

CUYAMACA COLLEGE
COURSE OUTLINE OF RECORD

PHILOSOPHY 141 – BIOETHICS

3 hours lecture, 3units

Catalog Description

In this orientation to biomedical ethics, students will explore ethical dilemmas common in the medical field including but not limited to organ transplantation, the use of human beings and animals in research, genetic and reproductive technologies, abortion, euthanasia, and delivering healthcare. By considering how concepts such as justice, patient autonomy, caring, truth-telling, and resource allocation figure into such ethical dilemmas, the student will analyze various works of philosophical, literary, cultural and historical importance and develop an appreciation for how they relate to ethical decision making in the bio-medical field.

Prerequisite

None

Course Content

Biomedical ethical questions and issues will be examined with respect to works of philosophical, literary, cultural and historical importance in discussing major ethical theories and applications. Specifically, the following theories and issues will be analyzed:

- 1) Utilitarianism
- 2) Deontology
- 3) Natural Law Theory
- 4) Virtue Ethics
- 5) Feminist Ethics
- 6) Medical Professional and Patient Relations
- 7) Paternalism and Patient Autonomy
- 8) Truth Telling and Confidentiality
- 9) Informed Consent
- 10) Human Research
- 11) Issues of Life and Death
- 12) Justice and Health Care

Course Objectives

Students will be able to:

- 1) Identify and discuss major ethical theories in the history of philosophy such as virtue ethics, deontology, utilitarianism, egoism, relativism, care ethics, objectivism, etc.
- 2) Apply a variety of ethical principles utilized in a wide range of cultures studied in class to common ethical dilemmas in the medical field, i.e. abortion, euthanasia, reproductive technology, genetic choices, and human research.
- 3) Examine the relationship between patient and medical professional with respect to autonomy, truth-telling, informed consent, privacy, and considerations of social justice using historical examples of well-known ethical failures and their consequences, i.e. Tuskegee Experiment, Henrietta Lacks, etc.
- 4) Begin to formulate their own ethical judgments on the basis of theories and dilemmas discussed in class in order to develop a broader understanding of the human condition.

Method of Evaluation

A grading system will be established by the instructor and implemented uniformly. Grades will be based on demonstrated proficiency in the subject matter determined by multiple measurements for evaluation, one of which must be essay exams, skills demonstration or, where appropriate, the symbol system.

- 1) Exams and quizzes that measure students' abilities to identify the main features of ethical systems in the history of philosophy through various cultures and traditions and apply them to ethical dilemmas which arise in the medical field.
- 2) Research papers that measure students' abilities to evaluate various ethical theories and their applications to ethical dilemmas as regards their coherence, practicality, and/or legitimacy.
- 3) Critical reading journals that require students to begin to formulate their own ethical principles on the basis of philosophical reasoning leading to a broader understanding of the human condition.

Special Materials Required of Student

None

Minimum Instructional Facilities

Smart Classroom

Method of Instruction

Lecture and Discussion

Out-of-Class Assignments

- 1) Writing assignments, including essays
- 2) Reading assignments

Texts and References

- 1) Required (representative examples):
 - a. Vaughn, Lewis. *Bioethics: Principles, Issues, and Cases*. 4th edition, Oxford University Press, NY: 2020.
 - b. Beauchamp, Tom L. and James R. Childress. *Principles of Biomedical Ethics*. 7th Ed., San Diego, CA: Oxford University Press, 2012.
 - c. Singer, Peter. *The Cambridge Book of Bioethics*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- 2) Supplemental: None

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- 1) Apply principles of major moral theories from a variety of cultural traditions to problems encountered in contemporary health care analysis related to human beings and bioethical issues.
- 2) Formulate ethical judgments on the basis of bioethical theories and dilemmas to develop a broader understanding of the human condition.