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

1. BASIC COURSE INFO

Prof. Information:
Prof: Dr. Joshua May
Office: Humanities Bldg. Rm. 425
Email: joshmay@uab.edu
Website: www.joshdmay.com
Office Hours: Tues/Thurs 2-3pm (& by appt.)

Section Info:
Online: Section QL
On-campus: Section 2D
Time: TR 12:30pm - 1:45pm
Location: Education Bldg. 150
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: abortion, euthanasia, assisted reproduction, human cloning, human and animal experimentation, medical financing (including the Affordable Care Act), and human enhancement (with a focus on the neuroethics of this: brain enhancement). 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 (McGraw Hill, 2015). ISBN-13: 978-0078038457. (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 (McGraw Hill, 1997). ISBN-13: 978-0070381155. (Available at local university bookstores as well as various online retailers—about $21 to rent at Amazon.)

ASSESSMENT
1. Engagement 10% of grade (Due: N/A) [weekly]
2. Quizzes (x6) 15% of grade (See Schedule) [biweekly]
3. Midterm Exam 30% of grade (Date: 2/17) [week 7]
4. Final Exam 45% of grade (Date: 4/23) [week 15]

Note: These due dates are pretty firm, but they are subject to minor changes.
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.]

Handouts/Slides
There will be some handouts and slides from time to time, and they will be available on the course website. I’m doing this primarily so on-campus students don’t have to take such copious notes during class. Keep in mind, though, the handouts/slides will be rather bare. You’ll very likely need to supplement them with your own notes.

Buddy System
On-campus students: Early in the semester, I’ll set aside time for you to exchange contact information with some fellow classmates. When needed (e.g. if you have to miss class), get in touch with them to share notes or discuss the course material.

Online students: I encourage you to seek a fellow student out through the course website to exchange contact information with. You might, for example, post on the discussion board about this.

No Laptops, Phones, Etc.
During class, turn off and put away all computers, phones, and other electronic devices. Texting, instant messaging, web surfing, message checking, e-mailing, are all distractions to you and your fellow classmates. It’s becoming so rampant that the best option at this point seems to ban it all during lecture. Think of the class meetings as a “philosophy retreat” where you focus on only philosophy. That’s not too much to ask. (If you have a special need for some such device, talk with me and of course we can make exceptions as needed.)

A rationale I endorse:

Penalties: If I catch you during class, I’ll ask you to put the device away and you won’t be marked as present for that lecture. If the problem persists, you will need to leave.

2. Assignments

Engagement
On-campus students: Your Engagement grade will be determined by:
(a) Timely attendance in lecture;
(b) Participation in class discussion.

I will do roll call and track attendance (this isn’t just part of your grade; it’s also for me to learn names). More than about 5 minutes late for class will be counted “absent,” although that shouldn’t discourage you from coming that day.
Your Engagement grade will primarily be determined by this. We’ll have about 26 regular class meetings and your grade will largely be determined by the proportion of lectures you attend. For example, if you attend 75% of lectures, then you will likely receive around a C grade. However, I will reward those who consistently participate in class and penalize those who consistently cause problems. Ultimately, acquiring a few unexcused absences isn’t very detrimental, provided you aren’t disruptive in class. But do note that missing more than a few classes would likely make it difficult for you to do well in the course overall, simply because you will miss important material.

Note on excused absences: These require proper documentation—e.g. for jury duty (note from the court), military service (note from military superior), or required university-sponsored activities (documentation from UAB official or supervisor). Remember, students with excused absences are still required to complete work and readings by the required due dates.

**Online students:** Your Engagement grade will be determined by several factors:
(a) Having an appropriate profile picture on Canvas *(required to pass this assignment)*;
(b) Logging into Canvas regularly and accessing course documents (yes, I can monitor this);
(c) Activity on course discussion boards;
(d) Short engagement assignments if they come up (e.g. responding to a poll).

How these combine into a 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.

**Quiz/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.

[Note: At least one quiz will involve going out in the community and discussing an ethical issue, then writing up a report on it.]

**Exams**
Both the midterm and final exams will involve short-answer questions (e.g. multiple-choice, fill in the blank, define terms) and short essays. In advance of each of the exams, you will be given a handout on the exam format and sample questions.

**Online students only:** To take the exams 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. Details here:

- http://www.uab.edu/bblearn/respondus-lockdown-browser

This is very important. If you cannot use Lockdown Browser for whatever reason, 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.
**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.

**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.). The following chart is an example to help illustrate how to do the calculation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Multiplier</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 1</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>12.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment 2</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment 3</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>19.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>30.45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 80 (B)

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

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/2009/guides/philosophy/

WRITING SUPPORT
I will be expecting you to write college-level essays 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), please make an appointment as soon as possible to discuss accommodations that may be necessary for this course. 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 for doing 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.)

Some Advice: 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

Module 1: Intro: Bioethics and Argumentation [1 Week]
1. ME.10: Pence, G. (2015) “Medical Research on Vulnerable Subjects” (pp. 188-199 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 Week]

Module 8: Just Distribution of Organs [1 Week]

Module 9: 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 coming to class to know where we are.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wk</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings*</th>
<th>Key Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1/6</td>
<td>1. Intro: Paternalism &amp; Tuskegee</td>
<td>Syllabus, Pence</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1/8</td>
<td>1. Intro to Ethical Reasoning</td>
<td>Pence</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1/13</td>
<td>2. Euthanasia: Terminal Patients</td>
<td>Pence, Brock</td>
<td>Quiz 1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1/15</td>
<td>2. Euthanasia: Autonomy</td>
<td>Callahan</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>1/20</td>
<td>2. Euthanasia: Comas</td>
<td>Pence, Fletcher</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1/22</td>
<td>2. Euthanasia: Letting Die</td>
<td>Rachels, Foot</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>1/27</td>
<td>3. Ethical Theory: Some Theories</td>
<td>Pence</td>
<td>Quiz 2</td>
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<td>1/29</td>
<td>3. Ethical Theory: Trolley Problems</td>
<td>Foot</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>3. Ethical Theory: Cont.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2/5</td>
<td>4. Children: Having Them</td>
<td>Paul</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>2/10</td>
<td>4. Children: For Surrogacy &amp; More</td>
<td>Pence, Robertson</td>
<td>Quiz 3</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2/12</td>
<td>4. Children: Against Surrogacy</td>
<td>Ketchum</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>2/17</td>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
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<td>Midterm</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2/19</td>
<td>5. Embryos: Stem Cells and Cloning</td>
<td>Pence</td>
<td></td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>2/24</td>
<td>5. Embryos: Respect</td>
<td>Kass, Fletcher</td>
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<td>2/26</td>
<td>6. Abortion: Bodily Rights</td>
<td>Pence, Thomson</td>
<td>Quiz 4</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>3/3</td>
<td>6. Abortion: Futures Like Ours</td>
<td>Marquis</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3/5</td>
<td>6. Abortion: Personhood</td>
<td>Warren</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>3/10</td>
<td>6. Abortion: Versus Infanticide</td>
<td>Pence, Warren</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3/12</td>
<td>7. Animals: Rights</td>
<td>Pence, Cohen</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>3/17</td>
<td>7. Animals: Speciesism</td>
<td>Singer</td>
<td>Quiz 5</td>
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<td>3/19</td>
<td>8. Organs: Background</td>
<td>Pence</td>
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<td><strong>Spring Break: 3/23-27</strong></td>
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<td>4/2</td>
<td><strong>Peer Discussion - No Lecture</strong></td>
<td>Handout</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>4/7</td>
<td>9. Medical Finance: Pre-ACA</td>
<td>Pence, Lamm</td>
<td>Quiz 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4/9</td>
<td>9. Medical Finance: Post-ACA</td>
<td>Pence, Rawls</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>4/14</td>
<td>9. Medical Finance &amp; Wrap-Up</td>
<td>Gutman</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4/16</td>
<td><strong>Review for Final</strong></td>
<td>Handout</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>4/20</td>
<td><strong>Final Exam: Thurs. April 23, 10:45 am – 1:15 pm</strong></td>
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* Read the listed pieces for the corresponding lecture. Match authors’ last names in the Reading List.