



Grande Prairie Regional College
Department of Arts and Education
Philosophy and Health Care
Philosophy 3860 (UT) May 2012

Instructor: Tom Enders, PhD
Office: C303
Phone: 780-539-2996
E-mail: tenders@gprc.ab.ca
Office hours: after class and by appointment

Prerequisite: None. No prior knowledge of medicine, philosophy or ethics is required.

Required texts/resource materials:

Helga Kuhse and Peter Singer, editors. Bioethics: An Anthology, 2nd edition. Hokoken, New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell, 2006.

John Thomas and Wilfrid Waluchow, Well and Good. Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 1998.

Handouts and selected internet readings as indicated on reading list.

College Calendar Course Description:

This course provides a philosophical examination of concepts and issues central to the knowledge and practice of health care. Topics may include: provision and allocation of health care resources, rights and responsibilities of health care personnel and patients, passive and active euthanasia, abortion, reproductive technology, research and experimentation, disclosure of diagnosis and risks, death and suffering.

Course Description May 2012:

We will examine issues of institutional and public policy, professional ethics, and bioethics. The issues raise questions about who has the right to decide. They also raise questions about the criteria which decision-makers may use in making ethical decisions.

More specifically, after a brief introduction to philosophy and ethical theories, we will discuss the allocation of scarce medical resources, a challenge which appears in the background and foreground of numerous health care issues. We will proceed to examine the role of the health care professional and selected issues pertaining to autonomy and consent – also frequently reoccurring concerns. We will conclude by looking at end of life and beginning of life issues, as well as issues involving genetic testing and engineering. These last issues raise numerous questions, including further ones about autonomy, consent, the quality and value of life and death, and

the role of the medical profession.

Course objective:

By the end of this course you should have a good initial understanding of basic philosophical concepts, theories and approaches and be able to use them in thinking carefully about philosophical and ethical issues in health care.

Credit/Contact Hours: This is a three credit course with the equivalent of three hours of instructional time a week for a full term (or 14 three-hour classroom meetings.)

Delivery mode/course format:

Classroom sessions will be used for presentation and discussion of key concepts and arguments. Increasing attention will be given to discussions of challenging and illustrative cases in later classes. Moral or ethical values, principles and approaches will be applied to the cases.

Course requirements:

- First exam..... 20%
- First assignment20%
- Second assignment25%
- Final exam..... 35%

Conversion table:

A+ 90 - 100	B+ 76 - 79	C+ 67 - 69	D+ 55 - 59
A 85 - 89	B 73 - 75	C 64 - 66	D 50 - 54
A- 80 - 84	B- 70 - 72	C- 60 - 63	F 0 - 49

For conversion of letter grades to the four-point scale see the GPRC calendar.

Transferability: UA, AF (UA Camrose), UC, UL, AU

* The grade of D or D+ may not be accepted for transfer to other postsecondary institutions. Students are cautioned that it is their responsibility to contact the receiving institutions to ensure transferability.

Student Responsibilities:

* You are expected to devote time in the classroom to the class itself. Use of cell phones, laptops and other equipment is unacceptable unless approved for class purposes. It is also not acceptable to socialize or do work on other courses during the class.

* You are strongly advised to keep a copy of your own of any work you submit for grading at least until you have your work returned to you.

** Students who miss an excessive number of classes may be denied the opportunity to write the final exam, as stated in the Calendar.

****You are expected to write the final exam when scheduled by the Registrar's Office - with possible exceptions in the case of compelling and urgent circumstances beyond your control. Also note and observe other key dates during the term as provided in the Calendar.**

Statement on Plagiarism and Cheating:

* You are required to reference sources fully and properly for written assignments. You are responsible for familiarizing yourself with College Calendar information pertaining to cheating and plagiarism, for which there are various penalties depending on the severity of the offense.

Provisional Schedule

- T 1 May: I. Introduction. What is philosophy? Philosophy and science. Branches of philosophy. A little logic.
- W 2 I. Introduction concluded.
- Th 3 II. Ethical Theories or Approaches... A concise introduction to basics.

- M 7 May: III. Allocation of scarce medical resources. Age. Responsibility.
- T 8: FIRST TEST
- T/W 8, 9 IV. Professional Ethics: Autonomy. Paternalism. The doctor-patient relationship. Role of nurses. Truth telling. Cultural interaction.
- Th/M 10, 14 V. Consent and Autonomy. Informed Consent. Competent Persons. Mental Illness. The incompetent. Children. Religion. The Family

- T15, W16: VI. End of Life Issues: A. Passive Euthanasia. Assisted-Suicide. Active Euthanasia.
- Th 17 VI. B. Severely Disabled Newborns
- Th 17 VII. Prenatal Screening

- M. 21 May Victoria Day – no class
- T 22 VIII. Abortion
- W 23 May: IX. Reproductive Issues. New Reproductive Technologies. IVF, AID, Surrogacy.
- Th 24: X. Genetic Engineering. Genetic alteration and cloning.

- M 28 May: FINAL EXAM

Truth gains more even by the errors of one who, with due study and preparation, thinks for himself, than by the true opinions of those who only hold them because they do not suffer themselves to think. Not that it is solely, or chiefly, to form great thinkers, that freedom of thinking is required. On the contrary, it is as much and even more

indispensable to enable average human beings to attain the mental stature which they are capable of.

... The fact... is, that not only the grounds of the opinion are forgotten in the absence of discussion, but too often the meaning of the opinion itself. The words which convey it cease to suggest ideas, or suggest only a small portion of those they were originally employed to communicate. Instead of a vivid conception and a living belief, there remain only a few phrases retained by rote; or, if any part, the shell and husk only of the meaning is retained, the finer essence being lost.

From chapter 2, "Of the Liberty of Thought and Discussion," in *On Liberty*, John Stuart Mill, 1859.

... and if I say again that the greatest good of man is daily to converse about virtue, and all that concerning which you hear me examining myself and others, and that the life which is unexamined is not worth living — that you are still less likely to believe. And yet what I say is true, although a thing of which it is hard for me to persuade you...

From Plato, "The Apology," translated by Benjamin Jowett