

PHL 382H1F Ethics: Death and Dying

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Class: W 6-9; RW 110
Office Hours: W 5-6; RW 141
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Course Description

This course will examine philosophical issues related to death and dying, with a particular emphasis on ethical issues. The course is designed so that students can engage with issues at the theoretical level but also gain an appreciation for how ethical issues related to death and dying manifest in the practical world of health care.

Reading and Course Schedule

Links to the readings will be available on the course website. The particular readings were chosen to give you an introduction to the issues but are by no means exhaustive. Students are encouraged to read beyond the list provided here to gain a deeper understanding of the issues.

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| Sept 11 | Introduction; Defining death
Bernat JL, Culver CM and Gert B (1981) |
| Sept 18 | Determining death
Truog (2007); Shewmon (2009); Veatch (1993)
<i>Discussion groups begin</i> |
| Sept 25 | The wrongness of killing; Key distinctions in death
Rosenbaum (1986); Douglas C (2009); Sinnott-Armstrong & Miller (2013) |
| Oct 2 | Killing to save others: the trolley problem and the doctrine of double effect
Hallborg (1997); Zeis (2004) |
| Oct 9 | Can a person be harmed after death?
Winter (2010); Taylor (2008)
<i>First paper due</i> |
| Oct 16 | End-of-life treatment conflicts
Rubin (2007); Brett and McCullough (1986); <i>Rasouli v. Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre</i> , 2011 ONCA 482 (2011) |
| Oct 23 | Advance directives
Perkins (2007); Harvey (2006) |
| Oct 30 | Suicide: morally wrong, morally permissible, morally obligatory?
Hardcastle & Stewart (2002); Frey (1999); Hardwig (1997)
<i>Last day to drop courses is Nov 4</i> |

- Nov 6** **Controversies in organ transplantation: DCD and organ conscription**
Souter and Van Norman (2010); Delaney and Hershenov (2010); Spital (2003)
Advance directive paper due
- Nov 13** **Allocating life-saving resources: who lives and who dies?**
Frolic A, Kata A, & Kraus P (2009); Persad, Wertheimer & Emanuel (2009)
- Nov 20** **Treatment of compromised newborns**
Wilkinson (2005); Kipnis (2007)
Final discussion groups
- Nov 27** **Challenging cases; Review**

Discussion Groups

There are no formal tutorials for this course but small group discussions do provide the best learning experiences for students in ethics courses. Thus, this course will utilize student-led discussion groups to address this issue. These discussion groups will take place during the third hour of lecture (8-9pm), starting on the second day of class (Sept. 18) and running for 10 weeks (until Nov. 20). Students will be randomly assigned to a discussion group to take place in an assigned breakout room. While I may highlight topics for discussion in the lecture, and I will circulate between the rooms to check in, the discussion groups are designed to be *student-led*: they are an opportunity for students to delve deeper into the material in a way that cannot be accomplished in a large lecture.

Each week one member of each discussion group will take on the responsibility of scribe, which involves taking attendance and recording summary notes of the discussions that take place that week. The scribe will then email me the attendance and summary document for my records (I must receive the email before the next lecture). For each week that you attend your discussion group you will receive 1% towards your final grade, for a total maximum 10% discussion group attendance grade. If a scribe fails to submit a summary document on time, all members of that discussion group will lose their 1% for that week.

Evaluation

- Discussion group attendance: **10%**
- First paper (1500-1800 words; due October 9): **30%**
- Advance directives paper (1500-1800 words; due Nov. 6): **30%**
- Final exam: **30%**

Other important notes

- Late assignments will be penalized one grade fragment per day, including weekends (e.g., a B+ will be reduced to a B if the assignment is one day late, to a B- if it is two days late, etc.).

- It is your responsibility to complete your assignments on time. Extensions for particular assignments will be granted only in cases of serious illness, emergency, or bereavement. Documentation (e.g., doctor's note) may be required.
- All term work must be submitted prior to the faculty deadline (end of exam period). Extensions beyond this deadline will be granted only if they do not interfere with the submission of grades. *For extension permission beyond the end of the exam period you must contact your College Registrar.*
- Essays and papers must be submitted in hard copy directly to me or your TA. Email submissions will be accepted only in extreme circumstances. Do NOT slip papers under my office door as I am only there once/week.
- DON'T PLAGIARIZE! Suspected cases of plagiarism will be handled according to University of Toronto policies. I strongly encourage you to familiarize yourself with these policies. *Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site.* If you have concerns about your papers being submitted to Turnitin.com, please speak with me directly.