Advanced Studies in Bioethics
Philosophy/Biomedical Ethics 370

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Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 2:30 – 4:30

I. Texts:
Selected Photocopied Readings

II. Class Goals:
Advanced Studies in Bioethics provides us with an opportunity to focus on a few issues in Bioethics and explore them in detail. This term we will focus primarily on issues that surround death and dying. We will investigate questions about the definition of death, the freedom of individual patients to make choices about the manner of their death, how we should make decisions for individuals who are not competent, and physician-assisted suicide. These issues are interesting and important in their own right, but they also highlight classic philosophical questions. Consequently, our studies will highlight philosophical themes such as the nature of human freedom, the nature of well-being, and the nature of personal identity.

III. Grading:
Reflection Papers 50%
Term Paper 40%
Participation 10%

Reflection Papers: One of the major components of the class will be the completion of two short reflection papers (1-2 single spaced pages). Each reflection paper will be orally presented during class (you will not be graded on the presentation but we will use your paper to focus class discussion). An extra copy of your paper should be submitted to me at the beginning of class. Late papers will not be accepted. If you have a conflict with the date that you have signed up for you must find another student in class willing to trade with you.

When I grade your paper I will use the following criteria:

1. Organization and Clarity:
Your paper should have one clear, precise sentence for your thesis.
Your thesis should be the last sentence of your first paragraph.
Your thesis should clearly limit the scope of your discussion.
The introductory paragraph should provide a context making it easier for the reader/listener to understand the significance of your thesis.
The topic sentences of your supporting paragraphs should provide reasons why the reader/listener should accept your thesis.
The body of each supporting paragraph should provide reasons why the reader/listener should believe the topic sentence of that paragraph.

2. Description of the Text:
References to the text should be accurate and not mislead.
You should not overlook parts of the text that are relevant for your argument.
You should strive to make the ideas in the text as easy to understand as possible.

3. Argument:
Your paper should go beyond a mere description of the text by analyzing the plausibility of one or more arguments in the text. You may do this by criticizing arguments, siding with
one author against another, providing counter examples, or providing further support for an author’s position.

Write to an audience of other undergraduate philosophy students. Because the members of your audience are diverse you should not presume that they hold specific religious or ideological views.

**Term Paper:** You are required to write one term paper that focuses on an issue in class. All of the criteria, with one exception, that are used to judge the reflection papers are also used to judge the term paper. The one exception is that the term paper should be written to a professional audience who might be familiar with works on the subject. To help you accomplish this, the assignment will be divided into a three step process:

1. The first step in completing this assignment is to pick a topic area (or normative question to address) and construct a bibliography. The bibliography may go to sources outside your readings, but if your topic is covered extensively by the course readings I won't require it. The topic may be an expansion of one of your reflection papers. You should give me your topic area and bibliography sometime during office hours before Feb 8 reading period.
2. The next step is to generate a thesis and general strategy for your argument – what are you going to argue for and how are you going to do it? I'll post a sign up sheet for appointments to have a conference during office hours. The time slots will be during 7th and 8th week.
3. Finally, you will write one paper, 5-6 single spaced pages, and deliver it to me by 11:30 Friday, March 16.

**Class Participation:** You are expected to come to class and participate in classroom discussion. Excellent participation may raise your final grade and poor participation (including excessive absences and a failure to participate in discussion) may lower your final grade.

**IV. Schedule**

**A. Foundations**

Week 1: Jan 3 – Jan 5
Wed: Introduction

Week 2: Jan 8 – Jan 12

Week 3: Jan 15 – Jan 19
Mon: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

**B. Freedom and Paternalism**


Week 4: Jan 22 – Jan 26
Week 5: Jan 29 – Feb 2


Week 6: Feb 5 – Feb 9


Thurs: Topic area and bibliography due.

Fri: Reading Period

Week 7: Feb 12 – Feb 16


Week 8: Feb 19 – Feb 23

E. Defining and Evaluating Death


Week 9: Feb 26 – Mar 2


F. Physician Assisted Suicide and Active Euthanasia

Wed: John Hardwig, “Is There a Duty to Die?” Felicia Ackerman, “For Now Have I My Death: The ‘Duty to Die’ Versus The Duty to Help The Ill Stay Alive;” Martin Gunderson, “Being a Burden: Reflections on Refusing Medical Care”


Week 10 Mar 5 – Mar 9


Term Paper Due: 11:30 Friday, March 16.