

Phil 164: Medical Ethics

Spring 2012

Section 6

Instructor	Jesse Fitts (Call me Jesse)
Time	Tues. & Thur., 8am–9.15
Place	Bartlett 61
E-mail	jjfitts@philos.umass.edu
Website	Moodle
Office	Bartlett 361
Office hours	Tues., 9.30–10.30, or by appointment

Course description and goals: *Description.* We will discuss a number of philosophical issues that arise in medical ethics, e.g. abortion, euthanasia, animal experimentation, etc. In addition to that, we'll focus on two other broad subjects. We'll discuss the nature of ethics and historically influential ethical theories. We'll often apply the ethical theories to specific cases relevant to medical ethics. We'll also focus heavily on critical thinking skills, in the form of assessing arguments.

Goals. The goals are three-fold: One goal is for you is to become familiar with important philosophical issues that are involved in medical ethics. The second goal is for you to become familiar with the enterprise of philosophical ethics generally. The third goal is to gain critical thinking skills, which can be applied to any subject in which argumentation is involved. Upon successfully completing this course, your ability to cope with the complex subject of medical ethics should improve. More specifically, your ability to come to informed, rational conclusions for yourself ought to improve through critical reflection on your own as well as others' ethical beliefs. More generally, your ability to create and assess arguments of any kind should also improve.

Text: All reading will be made available on Moodle.

Grading: There are four grading components.

- Test 1: 20%
- Test 2: 25%
- Test 3 (final): 30%
- Weekly assignments: 25%
- Participation: Participation helps your grade qualitatively.
- Attendance: 3 excused absences. After that, if you miss every time I take attendance, then your grade drops by 10%

Weekly assignments: Except for the first week, there will be an assignment due every Thursday. You will submit the assignment on Moodle. It will consist of answering some question about the assigned reading, which will be due before class. You're allowed 2 freebies.

Academic honesty: The UMass academic honesty policy can be found here:

- http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/codeofconduct/acadhonesty/index.php

Academic dishonesty will be punished to the greatest degree that this policy allows. For resources on avoiding plagiarism, see the following:

- <http://www.umass.edu/academichonesty/>

I assume you know what counts as academically dishonest behavior, so any excuse based on ignorance won't be accepted.

Respect for other students: Many of the issues we'll be discussing are controversial and can sometimes elicit passionate discussion. Please treat every other student with tolerance and respect, no matter how much you might be in disagreement.

Attendance: I take attendance on occasion (not every class). The material on the exams will almost entirely be on what I cover in class, which will differ greatly from the readings. You are allowed 3 excused absences. After that, you need to contact me in advance or else come with something official to get the absence excused. Attendance can only hurt your grade, not help it.

Office hours: Please feel free to visit during office hours for anything that relates to the class. I'm also rather good with email, but I prefer to discuss substantial philosophical matters in person. So please, stop by.

Schedule: Due to the variability of our pace, the schedule of assignments and readings is available on Moodle and is subject to change.