PHL 116: BIOETHICS
Univ. of Alabama at Birmingham | Summer 2015

1. BASIC COURSE INFO

Prof. Information:  Section Info:
Prof: Dr. Joshua May  Online: Section QLA
Office: Humanities Bldg. Rm. 425  Course Website: Canvas
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Website: www.joshmay.com  Office Hours: By appointment

Section Info:
Online: Section QLA
Course Website: Canvas

COURSE DESCRIPTION
We’ll cover moral problems and dilemmas in medicine and health affairs, as well as some
basic logic and moral theory. Topics include: euthanasia, assisted reproduction, stem cells and
human cloning, abortion, human and animal experimentation, and medical financing
(including the Affordable Care Act). Warning: Some of these topics are sensitive and sacred
to some people. If you are uncomfortable considering reasons for and against the beliefs you
may have on these topics, you may want to reconsider taking this class.

No prerequisites. Ethics and Civic Responsibility are significant components of this course (QEP).

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
(1) Develop an understanding of some of the major moral issues of our time.
(2) Learn some basic moral theories and concepts.
(3) Hone the ability to explicate and critically assess moral arguments.
(4) Facilitate the skill of evaluating and justifying one’s moral beliefs.

REQUIRED TEXTS
(1) Medical Ethics: Accounts of Groundbreaking Cases (7th ed.) by Gregory E. Pence
[Available at local university bookstores as well as various online retailers, including Kindle format at
about $35 to rent. Don’t use the previous edition, as the readings have changed.]

(2) Classic Works in Medical Ethics: Core Philosophical Readings by Gregory E. Pence
[Available at local university bookstores and various online retailers—about $21 to rent at Amazon.]

ASSESSMENT
1. Engagement  10% of grade (Due: N/A) [daily]
2. Quizzes (x6)  15% of grade (See Schedule) [every couple of days]
3. Midterm Exam  30% of grade (Date: 5/15) [mid-semester]
4. Final Exam (cumulative)  45% of grade (Date: 5/29) [end of semester]

Note: These due dates are pretty firm, but they are subject to minor changes.
CLASS UPDATES
Important announcements and updates will be made occasionally on the course website. So do check it frequently (although you may have it set up to email you each announcement).

MATERIAL COVERED
We will be discussing material primarily from the text(s). However, we may not cover everything in the assigned reading. [Also: Given that this course covers important specific cases in medicine and the law, students will be tested on certain basic details of such cases.]

COURSE MATERIALS: HANDOUTS, LECTURE SLIDES, ETC.
To help students, I will provide handouts, slides, and so on. I hope providing handouts/slides in particular will allow students in class to participate in discussion rather than write down everything I say. Keep in mind, though, the handouts/slides will be rather barebones. You will likely want to supplement them with your own notes from class.

Lecture Recordings: You will have access to recordings of the lectures from an on-campus version of this course taught in Spring of 2015. So please note that some statements (e.g. regarding due dates) will not be accurate for this version of the course. Always look to this syllabus and the course website for the correct due dates, extra credit opportunities, etc.

Technical Difficulties: The lecture recordings are treated just as extra help for understanding the material from the texts. So you will be held accountable for assigned material even if there is a glitch or technical difficulty in the recording. However, you should be able to find the relevant material in the textbook and in the slides.

Copyright Notice: The course materials that I create (e.g. handouts, recordings, exams) are a kind of intellectual property. They are for you to use in this class only, during this semester, and not for others to use (e.g. they’re not to be posted on other websites or otherwise shared with others).

2. ASSIGNMENTS

ENGAGEMENT
Your Engagement grade will be determined by a mix of two types of tasks:

(a) Assignments that will yield points (or lose them if you don’t complete the task). Examples:
   - Having an appropriate profile picture on Canvas;
   - Short writing assignments if they come up
     (e.g. responding to a poll, report on an ethical discussion with a peer outside of class)
   - Certain required discussion board posts (rare).
   - Regularly accessing the Canvas site.

(b) Opportunities that are more like extra credit in that completing them will boost your Engagement grade, but you won’t exactly lose points for not doing completing them. Examples:
   - Extra participation in class discussion or online discussion boards.
   - Emailing me and asking questions in way that shows you’re engaged.
How these tasks combine into a final Engagement score will have to be up to my discretion. Naturally, you will receive an “A” if you do all of these things regularly, an “F” if you do none of them, a “C” if your engagement is about average and meets a minimal level of acceptance, and so on.

QUIZES/SHORT WRITING ASSIGNMENTS
These will all be online or take-home, so make sure you know how to navigate the Canvas site. Quizzes will be either multiple choice, short answer, or short essay (or some combination), depending on the week. I’ll mix it up so there are a number of different testing methods used. So these may involve some essay writing. The quizzes occur about every other week. No quizzes can be made up without very special circumstances.

The quizzes cover the material from before it (from the last quiz). So, for example, Quiz 2 will cover the material on the Schedule that falls between Quiz 1 and Quiz 2. That’s not a precise measurement, since sometimes a quiz will occur during the middle of a topic, in which case the following quiz may cover some of that same overlapping topic.

EXAMS
Both the midterm and final exams will involve short-answer questions (e.g. multiple-choice, fill in the blank, or define terms) and short essays. Before the exams, you’ll receive a study guide. The final will be cumulative but weighted toward material covered since the midterm.

LOCKDOWN BROWSER (ONLINE STUDENTS ONLY)
To do the online assignments in this class, you will need to download and be able to run Respondus Lockdown Browser. It’s free but unfortunately only works with Windows or Mac operating systems (http://www.uab.edu/bblearn/respondus-lockdown-browser). This is very important. If you cannot use Lockdown Browser for whatever reason, then you can’t take this course. I apologize for the requirement, but it is necessary to avoid cheating and thus to insure the quality and integrity of this course. With this installed, online students can complete exams online any time during the day they’re due. But you’ll have a limited time to finish once started.

Technical Difficulties: These are an unfortunate risks of taking a course online. It is your responsibility to avoid them. E.g. try to take the test earlier in the day, have backup options in case you lose Internet access during a test, have a camera ready to take pictures of errors, etc.

LATE & MAKE-UP ASSIGNMENTS
Assignments can be made up or submitted late only if you have very extenuating circumstances (e.g. medical, military, jury duty) that you can document. Make sure you let me know as soon as such special circumstances arise; otherwise I might not be able to work something out with you. Moreover, make-ups are conditional on our being able to schedule a mutually convenient time for it and a time that is either soon before or after the original assignment occurred. For example, don’t expect to be able to take an exam two weeks after (or before) the rest of the class takes it.

Late penalties: If I accept a late assignment without an agreed upon extension, a 5% penalty applies for the first day late; a subsequent penalty of 2% per day will be applied for the next 13 calendar days after the due date (including Saturdays and Sundays). No assignment can be accepted after more than 14 calendar days, except in exceptional circumstances and in consultation with the professor.
CHEATING (INCL. PLAGIARISM)
Don’t cheat. I warn against this at the beginning of every semester, and still nearly every time at least one person gets caught! I take this extremely seriously. I will give all cheaters a failing grade and report the incidents to the university.

Note that if you cut something from a Web document and paste it into your paper, you are plagiarizing (even if you mix up the wording a bit). If you consult any sources, you must diligently cite and quote them.

Furthermore, it’s your responsibility to make sure that your work doesn’t violate university policies about plagiarism and other academic cheating. (Compare: Ignorance of the law is no excuse.) If you need any help in understanding these standards or are in any doubt about whether your work for this course violates them, check with me. For your convenience, here is the link to UAB’s page on academic integrity:

https://www.uab.edu/students/academics/honor-code

All UAB students are expected to be familiar with the UAB Academic Honor Code, as well as any honor codes that are specific to their schools or disciplines. The code represents a commitment to integrity in the academic community and a respect for an individual’s educational endeavors:

I have read and, by choosing to become a member of the UAB academic community, accept the UAB Academic Honor Code. I understand that violation of this code will result in penalties as severe as expulsion from the university. I promise and confirm that I will not, at any time and under any circumstances, involve myself with abetting, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, or misrepresentation while enrolled as a student at the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

CALCULATING YOUR GRADE
All scores will be out of 100 (in other words, a percentage). To calculate your grade, multiply the percentage weight for each assignment by your score (out of 100) for that assignment, then add up the results for each assignment. Finally, convert that total score for the course into a letter grade using standard conversions (e.g. A=90-100, B=80-89, etc.).

Note: For final grades, UAB only uses A, B, C, D, F (no +/-).

GRADE DISPUTES
Ultimately, not everyone will receive the grade they wanted. But please note that I apply the usual standards in the discipline of Philosophy and I apply them fairly. That means I can’t make a special exception for anyone (e.g. "I tried really hard" or "I need to get an A for a scholarship" or "I felt I did really well," etc.). Making special exceptions for some students but not others is unfair. I will amend grades only if I made a calculating error or inadvertently misapplied a standard. I will not change the grading standards or extra credit opportunities for individual students.

Note also that the default grade for any assignment is not an “A” with points taken away for errors. Rather, the default grade (if we must imagine one) is more like a “C” which is supposed to be the grade for average work meeting minimum expectations. Points are then taken off for doing worse than this or added for doing better.
3. Student Support

Office Hours
I encourage you all to talk with me outside of class (e.g. in office hours). If you are unable to see me during my regular slot or talk to me before or after class, I’m happy to schedule a mutually convenient time. Talking to me about the material, especially in preparation for an upcoming assignment, is not just for those who fear failing the course; it’s also for those who want to secure an “A” (or whatever your goal is).

Emailing Me
I’m available to contact by email. I can even answer relatively short and specific questions that way. If you have a more detailed and lengthy question, talk to me in person (or on my office phone).

Website
The website for this class has some links that may prove useful in the course.
(Note: My personal website also has some information and links to several resources for philosophy. But what is particularly useful for this course will be provided on the web page for this course, not my personal website.)

See also the Library’s Philosophy Guide: http://www.mhsl.uab.edu/2009guides/philosophy/

Writing Support
I will be expecting you to do college-level writing for this course. So I will be expecting few errors in the areas of spelling, grammar, professional academic style, and so on. Furthermore, writing in philosophy is often very different from writing in other disciplines. Since philosophy requires the clear communication of often difficult and subtle ideas, weak writing renders high level performance impossible. So I encourage you to talk to me about your essays (and exams) before the due date if you have any questions.

If You Face Major Difficulties
If for any reason you are struggling—due to medical issues or otherwise—get in touch with me as soon as possible. I’m happy to work with you to find the best course of action and, if possible, to help you complete the course successfully. But you must get in touch as soon as you know there is a problem. Waiting until the last minute, for example, might mean we can’t work anything out.

Students with Disabilities
If you are registered with Disability Support Services (DSS), let me know as soon as possible about requested accommodations. If you have a disability but have not yet contacted DSS, please contact them as soon as possible (934-4205) or visit them (at 516 Hill University Center). Remember that special accommodations for students with disabilities are not retroactive. Students must obtain an accommodation letter from DSS at the beginning of each semester, get that letter to the instructor, and contact the instructor several days before the accommodation is required. Please see DSS FAQ’s at:

https://www.uab.edu/students/services/disability-support-services
4. READINGS

WHEN TO READ
Students are expected to do the assigned reading. You should aim to do the reading the day it's covered in class—or at least around that time. The point of this is: don't give up on the reading. If you didn't get to it before we covered it in class, make sure you do it after. This is especially important because philosophy involves close examination of often fairly dense arguments. However, you aren't expected to have figured it all out before the relevant lecture. That's what we're going to try to do in class. (Notice also that I've provided the page numbers of each reading so you can see the length and plan ahead.)

Mental Fatigue: Don't underestimate the power of mental fatigue. When reading, if you find that you can't process it, try reading it again. If you still feel rather lost, it might be that you're getting mentally exhausted. Try putting the book down and coming back to it later, even perhaps the next day. It's quite likely that you'll find it much easier after a break.

READING LIST
The list of readings below is subject to change. All readings are in the course text, unless marked “PDF” (in which case I'll make them available to you online). We'll try to go through these articles following this exact schedule, but it is not set in stone. You'll need to come to class to know where we are exactly.

Note: ME = Medical Ethics text | CW = Classic Works text | PDF = online

Module 1: Intro: Bioethics and Argumentation [1 Week]
1. ME.10: Pence, G. (2015) “Medical Research on Vulnerable Subjects” (pp. 188-199 only)
2. ME.1: Pence, Gregory (2015). “Ethical Reasoning….” [1st part] (pp. 1-8 only)

Module 2: Euthanasia & Physician-Assisted Death [2 Weeks]
2. CW.4: Brock, Dan (1992) “Voluntary Active Euthanasia” (skip final section, 18pp.)
6. CW.1: Rachels, James (1975) “Active and Passive Euthanasia” (6pp.)

1. ME.1: Pence (2015) “…Moral Theories, Principles, & Bioethics” [2nd part] (pp. 8-18 only)
Module 4: Having Children: Surrogates & More [1.5 Weeks]
3. CW.11: Robertson, John (1983) “Surrogate Mothers: No So Novel after All” (11pp.)
4. PDF: Ketchum, Sara Ann (1989) “Selling Babies and Selling Bodies” Hypatia (11pp.)

Module 5: Embryos: Stem Cells, Cloning [1 Week]
2. CW.8: Kass, Leon (1979) “‘Making Babies’ Revisited” (only sects. 1-7, 15pp.)

Module 6: Abortion: Ending Early Life [2 Weeks]
6. PDF: Warren, Mary Anne (1982) “Postscript on Infanticide” (3pp.)

Module 7: Animal Experimentation [1.5 Weeks]

Module 8: Medical Finance & Justice [1.5 Weeks]
2. CW.26: Lamm, Richard (1994) “St. Martin of Tours in a New World of Medical Ethics” (10pp.)
## SCHEDULE
(Note: Subject to minor revision. Keep checking Canvas to know where we are.)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wk</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lecture/Topic</th>
<th>Readings*</th>
<th>DUE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>5/4</td>
<td>1. Intro: Paternalism &amp; Tuskegee</td>
<td>Syllabus, Pence (1.1)</td>
<td>Profile Pic</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5/5</td>
<td>2. Intro to Ethical Reasoning</td>
<td>Pence (1.2)</td>
<td>Survey 1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5/6</td>
<td>3. Euthanasia: Terminal Patients</td>
<td>Pence (2.1), Brock (2.2)</td>
<td>Quiz 1</td>
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<td>5/7</td>
<td>4. Euthanasia: Autonomy</td>
<td>Callahan (2.3)</td>
<td>Disc. 1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5/8</td>
<td>5. Euthanasia: Comas</td>
<td>Pence (2.4), Fletcher (2.5)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5/11</td>
<td>6. Euthanasia: Letting Die</td>
<td>Rachels (2.6), Foot (2.7)</td>
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<td>5/12</td>
<td>7. Ethical Theory: Some Theories</td>
<td>Pence (3.1)</td>
<td>Quiz 2</td>
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<td>5/15</td>
<td>11. Children: For Surrogacy &amp; More</td>
<td>Pence (4.2), Robertson (4.3)</td>
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<td>Midterm Exam</td>
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<td>Midterm</td>
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<td>5/18</td>
<td>12. Children: Against Surrogacy</td>
<td>Ketchum (4.4)</td>
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<td>5/19</td>
<td>13. Embryos: Stem Cells &amp; Cloning</td>
<td>Pence (5.1)</td>
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<td>5/20</td>
<td>14. Embryos: Respect</td>
<td>Kass (5.2), Fletcher (5.3)</td>
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<td>5/21</td>
<td>15. Abortion: Bodily Rights</td>
<td>Pence (6.1), Thomson (6.2)</td>
<td>Quiz 4</td>
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<td>5/22</td>
<td>16. Abortion: Futures Like Ours</td>
<td>Marquis (6.3)</td>
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<td>5/23</td>
<td>17. Abortion: Personhood</td>
<td>Warren (6.4)</td>
<td>Disc. 2</td>
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<td>5/24</td>
<td>18. Abortion: Versus Infanticide</td>
<td>Pence (6.5), Warren (6.6)</td>
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<td>5/25</td>
<td>19. Animals: Rights</td>
<td>Pence (71.), Cohen (7.2)</td>
<td>Quiz 5</td>
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<td>5/26</td>
<td>20. Animals: Speciesism</td>
<td>Singer (7.3)</td>
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<td>5/27</td>
<td>Holiday – Memorial Day</td>
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<td>5/29</td>
<td>22. Medical Finance: Pre-ACA</td>
<td>Pence (8.1), Lamm (8.2)</td>
<td>Quiz 6</td>
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<td>23. Medical Finance: Post-ACA</td>
<td>Pence (8.3), Rawls (8.4)</td>
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<td>24. Medical Finance &amp; Wrap-Up</td>
<td>Gutman (8.5)</td>
<td>Survey 2</td>
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<td>Review for Final</td>
<td>Slides</td>
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<td>Final Exam: Fri. May 29 on Canvas</td>
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* Read the listed pieces for the corresponding lecture. Match authors’ last names in the Reading List or look up by number (e.g. 2.2 = Module 2, reading 2).