

## **Philosophy 265: Medical Ethics**

Fall Quarter 2011

Instructor: Jason Benchimol

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Course Location and Times: T Th 15.00-17.10 in C168

### **Course Description**

This course uses the tools of moral philosophy to investigate the ethical, social, and political dimensions of biomedicine. We'll begin the course with a short primer on arguments and moral reasoning. From there, we'll move on to examine specific topics in medical ethics. Our focus is on using the tools of reason and argument to think critically about right and wrong in the medical context. By the end of the course, students should expect to have significantly developed their skills in applied moral reasoning.

This course has no prerequisites. Background in philosophy or medicine, while helpful, is neither assumed nor required. What is required is a willingness to read our course materials carefully, to think critically about ethical issues in modern medicine, to practice defending your opinions with arguments, and to respectfully yet critically evaluate others' opinions in class discussion. Students should be advised that success in a philosophy course is much harder to achieve without an excellent command of the English language.

### **Required Text**

There is no required text for this course. All readings will be delivered electronically via our course website. The URL for our website is: <https://go.mybcc.net/classes/1939B122/default.aspx>

It will be assumed that you have read the assigned materials before you come to class. The reading load for this course will be rather heavy. We will mostly be reading articles that are selected from academic journals. It is expected that students will read these articles as many times as is necessary to comprehend, prior to our class discussions of them, the basic lines of argument the authors present therein. In other words, you are expected to come to class not only having read the assigned readings in advance of our discussions of them, but having read them closely and carefully enough to be prepared to discuss them in a reasonably intelligent and informed manner.

## Grades/Assessment

Your final grade will be based on points earned in the following categories, and weighted accorded to the following percentages:

In-Class Activities	20%
Reading Responses (3)	15%
Analysis Paper	25%
Exams (2)	40% (15% - midterm, 25% - final exam)

More specific information about assessment:

The midterm exam will take place on Tuesday 25 Oct, in our classroom, during our regularly scheduled class time (15.00-17.10). The final exam will take place on Tuesday 6 Dec, in our classroom, during our regularly scheduled class time (15.00-17.10). More information about the midterm and final examinations will be provided in due time. Our final examination will be cumulative. If you will be unavailable to take an exam on its regularly scheduled date, please see me ASAP so that we can find a suitable alternative date and time for you to take the exam.

During the term, you will be expected to submit three (3) reading responses (see the document distributed in class for more information about how to complete these). You may begin to submit reading responses in week 3 of the quarter, and all three must be submitted no later than the Thursday of the ninth week of the quarter. It is up to you to decide how you'd like to go about completing this requirement for the course. That is, you will select the particular readings to which you'd like to provide reading responses. Any given reading response must focus on just one (1) of our assigned readings (so, if there are two assigned readings for a given day of class, then if you'd like to submit a reading response for that day of class, you would respond to just one of those two assigned readings.) **Any given reading response must be submitted electronically (Word documents only!) to [jason.benchimol@bellevuecollege.edu](mailto:jason.benchimol@bellevuecollege.edu) no later than 23.59 PDT on the day prior to the class session in which we will discuss the reading about which you wrote your response.** These will be graded on a "satisfactory/unsatisfactory" basis, and you must turn in all three (3) of these to be eligible to earn any credit for this category of the course.

There will be in-class activities **every class session**. These will vary in nature, but they will typically consist in short writing assignments, group work, low-stakes pop quizzes, and so on. You must be present in class to earn credit for these activities. There is no way to make up missed in-class activities, whatever the reason for a given absence.

More information about the analysis paper will be provided in due course.

Finally, your respectful and helpful contributions to our class discussions might improve your final grade, but cannot lower it.

## **OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

### **Classroom Behavior:**

Please make every effort to arrive in class on time. Please do not leave the class before the period is over. Please wait for the class to end before you pack your bag to leave. I will make every effort to end at the moment the period ends.

Standard college course decorum applies: it goes without saying that you are expected to treat your fellow students with respect. That means, among other things, not interrupting, shouting at, or demeaning other people.

Turn off your cell phones and other electronic devices off during the class period. If a cell phone goes off in class or if you are found to be texting or using an electronic device for other purposes in class, I will ask you to leave the class.

The use of a laptop in class is also discouraged, except in the case where it accommodates a disability. You'll probably see that there will generally be no good reason to use a laptop computer in class.

Always bring your course materials to class so that we can refer to them during our discussions.

Please note that these are not exhaustive guidelines. Other forms of disruptive behavior will not be tolerated.

## **INFORMATION PERTINENT TO STUDENT LIFE AND AFFAIRS AT BELLEVUE COLLEGE:**

A link to the Philosophy department's web site: <http://bellevuecollege.edu/philosophy/>

### **Affirmation of Inclusion**

Bellevue College is committed to maintaining an environment in which every member of the campus community feels welcome to participate in the life of the college, free from harassment and discrimination.

We value our different backgrounds at Bellevue College, and students, faculty, staff members, and administrators are to treat one another with dignity and respect.

<http://bellevuecollege.edu/about/goals/inclusion.asp>

### **Division Statements**

You should also review the Arts and Humanities Expectations posted here:

<http://bellevuecollege.edu/artshum/policy.html>

Information about Bellevue Colleges copyright guidelines can be found at:

<http://bellevuecollege.edu/lmc/links/copyright.html>

A good resource for Plagiarism is the Writing

Lab: <http://bellevuecollege.edu/writinglab/Plagiarism.html>

### **Student Code of Academic Conduct**

“Cheating, stealing and plagiarizing (using the ideas or words of another as one’s own without crediting the source) and inappropriate/disruptive classroom behavior are violations of the Student Code of Conduct at Bellevue College. Examples of unacceptable behavior include, but are not limited to: talking out of turn, arriving late or leaving early without a valid reason, allowing cell phones/pagers to ring, and inappropriate behavior toward the instructor or classmates. The instructor can refer any violation of the Student Code of Conduct to the Vice

President of Student Services for possible probation or suspension from Bellevue College. Specific student rights, responsibilities and appeal procedures are listed in the Student Code of Conduct, available in the office of the Vice President of Student Services.” The Student Code, Policy 2050, in its entirety is located at:

[http://bellevuecollege.edu/policies/2/2050\\_Student\\_Code.asp](http://bellevuecollege.edu/policies/2/2050_Student_Code.asp)

**Bellevue College E-mail and access to MyBC:** All students registered for classes at Bellevue College are entitled to a network and e-mail account. Your student network account can be used to access your student e-mail, log in to computers in labs and classrooms, connect to the BC wireless network and log in to MyBC. To create your account, go to: <https://bellevuecollege.edu/sam> .

BC offers a wide variety of computer and learning labs to enhance learning and student success. Find current campus locations for all student labs by visiting the Computing Services website.

**Disability Resource Center (DRC)** The Disability Resource Center serves students with a wide array of learning challenges and disabilities. If you are a student who has a disability or learning challenge for which you have documentation or have seen someone for treatment and if you feel you may need accommodations in order to be successful in college, please contact us as soon as possible. If you are a person who requires assistance in case of an emergency situation, such as a fire, earthquake, etc, please meet with your individual instructors to develop a safety plan within the first week of the quarter. The DRC office is located in B 132 or you can call our reception desk at 425.564.2498. Deaf students can reach us by video phone at 425-440-2025 or by TTY at 425-564-4110. Please visit our website for application information into our program and other helpful links at [www.bellevuecollege.edu/drc](http://www.bellevuecollege.edu/drc)

### **Public Safety**

The Bellevue College (BC) Public Safety Department’s well trained and courteous non-commissioned staff provides personal safety, security, crime prevention, preliminary investigations, and other services to the campus community, 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Their phone number is 425.564.2400. The Public Safety website is your one-stop resource for campus emergency preparedness information, campus closure announcements and critical information in the event of an emergency. Public Safety is located in K100 and on the web at: <http://bellevuecollege.edu/publicsafety/>

### **Academic Calendar**

The Bellevue College Academic Calendar is separated into two calendars. They provide information about holidays, closures and important enrollment dates such as the finals schedule.

Enrollment Calendar - <http://bellevuecollege.edu/enrollment/calendar/deadlines/>. On this calendar you will find admissions and registration dates and important dates for withdrawing and receiving tuition refunds.

College Calendar - <http://bellevuecollege.edu/enrollment/calendar/holidays/0910.asp>. This calendar gives you the year at a glance and includes college holidays, scheduled closures, quarter end and start dates, and final exam dates.

**TOPICS AND READINGS (The following reading schedule is subject to change: readings may be added or removed at the discretion of the instructor. Timely notice in the event of a change will, of course, be provided. All readings are available electronically through UW Course Reserves.)**

Moral Reasoning in the Medical Context

**Thu 22 Sep:** Louis Vaughn, "Moral Reasoning in Bioethics"

**Tue 27 Sep:** Louis Vaughn, "Bioethics and Moral Theories"

**Thu 29 Sep:** Laura Purdy, "Feminists Healing Ethics"; Laura Purdy, "Medicalization, Medical Necessity, and Feminist Medicine"

Organ Donation

**Tue 4 Oct:** Harris, "The Survival Lottery"; Hanink, "On the Survival Lottery"

**Thu 6 Oct:** Steinberg, "An Opting-In Paradigm for Kidney Transplantation"; Hester, "Why We Must Leave Our Organs to Others"

Contested Therapies

**Tue 11 Oct:** Crouch, "Letting the Deaf Be Deaf: Reconsidering the Use of Cochlear Implants in Prelinguistically Deaf Children"; Tucker, "Deaf Culture, Cochlear Implants, and Elective Disability"

**Thu 13 Oct:** Film: Sound and Fury

**Tue 18 Oct:** Carl Elliott, "Amputees By Choice"; Bayne and Levy, "Amputees By Choice: Body Integrity Identity Disorder and the Ethics of Amputation"

**Thu 20 Oct:** Miller, Brody, and Chung, "Cosmetic Surgery and the Internal Morality of Medicine"; Little, "Cosmetic Surgery, Suspect Norms, and the Ethics of Complicity"

**Tue 25 Oct: Midterm Exam in Class**

Normal Functioning, Definitions of Disease and Disability

**Thu 27 Oct:** Norman Daniels, "Normal Functioning and the Treatment/Enhancement Distinction"; Ron Amundson, "Against Normal Functioning"

**Tue 1 Nov:** Silvers, "A Fatal Attraction to Normalizing: Treating Disabilities as Deviations from 'Species-Typical Functioning'"

The Disability-Rights Critique of Prenatal Diagnosis and Selective Abortion

**Thu 3 Nov:** Asch, "Prenatal Diagnosis and Selective Abortion: A Challenge to Practice and Policy"; Saxton, "Why Members of the Disability Community Oppose Prenatal Diagnosis and Selective Abortion"

**Tue 8 Nov:** Lindemann-Nelson, "The Meaning of the Act"

**Thu 10 Nov:** Asch and Wasserman, "Where is the Sin in Synecdoche?"

Advance Directives and Decisional Incapacity

***Tue 15 Nov:*** Robertson, “Second Thoughts on Living Wills”; Cantor, “Testing the Limits of Prospective Autonomy: 5 Scenarios”

***Thu 17 Nov:*** Kuhse, “Some Reflections on the Problem of Advance Directives, Personhood, and Personal Identity”

***Tue 22 Nov:*** Dresser and Whitehouse, “The Conscious Incompetent Patient on the Slippery Slope”

**No class Thu 24 Nov due to Thanksgiving Holiday**

Social Justice and Access to Health Care

***Tue 29 Nov:*** Buchanan, “Justice: A Philosophical Review”

***Thu 1 Dec:*** Nielsen, “Autonomy, Equality, and a Just Health Care System”

**Final Exam on Tue 6 Dec. 15.00-17.10 in C168**