

# Philosophy 155A: Medical Ethics

## Summer 2022 (Session C)

<b>Instructor</b>	David Pederson <i>Email:</i> dpederson@humnet.ucla.edu <i>Office hours:</i> Tuesday and Thursday, 3:15–4:30 pm, Dodd 317
<b>Teaching Assistant</b>	Colleen Hanson <i>Email:</i> crhanson@humnet.ucla.edu
<b>Class Times/Locations</b>	<i>Lecture:</i> Tuesday and Thursday, 1:00–3:05 pm, Rolfe 3126  <i>Sections:</i> 1A Tuesday, 9:30–10:20 am, Rolfe 3116 1B Thursday, 11:30 am–12:20 pm, Rolfe 3116

### Course Description

This course is an intensive introduction to some key ideas and arguments in medical ethics, organized into three parts. In Part 1 (Weeks 1-2), we will examine *end-of-life* issues, focusing on euthanasia and the disvalue of death. Part 2 of the course (Weeks 3-5) will concentrate on three *beginning-of-life* issues: abortion, pre-natal selection and disability, and genetic enhancement. Finally, in Part 3 (Week 6), we will consider some broader social and political questions concerning the distribution of medical treatment.

### Learning Objectives

As a result of this class, students should gain a deeper insight into some important issues in medical ethics, while sharpening their abilities to discuss difficult ethical problems, analyze arguments, and write philosophical papers. Active engagement is encouraged and expected—through weekly reading responses, papers, peer commenting, and participation in section, lecture, and office hours.

### Texts

All texts for this course will be made available on the course website.

### Lectures

In-person attendance at lecture is strongly recommended (and your participation in lecture, of course, presupposes your attendance!). But lectures will also be recorded and posted on the course website, along with any handouts.

## Grading Breakdown

Your grade for the course will be determined as follows:

<i>Reading responses</i>	20%
<i>Paper 1 (2-3 pages)</i>	20%
<i>Peer comments on Paper 1</i>	10%
<i>Paper 2 (3-4 pages)</i>	30%
<i>Participation</i>	20%

## Reading Responses

Reading responses must be submitted each week, due by 11:59 pm on Friday of that week, via the appropriate link on the course website. (So, your response for Week 2's reading, for instance, must be turned in by 11:59 pm on Friday of Week 2.)

The responses will be graded on a full-credit/half-credit/no-credit basis. (Responses submitted after their deadline will receive no credit.) There will be 6 reading responses in total, but your response with the lowest grade will be dropped: only your 5 best reading responses will count towards your final course grade. (If you are satisfied with your grade for your first 5 reading responses, you don't have to submit the 6<sup>th</sup> one.) Each of those 5 best responses is worth 4% of your course grade; collectively, they comprise 20% of that grade.

Your responses should be 1/2 to 1 double-spaced page in length and should *critically engage with* (rather than recap or summarize) the reading—e.g. making a criticism of an argument in the reading, offering further reasons in support of an argument in the reading, posing a question about the reading, etc.

## Papers

You will write two papers for this class. Prompts will be assigned for each paper, with at least two possible topics for you to write on per paper. Both papers should be submitted through the course website.

*Paper 1* (2-3 pages) will be assigned on Tuesday, August 9<sup>th</sup> (Week 2), and it will be due on Tuesday, August 16<sup>th</sup> (Week 3,) at 11:59 pm. *Paper 2* (3-4 pages) will be assigned on Tuesday, August 30<sup>th</sup> (Week 5), and it will be due on Friday, September 9<sup>th</sup> (Week 6), at 11:59 pm.

Any paper submitted late, without an extension granted by the instructor or teaching assistant, will be penalized 1/3 of a letter grade for each twenty-four-hour period after the deadline. (So, if the deadline were at 3:00 pm on Monday, then you would be penalized 1/3 of a letter grade if you submitted the paper between 3:00 pm on Monday and 3:00 pm on Tuesday; you would be penalized an *additional* 1/3 of a letter grade if you submitted the paper between 3:00 pm on Tuesday and 3:00 pm on Wednesday; and so on.)

## Peer Comments

After turning in Paper 1, your paper will be assigned to one of your classmates and you will be assigned one of your classmates' papers. You must provide comments on that paper—via Peer Review on Canvas—by the deadline in the following week. Your peer comments will be graded on a full-credit/no-credit basis: if you submit your comments before the deadline and in good faith, you will receive full credit; if you *don't* submit your comments before the deadline and in good faith, you will receive no credit.

## Participation

The best way to do philosophy is by actively engaging, and so participation is very important! A good participation grade can result from participating in either (1) *lecture*, (2) *section*, or (3) the instructor's or the teaching assistant's *office hours*.

## Academic Dishonesty

Please familiarize yourself with UCLA's policies on academic dishonesty (see § 102.01 of the Student Conduct Code: <https://deanofstudents.ucla.edu/individual-student-code>). Suspected cases of academic dishonesty—especially, but not limited to, plagiarism—will be reported to the Office of the Dean of Students. If you are unsure of whether something would constitute academic dishonesty, and it is not clear from the Student Conduct Code, consult the instructor or your teaching assistant. As a general rule, if you use an idea in a writing assignment, but you got that idea from some other source, properly *cite* that source.

## Academic Accommodations

Students who require disability-based academic accommodations should get in touch with the Center for Accessible Education (CAE) as soon as possible: by phone (310-825-1501), email ([caeintake@saonet.ucla.edu](mailto:caeintake@saonet.ucla.edu)), or in person (A255 Murphy Hall).

## Campus Resources

UCLA Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): located at John Wooden Center West, 221 Westwood Plaza, and reachable by phone at 310-825-0768 or by email at [info@caps.ucla.edu](mailto:info@caps.ucla.edu).

Undergraduate Writing Center: located at A61 Kaplan Hall, and reachable by phone at 310-206-1320 or by email at [wcenter@g.ucla.edu](mailto:wcenter@g.ucla.edu).

## **Class Schedule**

### *PART 1: END-OF-LIFE ISSUES*

#### WEEK 1

Tuesday, August 2: Introduction, Death, and Euthanasia (I)

*Reading:* Thomas Nagel, "Death"; James Rachels, "Active and Passive Euthanasia"

Thursday, August 4: Euthanasia (II)

*Reading:* Philippa Foot, "Euthanasia"

#### WEEK 2

Tuesday, August 9: Euthanasia (III)

*Reading:* Dan W. Brock, "Voluntary Active Euthanasia" (skip the stories on pp. 12, 15, and 18); J. David Velleman, "Against the Right to Die"

***Paper 1 topics handed out (Tuesday, August 9<sup>th</sup>)***

Thursday, August 11: Euthanasia (IV)

*Reading:* J. David Velleman, "A Right of Self-Termination?" (only pp. 606-20)

### *PART 2: BEGINNING-OF-LIFE ISSUES*

#### WEEK 3

Tuesday, August 16: Abortion (I)

*Reading:* Judith Jarvis Thomson, "A Defense of Abortion"

***Paper 1 due (Tuesday, August 16<sup>th</sup>, 11:59 pm)***

Thursday, August 18: Abortion (II)

*Reading:* Mary Anne Warren, "On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion"; Jane English, "Abortion and the Concept of a Person"

#### WEEK 4

Tuesday, August 23: Abortion (III)

*Reading:* Don Marquis, "Why Abortion is Immoral"

Thursday, August 25: Pre-Natal Selection and Disability (I)

*Reading:* Jeff McMahan, "The Morality of Screening for Disability";  
Dena S. Davis, "Genetic Dilemmas and the Child's Right to an  
Open Future"

*Peer comments on Paper 1 due (Thursday, August 25<sup>th</sup>, 11:59 pm)*

#### WEEK 5

Tuesday, August 30: Pre-Natal Selection and Disability (II)

*Reading:* Dan W. Brock, "Preventing Genetically Transmitted  
Disabilities while Respecting Persons with Disabilities" (only  
pp. 79-87); Eva Feder Kittay, "How *Not* to Argue for Selective  
Reproductive Procedures"

*Paper 2 topics handed out (Tuesday, August 30<sup>th</sup>)*

Thursday, September 1: Genetic Enhancement

*Reading:* Michael J. Sandel, "The Case Against Perfection"; Julian  
Savulescu, "Genetic Enhancement" (only pp. 222-31)

#### *PART 3: MEDICAL ETHICS AND SOCIETY*

#### WEEK 6

Tuesday, September 6: Distribution of Medical Treatment (I)

*Reading:* John Harris, "QALYfying the Value of Life"; John Harris,  
"Deciding Between Patients" (only pp. 344-9); Allen  
Buchanan, "The Right to a Decent Minimum of Health Care"  
(only pp. 17-21, 26-36)

Thursday, September 8: Distribution of Medical Treatment (II)

*Reading:* Robert C. Hughes, "Egalitarian Provision of Necessary  
Medical Treatment"

*Paper 2 due (Friday, September 9<sup>th</sup>, 11:59 pm)*