

Course Syllabus

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Philosophy 265 – Biomedical Ethics

Winter 2013

Online Course – No prerequisites and no meeting times.

Dates of Instruction: 3 Jan 2013 - 20 Mar 2013

Instructor: Jason Benchimol

Contact: Please use the Canvas email tool for all electronic correspondence.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course uses the tools of moral philosophy to investigate the ethical, social, and political dimensions of biomedicine. Topics may include euthanasia and physician assisted suicide, new reproductive technologies, medical conscientious objection, justice in health care, definitions of health, disability, and disease, human reproductive cloning, the right to refuse treatment, and disability issues in medicine. We will begin with a primer on arguments and philosophical reasoning and a brief exploration of influential moral theories. Then, we will dedicate most of our time and attention to analysis of arguments pertaining to particular issues in bioethics. The focus is on understanding and evaluating arguments, on challenging ourselves to think more carefully about bioethics, learning to express our views more clearly, and not simply asserting our opinions without argument or simply accepting others' opinions without argument.

This course has no prerequisites. It is suitable for both veterans and newcomers to philosophy. That is, background in philosophy or medicine, while helpful, is neither assumed nor required. But please be advised: the course material is challenging by nature, and will present special challenges that are unique to the philosophical discipline. Bellevue College estimates that, during a normal 10-week quarter, students should plan to spend approximately 15 hours a week doing class-related work for 5-credit online course. You are hereby advised that success in this course will likely require – and is surely not guaranteed by – spending at least this much time working on this course. Success in this course requires a willingness to patiently read, re-read, and digest quite a lot of rather dense material, a personal schedule that allows one to devote significant time to thinking independently about this material, and a readiness to spend a good amount of time sharpening one's argumentative skills.

TEXT

There is no required textbook for the course. All readings are electronically delivered through the Canvas site.

ASSESSMENT

Final grades will be calculated based on grade credits earned in the following two categories of assessment:

Daily Exercises - 60% of final grade

Tests (4) - 40% of final grade (10% each)