



**DOUGLAS COLLEGE**

**EFFECTIVE: JANUARY 2013  
CURRICULUM GUIDELINES**

**A:** Division: Academic Effective Date: January 2013

**B:** Department / Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences / Philosophy & Humanities  
 Program Area: Revision  New Course

If Revision, Section(s) Revised: A, P

Date of Previous Revision: June 2004

Date of Current Revision: July 2012

**C:** PHIL 1121 **D:** Medical Ethics **E:** 3

Subject & Course No.

Descriptive Title

Semester Credits

**F:** Calendar Description:

What rights do patients and clients have? What obligations do medical practitioners have? When, if ever, is lying to a patient justified? How much should a patient be told? When, if ever, is it justifiable to interfere with a patient's liberty for their own good? How important is confidentiality? How can death best be defined? How important is the autonomy of the elderly and the mentally challenged? When, if ever, is experimentation justified on human subjects? What ethical constraints are there on animal experimentation? When is a health care system just? How should scarce medical resources be rationed? This course will consider many of these questions, and other related issues. The ethical dimensions of topics such as AIDS, refusal of medical treatment, surrogate motherhood, and genetic engineering may also be considered. Students will be briefly introduced to the fundamentals of ethical theory and decision making, and to their applications.

**G:** Allocation of Contact Hours to Type of Instruction / Learning Settings

Primary Methods of Instructional Delivery and/or Learning Settings:

Lecture and Seminar

Number of Contact Hours: (per week /semester for each descriptor)

Lecture: 2 hrs. per week / semester

Seminar: 2 hrs. per week / semester

Number of Weeks per Semester: 15

**H:** Course Prerequisites:

None

**I:** Course Corequisites:

None

**J:** Course for which this Course is a Prerequisite

None

**K:** Maximum Class Size:

35

**L:** PLEASE INDICATE:

- Non-Credit
- College Credit Non-Transfer
- College Credit Transfer:

SEE BC TRANSFER GUIDE FOR TRANSFER DETAILS ([www.bctransferguide.ca](http://www.bctransferguide.ca))

**M:** Course Objectives / Learning Outcomes

Successful students will be able to:

1. Explain the ethical theories and concepts covered in the course.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of the moral controversies covered in the course.
3. Reflect in a critical way about the moral issues which arise in the delivery and practice of medical care.
4. Develop more effective methods for making up their minds about moral issues related to the delivery and practice of medical care.
5. Apply ethical theory to the resolution of moral issues related to the delivery and practice of medical care.
6. Explain the moral reasoning involved in viewpoints directly opposed to one another.
7. Develop their own reasoning about the moral controversies.

**N:** Course Content

Instruction in this course will cover the following six areas:

1. The nature of ethics - including the relation between ethics & morality, and morality & law; a simple introduction to the basic types of ethical theories: such as, consequentialism (e.g. utilitarianism), deontological theories (e.g. Kantian or moral intuitionism); and rights theories. An elucidation of basic ethical concerns and concepts in the health care context, such as autonomy and paternalism, and of relevant principles pertaining to them. The application of such ethical theory to the resolution of moral issues related to the delivery and practice of medical care.
2. The ethical dimensions of the relation between medical care practitioners and client & patients - including such topics as codes of medical ethics, the ethical nature of the nurse-patient relationship, the physicians' "duty to treat", hospitals and patients rights, and hospital ethics committees. This may encompass a consideration of such moral topics as autonomy, truth-telling, informed consent, confidentiality, and the resolution of conflicting obligations;
3. Ethical concerns regarding human and animal experimentation, and regarding the status and rights of adults with less than full autonomy. This may encompass a consideration of such topics as informed consent and proxy consent, the status of the concept of mental illness, sterilization, and institutional commitment and release.
4. The ethical dimensions of such life and death issues as suicide, euthanasia, infanticide, and abortion, as they pertain to quality of life, liberty, paternalism, and rights - including such topics as suicide intervention, the refusal of life sustaining treatment, the moral relevance of the difference between killing and letting die, the definition of death, and treatment of incompetent individuals and of impaired infants. (Although special moral issues pertaining to the problem of abortion may be covered in this course, this problem will not be covered in depth as it is generally a major focal point of another philosophy course (PHIL 1102).
5. Ethical issues pertaining to genetics and to human reproduction - including such topics as reproductive risks, prenatal diagnosis, surrogate motherhood, *In Vitro Fertilization*, and genetic engineering; and
6. Society's obligation to provide adequate health care to individuals, and the just distribution of available health care - including such topics as equitable access to health care, the rationing of health care, aged-based rationing, exotic medical therapy, organ transplantation, and voluntarily assumed health risks.

All six of these general areas will be covered, but some of no. 2 - 6 may be emphasized more heavily than the others.

**O:** Methods of Instruction

The course will employ a variety of instructional methods to accomplish its objectives, including some of the following:

A combination of lecture and discussion (possibly including student presentations). Some class sessions may involve formal lectures for the entire time (allowing time for questions), in which case a later class session will allow discussion of the lecture and reading material. Other class sessions may involve a combination of informal lecture and structured discussion.

<p><b>P:</b> Textbooks and Materials to be Purchased by Students:</p> <p>Texts will be updated periodically. Some typical examples are:</p> <p>Baylis, F; Downie, J; Hoffmaster, B; Sherwin, S. (2004). <u>Health Care Ethics in Canada</u>. Harcourt Brace.</p> <p>Collier, C.; Haliburton, R. (2011). <u>Bioethics in Canada: A Philosophical Introduction</u>. Canadian Scholars' Press.</p> <p>Mappes, Thomas A. &amp; Degrazia, Daniel (Eds.). (2001). <u>Biomedical Ethics</u>, (5th. ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.</p> <p>Veatch, Robert M. (2009). <u>Patient, Heal Thyself: How the New Medicine Puts the Patient in Charge</u>. Oxford: Oxford University Press.</p>																
<p><b>Q:</b> Means of Assessment:</p> <p>Evaluation will be based upon course objectives and will be carried out in accordance with Douglas College policy. The instructor will provide a written course outline with specific evaluation criteria at the beginning of the semester.</p> <p>Any possible combination of the following which equals 100%: (No one evaluation component within each category may exceed 40%)</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;"></th> <th style="text-align: center;"><u>Percent Range</u></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><u>Example</u></th> <th style="text-align: right;"></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Tests, Quizzes, Short Written Assignments</td> <td style="text-align: center;">20 – 50%</td> <td>Three 10% Tests</td> <td style="text-align: right;">30%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Written Class Presentations, Essays, Essay Exams</td> <td style="text-align: center;">30 – 60%</td> <td>Two 30% Essays</td> <td style="text-align: right;">60%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Instructor's General Evaluation (may include attendance class participation, group work, homework, etc.)</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0 – 20%</td> <td>Attend/Participation</td> <td style="text-align: right;"><u>10%</u> 100%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		<u>Percent Range</u>	<u>Example</u>		Tests, Quizzes, Short Written Assignments	20 – 50%	Three 10% Tests	30%	Written Class Presentations, Essays, Essay Exams	30 – 60%	Two 30% Essays	60%	Instructor's General Evaluation (may include attendance class participation, group work, homework, etc.)	0 – 20%	Attend/Participation	<u>10%</u> 100%
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<p><b>R:</b> Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition: specify whether course is open for PLAR</p> <p>No.</p>																

Course Designer(s): Brian Davies, M.A.  
Doug Simak, Ph.D.

Education Council / Curriculum Committee Representative

Dean: Catherine Carlson, Ph.D.

Registrar