

PHIL 213
Health Care Ethics

Dr. Kieran Aarons
North Central College
Fall 2023

Time: Mon, Wed, Fri 1:20-2:25pm
Location: Larrance Academic Center 6
Office: Goldspohn G18
Office hours: Wed 11:30am-1pm
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DESCRIPTION

This course examines moral standards as they apply to the various dimensions of medical institutions and practices. After introducing several major ethical theories, we will examine how moral principles such as nonmaleficence, autonomy, beneficence, and justice ought to govern the delivery of health services. We will also consider how ethical frameworks ought to inform the various social structures in which these services are provided. The course will familiarize students with key concepts in health care ethics such as patient autonomy, due care, informed consent, paternalism, and justice. Students will also work in groups to develop and present an extended argument related to contemporary debates within the field.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The course will enable students to:

- Explain, and critically reflect on, the major questions, issues, and debates in health care ethics.
- Construct and evaluate moral arguments for and against specific views on major questions in bioethics.
- Distinguish between the primarily practical or pragmatic aspects of a major issue in bioethics and its distinctly philosophical dimensions.
- Utilize reflective and argumentative writing as a crucial aid in critical thinking about bioethics.
- Improve skills in critical reading, presentation, and ethical assessment of scientific knowledge and practice.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

Tom L. Beauchamp & James F. Childress, *Principles of Biomedical Ethics*, 7th Edition (Oxford, ISBN: 9780199924585). NOTE: *If you buy the book through a third-party vendor, make sure it's the 7th edition*, as page numbers can change from one to the next. _

All other required and optional texts will be made available on the course homepage on Canvas. Students must bring all required readings to class with them.

REQUIREMENTS

Exams: (60% Total; 15% Each)

Exams will consist of an assortment of different question types, including identifications of terms and passages, multiple choice, true-false, short answer, and longer essays. Topics covered will be drawn from the readings, lectures, and classroom discussions. Details of each exam will be covered in an in-class review session. All four exams must be taken in order to

fulfill the requirements for this course. All exams will be administered in class. If you know that you must be absent on a test day, then you must arrange to take the test prior to the test date.

Discussion Board Posts: (8 Original Posts, 8 Reply Posts, 15% total)

Over the course of the term, you are responsible for posting reading responses to our discussion board on Canvas. These posts are of two different sorts:

- *Original Posts*: For your Original Posts, you may summarize the reading, analyze a difficult passage, or raise questions about the reading. Most importantly, you must demonstrate that you actually did the reading before you came to class. These posts must be at least 300-400 words long (quotes do not count towards your word count) and they must be posted *before the start of class* in order to count. Each Original Post counts for 8 points towards your total message board grade. Please end all posts by posing at least two questions that are directly related to our readings, for your classmates to consider.
- *Response Posts*: For your Response Posts, your job is to respond to the questions posed by two of your classmates' Original Posts. There are no length or time requirements for Response Posts, except that doing less than two responses per week will count towards your grade. Your Response Post counts for 2 points towards your total message board grade.

Attendance: (10% Total)

Attendance will be taken at the start of every class. Students will be allowed two unexcused absences without penalty. Your attendance grade will be penalized 8 points per additional absence.

If you are late for class, you may be marked as completely absent. If you are late, you may notify me immediately after class that you were present for credit. If you are late more than twice, I reserve the right to penalize you 4 points per late arrival.

Group Presentations: (15% Total)

In the final weeks of the semester, in groups of approximately 3-4, students will give a 30 minute presentation on an assigned reading addressing a contemporary issue in health care ethics. The presentation will be followed by a 10-15 minute Q&A discussion which your group will curate. The aim of this assignment is to refine skills such as scholarly research methodology, oration, rhetoric, and persuasive writing. Please see "Guidelines for Group Presentations" on Canvas for further details.

GRADE DISTRIBUTION AND GRADING SCALE

Discussion Board: 15%	A	93 – 100	C+	77–79
Exam 1: 15%	A-	90 – 92	C	73–76
Exam 2: 15%	B+	87–89	C-	70–72
Exam 3: 15%	B	83–86	D	60 – 69
Exam 4: 15%	B-	80–82	F	Below 60
Presentation: 15%				
Attendance: 10%				

WRITING CENTER

The Writing Center is located at Oesterle 242, and is an excellent resource for students at all levels of writing. Consultations are free and offered in-person or online. Tutorials can happen at any stage of the writing process, from brainstorming a topic to final revision.

Group Presentation Project

For this project you will divide into groups and develop a presentation on one of the topics below. Each of the topics will ask you to apply the ethical theories that we have learned in class to a real world health care ethics issue. These presentations count for **15% of your final grade** in the course. The goal of presentations is not primarily to provide a *descriptive* factual report about the health care ethics issue you are discussing. Rather your goal is to use *normative* theories and principles from the class to provide an ethical analysis of some dimension of the issue. As a result, you should provide *just* enough of a factual overview about your topic for the audience to understand the basic aspects of the issue, and for you to set up your ethical argument. Then turn as soon as possible to the ethical stakes, where our focus should stay.

Together you will develop a 20-minute presentation on the topic, using resources that you find from course readings, lectures, discussions, outside scholarly sources, news sources and other media. Your group must run your plan for the presentation (and argument) by me at least two days before your presentation. You must provide me with a one-page outline of your argument on the day of your presentation. The outline should clearly state your main question, your thesis, and provide the structure of your argument. After your presentation, there will be 15 minutes for questions. Everyone in your group must participate during the presentation or during the Q&A.

TOPICS

1. Justice and Access to Health Care

The question of whether access to health care is a basic human right continues to be raised year after year. For this presentation, dive deeper into contemporary analysis of a right to a basic minimum of health care in the United States. As we know, other countries have created universal health care systems. What moral intuitions inform those on each side of the argument? Even if it would be morally ideal to have universal access to affordable health care in the United States, would it be feasible?

- Veatch, Robert M. "Justice, the Basic Social Contract, and Health Care." In *Contemporary Issues in Bioethics*. Edited by Tom Beauchamp, LeRoy Walters, Jeffrey P. Kahn, and Anna Mastroianni. Boston: Wadsworth, 2014

2. The Ethical Implications of Genome Mapping

With companies like 23andMe and AncestryDNA promising their customers intimate knowledge of their genetic make up, serious ethical questions have begun to emerge. Can one have too much information about their health? Could these tests be causing more anxiety than good? Or does such testing promise a healthier future for human society? What are the responsibilities of those who administer these tests? For this presentation, take a careful look at the ethics of genome mapping and offer an ethical analysis of the use of this emerging technology.

- Robertson, John A. "The \$1000 Genome: Ethical and Legal Issues in Whole Genome Sequencing of Individuals." In *Contemporary Issues in Bioethics*. Edited by Tom Beauchamp, LeRoy Walters, Jeffrey P. Kahn, and Anna Mastroianni. Boston: Wadsworth, 2014

3. Vaccines and Personal Choice

This year has marked one of the most significant Flu outbreaks in recent memory. As the death toll increases, health care professionals continue to urge people to get a vaccine. Many people choose to forgo vaccines for the flu and other diseases (measles, mumps, polio, etc.) for personal reasons, or because of a belief that vaccines are ineffective, or because they believe that vaccines cause other harmful conditions. Should it be up to individual prerogative as to whether one gets vaccinated for a communicable and deadly disease? Should parents be able to forgo vaccinating

their children against doctor's orders? For this topic, consider the autonomy and public health concerns surrounding the ethics of vaccination.

- Lantos, John D. Mary Anne Jackson, and Christopher J. Harrison. "Why We Should Eliminate Personal Belief Exemptions to Vaccine Mandates." In *Contemporary Issues in Bioethics*. Edited by Tom Beauchamp, LeRoy Walters, Jeffrey P. Kahn, and Anna Mastroianni. Boston: Wadsworth, 2014

4. The Costs of Getting Well

Martin Shkreli made headlines when, as CEO of Turing Pharmaceuticals, he raised the cost of Daraprim (a 62-year-old drug used for the treatment of HIV and AIDS) from \$13.50 a tablet to \$750 a tablet. Controlling the rising cost of pharmaceutical treatments has become an ethical and political issue as many Americans find that, even with health insurance, they are unable to afford the medications that they need. For this presentation, consider the ethical implications of rising pharmaceutical costs. Do manufacturers have any moral responsibilities to make sure that consumers can afford their treatments? Does society as a whole have a responsibility to make sure that the ill get affordable treatment? Or would increased regulation of the pharmaceutical industry amount to an unjust infringement on the liberty of these businesses?

- Sonderholm, J. "Paying a high price for low costs: Why There Should Be No Legal Constraints on the Profits that Can Be Made on Drugs for Tropical Diseases." *Journal of Medical Ethics*. (2009). Available Online At: <http://jme.bmj.com/content/35/5/315>

5. The Ethics of Commercial Surrogacy

While new reproductive technologies are now making it possible for people to overcome issues with infertility, the use of commercial surrogates raises serious ethical concerns. In 2008, a child born to a commercial surrogate in India was almost left stateless, due to family issues and legal red tape. For this topic, consider the ethical issues raised by the use of commercial surrogates to reproduce. What are the moral implications of selling one's reproductive capacities? What responsibilities do the child's parents or the surrogacy businesses have to surrogates? Are there moral concerns with exploitation of potential surrogates in a global context, especially with women who don't have other options for employment?

- Wilkinson, Stephen. "The Exploitation Argument Against Commercial Surrogacy." *Bioethics*. 17, 2 (2003)

6. The Enduring Ethical Debate on Abortion

For this topic, analyze the ethical issues present in the maternal/fetal conflict. Go beyond class discussion and consider the contemporary ethical issues concerning the practice of abortion. While you can discuss core ethical debates concerning personhood and the right to control one's body, expand your discussion to consider contemporary issues. For example, you might choose to analyze the ethical/political issues surrounding Planned Parenthood funding. You might focus on ethical issues that emerge surrounding technological advancement, such as the termination of fetuses with developmental disabilities or the use of sex-selective abortion in other cultures.

- Rogers, Wendy, Angela Ballentyne and Heather Drayper. "Is Sex-Selective Abortion Morally Justified and Should It Be Prohibited?" *Bioethics*. 21, 9 (2007)
- Vehmas, Simo. "Parental Responsibility and the Morality of Selective Abortion." *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*. 5, 4 (2002)

READING SCHEDULE

Note: Readings marked with a double asterisk (**) will be made available in PDF form through Canvas

DATE	READING	ASSIGNMENT
	Introduction to Ethics & Healthcare	
W 8/23	Introduction to class, Syllabus Overview; Lecture: “What is moral philosophy?”	
	Ethical Theories	
F 8/25	“Utilitarian Theory” (Beauchamp and Childress, <i>Principles of Biomedical Ethics</i> p.354-361)	
M 8/28	Pojman, “Strengths and Weaknesses of Utilitarianism”**	Discussion Board #1 due by the start of class
W 8/30	“Kantian Theory,” in Beauchamp and Childress, <i>Principles of Biomedical Ethics</i> p.361-367	
F 9/1	O’Neill, “A Simplified Account of Kant’s Ethics”**	Response post #1 due 10pm
M 9/4	LABOR DAY No class	
W 9/6	“Virtue Theory,” in Beauchamp and Childress, <i>Principles of Biomedical Ethics</i> p.375-383	Discussion Board #2 - Original post due by the start of class
F 9/8	Belazzi, “COVID-19 Demands Virtue Ethics”	Response post #2 due by 10pm
M 9/11	Virtue Theory (cont’d)	
W 9/13	Exam #1 Review	
F 9/15	EXAM 1	
	Nonmaleficence	
M 9/18	“The Concept of Nonmaleficence,” <i>Principles of Biomedical Ethics</i> p.150-158	
W 9/20	“Distinctions and Rules Governing Non-Treatment,” in <i>Principles of Biomedical Ethics</i> p.158-174	Discussion Board #3 — Original post due by the start of class.
F 9/22	“Killing and Letting Die,” <i>Principles of Biomedical Ethics</i> p.174-178	Response post #3 due 10pm.
M 9/25	“The Justification of Intentionally Arranged Deaths,” <i>Principles of Biomedical Ethics</i> p.178-186;	

W 9/27	“Case Studies I: The Quinlan, Cruzan, and Schiavo Cases”**	Discussion Board #4 — Original post due by the start of class.
F 9/29	Group Presentation #1	Response post #4 due 10pm.
M 10/2	Exam #2 Review	
W 10/4	EXAM 2	
	Autonomy	
F 10/6	“The Concept of Autonomy and the Principle of Respect for Autonomy,” in <i>Principles of Biomedical Ethics</i> , p.101-120	
M 10/9	“The Concept of Autonomy,” (Cont’d)	
W 10/11	“Case Studies II: The Cowart, Placebo, and Vegan Baby Cases”**	Discussion Board #5 — Original post due by the start of class.
F 10/13	No Class Online activity (see Canvas)	Response post #5 due 10pm.
10/16-17	FALL BREAK <i>No class</i>	
	Informed Consent	
W 10/18	“The Meaning and Justification of Informed Consent,” in <i>Principles of Biomedical Ethics</i> , p.120-130	Discussion Board #6 — Original post due by the start of class.
F 10/20	“Understanding” (<i>Principles</i> , p.131-137), “Voluntariness” (p.137-141)	Response post #6 due 10pm.
	Paternalism and Risk	
M 10/23	“Paternalism: Conflicts between Beneficence and Respect for Autonomy,” <i>Principles of Biomedical Ethics</i> , p.214-229	
W 10/25	“Protecting Incompetent Patients,” in <i>Principles of Biomedical Ethics</i> , p.188-193	Discussion Board #7 — Original post due by the start of class.
F 10/27	Group Presentation #2	Response post #7 due 10p
M 10/30	Exam #3 review session	
W 11/1	EXAM 3	
F 11/3	In-class film: <i>John Q</i>	

M 11/6	Finish in-class movie: <i>John Q</i> In Class Discussion	
	Health and Justice	
W 11/8	Aarons, “The Concept of Health” **	
F 11/10	Canguilhem, “Health: Popular Concept and Philosophical Question” **	
M 11/13	“The Concept of Justice” and “Theories of Justice” in <i>Principles of Biomedical Ethics</i> , p.249-262	
W 11/15	“Theories of Justice” (cont’d)	Discussion Board #8 — Original post due by the start of class.
F 11/17	“Fair Opportunity and Unfair Discrimination” and “Vulnerability, Exploitation, and Discrimination in Research” in <i>Principles of Biomedical Ethics</i> , p.262-270	Response post #8 due 10pm.
M 11/20	Film: <i>Escape Fire: The Fight to Rescue American Healthcare</i> , In Class Discussion	
11/22-24	THANKSGIVING BREAK <i>No class</i>	
M 11/27	Finish film: <i>Escape Fire</i> In-class discussion	
W 11/29	Group Presentation #3	
F 12/1	Group Presentation #4	
M 12/4	Exam 4 Review Session	
W 12/6	EXAM 4	
F 12/8	Wrap up	

COLLEGE POLICY STATEMENTS

Plagiarism Policy

All instances of cheating and/or plagiarism will be handled in accordance with NCC's official policy, located here: <http://catalog.northcentralcollege.edu/content.php?catoid=21&navoid=1804>

Assessment Notification

It is possible that your work may be selected anonymously for assessment of the philosophy department. If selected, your grade will not be impacted in any way by our program assessment. You may opt out of having your work selected for program assessment by emailing me.

Early Alert

North Central College cares about, and is committed to, the safety and success of all members of the College community. If you or someone you know may be struggling academic and/or personally, College resources and assistance are available. As your faculty, I may seek support for you by passing information on or sharing concern with the Office of Student Affairs, Center for Student Success, and/or Behavioral Intervention Team by submitting an Early Alert referral. You may also submit an Early Alert referral if you or another member of our campus community is in need of assistance.

Title IX: Confidentiality and Mandated Reporter Statement

North Central College faculty are committed to creating a safe learning environment for all members of our community, free from gender and sex-based discrimination, including sexual harassment, domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, in accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Please note that our Title IX and Sexual Misconduct Policy designates all faculty members as Mandated Reporters. Under this policy, all Mandated Reporters must report all disclosures of sex or gender-based discrimination or violence to Cortney Matuszak, North Central College's Title IX Coordinator. The Title IX Coordinator will reach out to provide resources, support, and information after receiving a report, but community members are not required to respond to such outreach. Reported information will remain private. The Title IX Coordinator can be reached at cmatuszak@noctrl.edu, (630) 637-5156, or by visiting her office in Old Main, Room 524. If you have (or someone you know has) experienced any form of sex or gender-based discrimination or violence and wish to speak with someone confidentially about rights, options, and referrals, please contact our Campus Advocate Samantha Godfrey, at skgodfrey@noctrl.edu or (630) 637-5113. For more information regarding North Central College's Title IX procedures, reporting, or supportive measures, please visit the [Title IX webpage](#).

Student Disability Services

North Central College values diversity and inclusion; we are committed to a climate of mutual respect and full participation by providing an equal opportunity and meaningful access for all students. Student Disability Services is the office designated by the College to support students with disabilities under Section 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008. If you are a student with a disability, you are encouraged to contact Student Disability Services at 630-637-5264 or SDS@noctrl.edu. Please visit the Student Disability Services HUB page for additional information.

Please be aware that the accessible table and chairs in this room should remain available for students who find that standard classroom seating is not accessible. Be cognizant of those around you and respect the learning and physical access needs of your fellow classmates.