

## **Philosophy 265: Medical Ethics**

Spring Quarter 2012

Bellevue College

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 can be 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/1945B124/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/Quizzes	30%
Homework Assignments	30%
Take-Home Exams (2)	40%

More specific information about assessment:

There will be in-class activities/quizzes during **most, if not all, of our class sessions**. These will vary in nature, but they may 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/quizzes. Regardless of the reason for an absence, there is no way to make up missed in-class activities/quizzes. Each student will be permitted to miss two (2) in-class activities/quizzes without penalty to his final grade.

Homework Assignments must be submitted in class. You may not submit homework assignments electronically or remotely. If you are not present during a given class when homework is due, then you will not be permitted to submit your homework assignment *regardless of the circumstances*. Each student will be permitted to miss one (1) homework assignment without penalty to her final grade.

More information about the take home exams will be provided in due time. Due dates are listed under the reading schedule below.

Finally, your respectful and helpful contributions to our class discussions might improve your final grade. Failure to participate in class discussion will not lower your final grade.

**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 our course website.)**

Moral Reasoning in the Medical Context

**Tue 3 Apr:** No Reading Assignment

**Thu 5 Apr:** Louis Vaughn, "Moral Reasoning in Bioethics"

**Tue 10 Apr:** TBA

**Thu 12 Apr:** TBA

Organ Donation

**Tue 17 Apr:** Harris, "The Survival Lottery"; Hanink, "On the Survival Lottery"

**Thu 19 Apr:** Steinberg, "An Opting-In Paradigm for Kidney Transplantation"; Hester, "Why We Must Leave Our Organs to Others"

Contested Therapies

**Tue 24 Apr:** Carl Elliott, "Amputees By Choice"; Bayne and Levy, "Amputees By Choice: Body Integrity Identity Disorder and the Ethics of Amputation"

**Thu 26 Apr:** Miller, Brody, and Chung, "Cosmetic Surgery and the Internal Morality of Medicine"; Little, "Cosmetic Surgery, Suspect Norms, and the Ethics of Complicity"

**Tue 1 May:** 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 3 May:** Film: Sound and Fury

The Disability-Rights Critique of Prenatal Diagnosis and Selective Abortion

**Tue 8 May:** 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"

**Note: Take-Home Exam 1 Due 8 May in class.**

**Thu 10 May:** Lindemann-Nelson, "The Meaning of the Act"

Physician-Assistance in Dying

**Tue 15 May:** Ackerman, "Assisted Suicide, Terminal Illness, Severe Disability, and the Double Standard"; Orentlicher, "The Supreme Court and Terminal Sedation"

**Thu 17 May:** Battin, "The Case for Euthanasia"; Bickenbach, "Disability and Life-Ending Decisions"

Advance Directives and Decisional Incapacity

**Tue 22 May:** Robertson, "Second Thoughts on Living Wills"; Cantor, "Testing the Limits of Prospective Autonomy: 5 Scenarios"

**Thu 24 May:** Kuhse, "Some Reflections on the Problem of Advance Directives, Personhood, and Personal Identity"

Social Justice and Access to Health Care

**Tue 29 May:** Film: Unnatural Causes; "Social Determinants of Health: The Solid Facts"; Kawachi, "Why the United States is Not Number One in Health"

**Thu 1 Jun:** Rice, "Individual Autonomy and State Involvement in Health Care"

**Tue 5 Jun: NO CLASS**

**Thu 7 Jun:** Nielsen, "Autonomy, Equality, and a Just Health Care System"

**Note: Take-Home Exam 2 Due 12 Jun at 14.00 PDT by electronic submission.**

**No class during the last week of the quarter.**

## **LIBRARY MEDIA CENTER**

The Bellevue College Library Media Center has extensive resources available online for all Distance Education students. Become acquainted with the LMC homepage: <http://bellevuecollege.edu/lmc/>. By clicking on the Research Help link you will find copies of handouts as well as tutorial help, including the LMC Guide for BAS Students. The BCC Catalog will tell you which books and films the library owns. Full-text journal articles can be found by searching the EBSCOhost and Proquest databases, located under Periodicals / Databases.

Online access to the library is available 24 x 7, but personal help is available via telephone only when the library is open. Those hours are posted under Library Information on the homepage. The Reference Desk phone number is (425) 564-6161. At other times, you may e-mail [bccref@bellevuecollege.edu](mailto:bccref@bellevuecollege.edu). You will receive an answer as soon as the library opens again.

## **ACCOMMODATIONS AND SUPPORT SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Bellevue Community College provides reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities. Students who need course accommodations because of a disability, have emergency medical information, or need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, should notify the instructor as soon as possible. The responsibility for determining a student's eligibility for accommodations rests with Disability Resource Center. For more information, visit the Disability Resource Center in room B132, call (425) 564-2498 (TTY line (425) 564- 4110), or go to [bellevuecollege.edu/drc](http://bellevuecollege.edu/drc).

## **AFFIRMATION OF INCLUSION**

Bellevue Community 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 BCC, and students, faculty, staff members, and administrators are to treat one another with dignity and respect.

For further information regarding the Bachelor of Applied science program and policies, see the BAS student handbook. For further information regarding BCC policies, programs and services, review the BCC student handbook at [bellevuecollege.edu/stupro/handbook\\_cd2008/programs/default.html](http://bellevuecollege.edu/stupro/handbook_cd2008/programs/default.html).

## **CHEATING POLICY**

Upon demonstrable evidence of cheating and/or plagiarism, students will be subject to the following penalties:

1<sup>st</sup> offense: a score of '0' for the assignment itself.

2<sup>nd</sup> offense: a score of '0' for the entire category of assessment in which the offense was detected.

3<sup>rd</sup> offense: class failure.