

Medical Ethics

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This course provides an introduction to some of the central problems of medical ethics. Many of these problems are the subject of deep controversies in public life. Our aim is to identify and analyze the main philosophical arguments and positions behind the views advanced in these controversies. The homework and in-class discussion will help you develop your analytical skills and your ability to formulate and evaluate arguments. After a brief introduction to philosophical approaches to ethics and some relevant background material, we will explore ethical questions surrounding the badness of death, abortion, genetic selection and reproductive choice, medical autonomy, euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide, organ sales, the commodification of healthcare and the allocation of scarce healthcare resources, human enhancement, and the possibility and desirability of attaining immortality.

Week 1: Introduction & the badness of death

Lucretius: On the Nature of Things (excerpts)
Nagel: Death

Week 2: Abortion I: overview; abortion and infanticide

Glover: Causing Deaths and Saving Lives (Chs 9, 10, 11)
Tooley: Abortion and Infanticide

Week 3: Abortion II: violinists and future existence

Thomson: A Defense of Abortion
Marquis: Why Abortion is Immoral

Week 4: Voluntary Euthanasia

Kamm: A Right to Choose Death?
Rachels: Active and Passive Euthanasia
Velleman: Against the Right to Die

Week 5: Consent & informed decision making

Faden and Beauchamp: The Concept of Informed Consent
O'Neill: Some Limits of Informed Consent
Brock: Patient Competence and Surrogate Decision-Making

Week 6: Autonomy and paternalism

O'Neill: Autonomy and Trust in Bioethics (excerpts)
Goldman: The Refutation of Medical Paternalism

Week 7: Organ sales and exploitation

Radcliffe Richards: Nephraious Goings On: Kidney Sales and Moral Argument
Satz: The Moral Limits of Markets: the Case of Human Kidneys
Greasley: A Legal Market in Organs: the Problem of Exploitation

Week 8: Commodification

Anderson: Is Women's Labour a Commodity?

Arneson: Commodification and Commercial Surrogacy
Macklin: What is Wrong with Commodification?

Week 9: **In favour of a right to healthcare**

Daniels: Is there a Right to Health Care and, if so, What Does it Encompass?
Rawls: A Theory of Justice (excerpts)

Week 10: **Against a right to healthcare**

Buchanan: The Right to a Decent Minimum of Health Care?
Nozick: Anarchy, State, and Utopia (excerpts)

Week 11: **Rationing and justice**

Daniels: Rationing Fairly: Programmatic Considerations
Broome: Fairness vs Doing the Most Good

Week 12: **Immortality**

Williams: The Makropulos Case: Reflections on the Tedium of Immortality
Bostrom: The Fable of the Dragon Tyrant

Week 13: **Transhumanism and human enhancement**

Buchanan: Human Nature and Enhancement
Kamm: What is and is not Wrong with Enhancement?
Wilson: Transhumanism and Moral Equality