Jonathan Dixon Office Hours: Thurs after Class

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**Philosophy 164(05): Medical Ethics**

Spring 2017

Tu/Th, 11:30am-12:45pm, Bartlett 206

**Course Description**

The purpose of this course is to provide an introduction to some contemporary issues in medical ethics. We will look such issues as: What obligation (if any) do medical professionals have to fully inform their patients? When (if ever) does a patient’s autonomy override a doctor’s considered judgment? Can patients be well informed enough to truly consent to treatment? Is Euthanasia morally permissible? Is intentionally killing a patient always worse than letting a patient die? Is abortion morally permissible? What obligations do mothers and doctors have to fetuses? Is it (ever) morally justified to perform medical experiments on non-human animals? Is genetic “enhancement” morally permissible? And other questions. The goal of this class is to give students a firm understanding of ethical issues to provide a basis for deeper ethical thinking in medical contexts and in one’s everyday life.

**Required Texts**

There are no required books for this class. All readings will be made available online through Moodle.

**Course Requirements**

1. Class Participation (20%) (Which is earned by turning in 4 Reading Outlines each worth 5%)
2. 4 out of 5 Class Examinations (20% each) (where your lowest test grade is dropped)

Class Participation: It is crucial to understanding the material in this course (and any philosophy course) to actively engage with the material. Students should have read the assigned reading (AT LEAST ONCE) BEFORE coming to class on the day listed for that assigned reading. To be able to meaningfully participate and to fully understand the assigned articles I recommend that students read them TWICE.

Class participation grades will be determined by turning in 4 Reading Outlines (approx. 1-3 pages(max) – stapled or double-sided) that each detail the main argument(s) of an assigned reading. Details of how to write these outlines will be given in the first two weeks of class. Beginning AFTER THE FIRST EXAM, Reading Outlines may be turned in for any of the assigned readings till the end of the semester. Hardcopies of Reading Outlines must be turned in at the BEGINNING OF CLASS for the day we are covering said assigned reading. I will NOT accept electronically submitted assignments. Students are responsible for keeping track of the number of assignments they turned in and their grade for each assignment. Students may turn in (no more than) one extra Reading Outline to replace one graded Reading Outline. (i.e., if you turn in a 5th assignment, your lowest reading outline grade will be dropped). And to facilitate class discussion, I may use these reading outlines to call on students to discuss the assigned reading. Any students that submitted an assignment but that is not in class when called upon will fail that assignment (i.e., this will drop 5% of one’s overall grade). Grading these assignments is on a 5 point scale: 5=Excellent; 4=Good, 3=Passing; 2=Sub-par; 1 or 0=Fail.

Classroom Etiquette: No laptops or cell phones are permitted in this class. Students will be asked to leave class if either of these electronic devices is used or makes noise in class. I will actively keep track of students who come to class prepared to discuss the reading for the week. Any students who are acting in a manner that is disrespectful or disruptive will be asked to leave.

Examinations: There are a total of 5 in-class tests in this class where each is worth 20% of your overall grade. However, only 4 of these exams will count toward your final grade because your lowest test score will be dropped from your final grade calculation. Each exam will consist only of True/False, Multiple Choice and Short Answer Questions. Books and notes may NOT be used during these exams. Students are responsible for keeping track of their grade for each exam. In cases of illness, university sponsored club or athletic events out of town, or genuine emergencies, you may make a request, PRIOR to the regularly scheduled exam, for a makeup exam. Requests received during or after the exam time will not usually be considered.

Cheating and Plagiarism will not be tolerated. It is a violation of the University Honor Code to use material from any source (other than yourself) in your papers or assignments without adequate citation. All suspected cases of cheating and Plagiarism will be referred to the Honor Court. Visit http://www.umass.edu/dean\_students/codeofconduct/acadhonesty if you are unclear about what constitutes these Honor Code violations.

Disabilities: Any student who feels that he or she may need an accommodation because of a disability (learning disability, attention deficit disorder, psychological, physical, etc.), please make an appointment to see me during office hours. If the student requires special arrangements (due to disability or other circumstances), she or he must contact the instructor ASAP. http://www.umass.edu/disability.

**Course Schedule**

All reading should be completed before class on the day listed.

NOTE: Any Reading with \*’s around it is ineligible for a Reading Outline assignment

Jan 24 – Introduction

Ethical Theory Background

Jan 26 – \*Timmons – A Moral Theory Primer\* (What is a Moral Theory?, Consequentialism, Natural Law Theory)

Jan 31 – \*Timmons – A Moral Theory Primer\* (Kantian Moral Theory, Rights-Based Moral Theory, Virtue Ethics, Ethics of Prima Facie Duty, Social Contract Theory)

Feb 2 – Finish-up \*Timmons (Coping with Many Moral Theories) and Review for First Test

Feb 7 – **Test #1** – On Ethical Theory Background (True/False, Multiple Choice, Fill in the Blank)

Truth Telling and Informed Consent

*Begin Reading Outline Period…….*

Feb 9 – \*Vaughn (Truth-Telling Background)\*; (AND) Higgs – On Telling Patients the Truth

Feb 14 – Jackson – Telling the Truth

Feb 16 – \*Vaugh (Informed Consent Background)\*; (AND) Katz – Informed Consent: Must it Remain …

Feb 21– Veatch – Abandoning Informed Consent

Feb 23 – **Test #2 –** On Truth Telling and Informed Consent (True/False, Multiple Choice, Short Essay)

Euthanasia

Feb 28 – \*Timmons – (Euthanasia Background)\*; (AND) Rachels – Active and Passive Euthanasia

Feb 2 – Foot – Killing and Letting Die

Mar 7 – Nesbitt – Is Killing No Worse than Letting Die?

Mar 9 – Kuhse – Why Killing is Not Always Worse …

Mar 14 – **Class Cancelled** – Spring Break

Mar 16 – **Class Cancelled** – Spring Break

Mar 21 – Review for Test #3 (No readings)

Mar 23 – **Test #3** – On Euthanasia (True/False, Multiple Choice, Short Essay)

Abortion

Mar 28 – \*Timmons – (Abortion Background)\*; (AND) Thomson – A Defense of Abortion

Mar 30 – Warren – On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion

Apr 4 – Marquis – Why abortion is Immoral

Apr 6 – Strong – A Reply to Marquis

Apr 11 – **Test #4** – On Abortion (True/False, Multiple Choice, Short Essay)

Animal Experimentation and Enhancement

Apr 13 – \*Timmons – (Animal Ethics Background)\*; (AND) Singer – All Animals are Equal

Apr 18 – **Class Canceled**

Apr 20 – Warren – Human and Animal Rights Compared

Apr 25 – \*Vaughn (Enhancement Background)\*; (AND) Sandel – The Case against Perfection

Apr 27– \*Kamm – Is there a Problem with Enhancement?\* ^^^^^^^*End Reading Outline Period*

May 2 – **Test #5** – On Animal Experimentation and Enhancement (T/F, Multiple Choice, Short Essay)

May 4 – **No Class**

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| Percentage | Letter Grade |
| 93+ | A |
| 90-92 | A- |
| 87-89 | B+ |
| 83-86 | B |
| 80-82 | B- |
| 77-79 | C+ |
| 73-76 | C |
| 70-72 | C- |
| 67-69 | D+ |
| 63-66 | D |
| 60-62 | D- |
| -59 | F |

NO FINAL scheduled for our final time of – May 9, 1-3pm, Bartlett Hall 206

(NOTE: In boarder line cases with final grades, I will round up only if a student has consistently attended and participated in class)