

PHIL 388 Sect. A1 – Philosophy of Nursing I

Fall Term 2013

Mon Wed Fri 1:00–1:50 pm, ED 106

Discussion sessions in ED 206 and ED 213

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Students with last name A–K

Discussion session in ED 213

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Students with last name L–Z

Discussion session in ED 206

Teaching assistant: Roxana Akhbari

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A. Course overview and aims

Different health care professionals routinely encounter ethical questions and questions about best practices. In this course, we will examine a number of ethical issues that arise in nursing practice. The class will start with a brief introduction to the major approaches in moral philosophy (e.g., duty-based ethics and utilitarianism), the core principles of medical ethics, and moral arguments. Then we turn to concrete issues in nursing ethics. Concepts to be covered include informed consent, patient autonomy, paternalism, competency to make decisions, and truthfulness to patients. We conclude with scrutinizing ethical arguments about the question of euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide. Throughout the class we will consider how the ethical theories and concepts discussed apply to concrete cases.

Students who successfully complete this class will

- be able to identify different ethical approaches to selected issues in nursing ethics,
- be able to analyze different ethical principles and concepts and apply them to concrete cases in nursing practice,
- have gained insight into how to read and critically interpret moral arguments, and
- have developed skills that will enable them to think more clearly and critically about ethical questions as future health care practitioners.

B. Prerequisites

The course is restricted to nursing students registered in the BScN-Collaborative Program. The class does not presuppose any special knowledge of ethical theory or health care ethics.

C. Texts

Michael Yeo, Anne Moorhouse, P. Khan, and P. Rodney, *Concepts and Cases in Nursing Ethics*, 3rd edition. Broadview Press, 2010.

The textbook is available at the UofA Bookstore. (If you get it online, make sure to obtain the 3rd edition.) The plan is that you will keep using this textbook in the second part of the course (PHIL 398) in Winter 2014, taught by a colleague of mine.

In addition to our textbook, there are further assigned readings (which we will discuss in class or the TA sessions, or which you need for your assignments). They are listed in the schedule of classes in Section G. Most of these readings can be accessed online via our course website.

D. Course requirements and grading

- Final exam 50%
- Assignment 15%
- Essay 25%
- Participation 10%

Final exam (50%): The final on **Wednesday, October 23** will consist of multiple choice questions, short answer questions (requiring you to explain a concept in a few sentences), and long answer questions (applying the notions learned in class to a case).

Assignment (15%): On **September 30**, you have to hand in a homework assignment in class. An assignment is up to 2 pages long (double spaced). The task is to reconstruct and briefly analyze a moral argument from our assigned, additional readings. The assignment is meant as a preparation for the essay.

Essay (25%): On **October 18**, you have to hand in an essay in class. An essay is 3–5 pages long (double spaced). In the essay, you have to analyze and criticize the argument of another author, using one of the additional readings that we deal with toward the end of class (or possibly another suitable article).

Participation (10%): Attendance and active participation is important for this class. There will be the opportunity to participate during both the lecture sessions and the TA sessions. It is the responsibility of each student to come to class prepared to actively engage in discussion of the week's readings and case studies. You can also obtain participation credit by starting topics and contribute to existing discussions at the discussion forum on our website.

Some of the ethical topics which we will be discussing may be controversial. Remember to respect the opinions and feelings of others. Be critical of arguments, not people.

When assigning final grades at the end of the term based on your performance on the above requirements, I will ensure that the grade distribution of this class does not deviate too much from the overall university distribution, taking into account the overall workload of this course and the difficulty of the material.

E. Course website

The course has a website at <https://eclass.srv.ualberta.ca>. Some of our assigned readings can be accessed from this site, and I use it to post lecture slides and additional material. The site also contains a discussion board.

F. Academic integrity and plagiarism

The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards and to uphold the policies of the university in this respect. Students are urged to familiarize themselves with the Code of Student Behaviour (<http://tinyurl.com/CodeofStudentBehaviour>) and avoid any behaviour which could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the university. For a summary please see <http://www.governance.ualberta.ca/en/StudentAppeals/DontCheatsheet.aspx>

The Code of Student Behaviour defines plagiarism as follows:

No Student shall submit the words, ideas, images or data of another person as the Student's own in any academic writing, essay, thesis, project, assignment, presentation or poster in a course or program of study.

The library has a general website on plagiarism:

<http://www.library.ualberta.ca/guides/plagiarism>. See in particular the section on “Avoiding Plagiarism” (sidebar on the left, among “Resources for Students”).

G. Schedule of classes

Sep 4	Introduction
Sep 6	Utilitarianism and Kantian ethics <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Concepts & Cases in Nursing Ethics</i>, Introduction (pp. 11–33)
Sep 9	Principles of medical ethics <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>C & C in Nursing Ethics</i>, Ch. 1, pp. 37–49
Sep 11	Discussion session <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>C & C in Nursing Ethics</i>, Ch. 1, pp. 49–68
Sep 13	Moral arguments <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>C & C in Nursing Ethics</i>, Ch. 3, pp. 103–112

Sep 16	Discussion session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lipkin, ‘On telling truth to patients’ • <i>C & C in Nursing Ethics</i>, Ch. 3, pp. 113–116, 128–134
Sep 18	Documentary: ‘The Deadly Deception’
Sep 20	Informed consent and research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>C & C in Nursing Ethics</i>, Ch. 4, pp. 143–156 • Hellman & Hellman, ‘Of mice but not men: problems of the ...’
Sep 23	Autonomy and paternalism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>C & C in Nursing Ethics</i>, Ch. 4, pp. 156–169, 178–179
Sep 25	Discussion session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>C & C in Nursing Ethics</i>, Ch. 4, pp. 180–191 • Macklin, ‘Consent, coercion, and conflicts of rights’
Sep 27	Competence. Truthfulness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>C & C in Nursing Ethics</i>, Ch. 5, pp. 207–220
Sep 30	Discussion session HOMEWORK DUE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>C & C in Nursing Ethics</i>, Ch. 3, pp. 117–127
Oct 2	Discussion session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>C & C in Nursing Ethics</i>, Ch. 5, pp. 221–237
Oct 4	Euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>C & C in Nursing Ethics</i>, Ch. 4, pp. 169–178, 192–196
Oct 7	Slippery slope arguments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daniel Callahan, ‘When self-determination runs amok’
Oct 9	Discussion session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • James Rachels, ‘Active and passive euthanasia’ • Gay-Williams, ‘The wrongfulness of euthanasia’
Oct 11	Cultural relativism
Oct 14	No class. Thanksgiving
Oct 16	Discussion session
Oct 18	Review for the final ESSAY DUE

Oct 23 FINAL EXAM Wednesday 1:00–2:50 pm in ED 129