleven</b>	<b>Beauchamp Chapter 9</b>  Moral Theories Presentation #5 Wednesday
<b>Week Twelve</b>	<b>Beauchamp Chapter 10</b>  Method and Moral Justification
<b>Week Thirteen</b>	<b>Research and Reading for final</b>  What are the limits of medical research? Friday April 19 No class: Transformations
<b>Week Fourteen</b>	<b>Research and Reading for final</b>  How much medical care do we need?
<b>Week Fifteen</b>	<b>Research and Reading for final</b>  Picking up loose ends

**Week Sixteen**

Last Day of class May 6

***Policies and Information***

1. SUNY Cortland is committed to upholding and maintaining all aspects of the federal Americans with Disabilities Act 1973.

*If you are a student with a disability and wish to request accommodations, please contact the office of Disability Services located in B-40 Van Hoesen Hall or call (607) 753-2066 for an appointment. Any information regarding your disability will remain confidential. Because many accommodations require early planning, requests for accommodations should be made as early as possible. Any request for accommodations will be reviewed in a timely manner to determine their appropriateness to this setting.*

2. No late work will be accepted unless prior arrangements are made with the instructor. Such arrangements will be made only under unusual circumstances.

3. Plagiarism. All work submitted must be your own. Ideas borrowed from others, either directly, or through paraphrase, must be well documented through endnotes or footnotes. If plagiarism is suspected the student will be reported to the Provost and can either accept the charge or defend her or himself in the Grievance Tribunal.

4. If you are absent, you are responsible for finding out what went on in class, whether any assignments were given, and for keeping up with your work.

### **SUNY Cortland Conceptual Framework**

The mission of teacher education at SUNY Cortland is to build upon the foundation of liberal learning in the development of teachers who have exceptional pedagogical knowledge and skills. The foundation of liberal learning informs the professional education strand in an innovative thematic approach that emphasizes personal responsibility, global understanding and social justice. Graduates of SUNY Cortland's teacher education program will be prepared to think critically, utilize technology, communicate effectively, understand and value diversity, contribute to their communities, and make a difference in the lives of the