

**HONS 235: Religion, Ethics, and Health Care
Spring 2022**

Instructor: Jeremy Fisher, PhD (Prof J)

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Time/Location: Tues/Thurs 9:25am-10:40am; Maybank Hall 320

Office: Religious Studies Department, 2nd Floor, 4 Glebe St.

Office Hours: Tues/Thurs 11:00am-12:00pm, and by appointment

Course Description: This course is designed to examine the ethical principles that commonly guide health care decisions in a liberal, pluralistic society. In our discussions, we will critically analyze a variety of theoretical frameworks offered by contemporary ethicists, and explore debates about the implications of these principles within Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, and Humanistic traditions. Topics and case studies include terminating life-sustaining treatment; suicide and assisted suicide; abortion and maternal-fetal relations; reproductive technologies (including cloning, the use of embryos and Stem Cell Research, and applied human genetics/genomics); using human subjects in research; justice and access to health care; and public health.

Required Texts: There is no textbook for this class as we will be drawing from a number of different traditions and source materials. All readings will be made available on Oaks. Films/documentaries are available online, though may require you to rent them depending on your streaming services.

Course Objectives: The primary goal of this course is the development of a *critical approach* to the *academic* study of ethical deliberation and health care decision making and its complicated relation to religion. Through historical, dialogical, and comparative analysis, students will 1) learn to appreciate how various experiences contribute to an expansive understanding of religious and ethical meaning; 2) learn to identify how various experiences give expression to (some of) the central features of particular religious/ethical systems; 3) learn to actively listen to the variety of voices *within* those systems; and 4) learn to give critical voice to their own religious or non-religious views regarding a variety of health care issues.

Course Expectations: Now that Covid restrictions are (tentatively) behind us, we will meet weekly, face-to-face, in the classroom. This class is designed to be ***discussion-based*** and ***primarily student-led***, and so students are expected to attend each class prepared for ***active***, critical involvement. With my assistance, each student will be responsible for leading discussion on an assigned topic below. The readings listed on the schedule below are to be completed for that day's class meeting, and should be ***printed and brought to class***. Experience has shown me that laptop

computers are a distraction to discussion, and therefore will not be permitted unless otherwise approved. All written assignments are expected to be submitted on time via Oaks.

Classroom Protocols and Etiquette: In full professional disclosure, this is my first time teaching an honors course at the College, and so I ask each of you to be patient with me (and with each other) as we ease into the semester. Every class has its own internal dynamic, and it may take some time to adjust and get acquainted with this one. That said, you will be expected to be *professional*—treating each other with dignity and respect, and completing your work as assigned and without excuses. If you foresee any problems fulfilling these requirements, please speak with me ahead of time. Accommodations can be made if possible, however, they cannot be guaranteed.

Additionally, we must remember to be *ethical*. Now that the university has decided to enforce mask requirements, we will all be expected to comply with the same care and concern as the previous academic semesters. No mask, no class—it's as simple as that. And whether we are face-to-face or are forced to return to remote learning, we must engage in discussion in a way that is affirmative, open, and above all, respectful. Racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, and/or any language or behavior that dehumanizes or degrades others will not be tolerated. **Period.**

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, this class may require a bit more *maturity* than some others. Throughout the semester we will be engaging in discussions about issues that can be particularly contentious—discussions which may challenge our previously accepted ideas, opinions, and/or beliefs, and elicit strong, emotional reactions and responses. **Critical discernment and compassion** will be essential here. My classroom is a safe place to challenge each other by asking questions and expressing ideas, so if you have them, fire away! However, your words and actions matter. The simple truth is that we are all surrounded by individuals whose experiences are not identical to our own, so be sure to think carefully and thoughtfully before you engage.

Course Requirements: This class will be assessed on a 200-point scale. As a discussion-based course, success in this class largely depends upon your *presence*—both in terms of attendance and in terms of participation. In regard to attendance, you will be permitted to miss two classes with no questions asked. After that, five points will be deducted from your final grade for each additional (unexcused) absence.

In regard to participation, 1) each student will be expected to come to class having read the assigned material; and 2) each student will be responsible for “taking the lead” of class discussion for one of the topics assigned below. Students will be expected to guide us through a brief synopsis of the material, offer critical questions for discussion, and field responses to those questions. Presentations will be worth 25 points of your total grade.

There will also be three Critical Reflection Papers assigned. (See dates below.) Papers are to be a minimum of three full pages, double spaced. Each paper will be worth 30 points. In addition, you will be required to attend one outside program related to course content, and craft a 2-3-page synopsis and response. This event-paper will be worth 20ps. (Events TBA)

Lastly, there will be a midterm and final exam, each worth 40 points.

Lying, cheating, attempting cheating and/or plagiarism are violations of the student Honor Code which—if identified—will be investigated and dealt with appropriately. (A complete version and all related processes can be found in the online Student Handbook.) Any student found responsible by the Honor Board will receive a XXF in the course, indicating failure for academic dishonesty.

Numerical and letter grades will be based upon the following scale: A = 100-92; A- = 91-89; B+ = 88-86; B = 85-82; B- = 81-79; C+ = 78-76; C = 75-72; C- = 71-69; D+ = 68-66; D = 65-62; D- = 61-59; F = 58 and below

The College of Charleston abides by section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you have a documented disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations, please see an administrator at the Center of Disability Services/SNAP, 843.953.1431 and contact me ASAP so that such accommodation may be arranged.

Course Schedule, Readings, and Assignments

(Instructor reserves the right to make changes as necessary.)

Tues, Jan 11: Introductions and Expectations

Thurs, Jan 13: **Situational Awareness and Orientation: Moral Foundations**

Reading: “Moral Norms”: Beauchamp and Childress (B&C) pp. 1-25 (with particular attention on pp. 10-25)

Tues, Jan 18: **Principles, Metaphors, and Narratives in Biomedical Ethics** (with particular attention to debates about Paternalism)

Readings: B&C pp. 101-114 (Autonomy); pp. 214-225 (Paternalism); pp. 302-311 (Veracity)

Thurs, Jan 20: Continued Discussion

Reading: “Metaphors and Models of Doctor-Patient Relationships: Their Implications for Autonomy” by James Childress and Mark Siegler

Tues, Jan 25: **Forgoing and Demanding Life-Prolonging Treatment**

Readings: “Nonmaleficence”: B&C pp. 150-186

Thurs, Jan 27: Continued Discussion

Readings: “Historical and Cultural Variants on the Good Death” by Tony Walter
“Letting Go: What should medicine do when it cant save your life?” by
Atul Gawande

Tues, Feb 1: **Out of State Conference—No Class**

Documentary Clip: “Terri Schiavo Documentary: The Cases Enduring Legacy”
Retro Report, New York Times, April 21, 2014.
Available on YouTube

Reading: “If That Should Ever Happen to Me: Making Life and Death Situations
after Terri Schiavo” by Lois Shepherd

Thurs, Feb 3: **Out of State Conference—No Class**

Readings: “Address of John Paul II to the Participants in the International Congress
on “Life-Sustaining Treatments and Vegetative State: Scientific
Advances and Ethical Dilemmas”

Critical Reflection Paper One—Due Sun, Feb 13 at 11:59pm

Tues, Feb 8: **Termination of Life-Sustaining Treatment, Active Euthanasia, and Assisted
Suicide**

Readings: “Rational Suicide and Reasons for Living” by Stanley Hauerwas
“Euthanasia & Christian Vision” by Gilbert Meilaender
“Declaration on Euthanasia” by the Sacred Congregation for the
Doctrine of the Faith
“The Jewish Tradition: Religious Beliefs and Health Care Decisions”
by Elliot Dorff

Thurs, Feb 10: **Debates about Professional, Social, and Legal Rules against Active
Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide**

Readings: B&C: review pp. 188-193
“Doctor, I Want to Die. Will you Help Me?” by Timothy Quill
“Compassion Needs Reason Too” by Edmund Pellegrino
“When Self-Determination Runs Amok” by Daniel Callahan
“Physician-Assisted Suicide: A Tragic View” by John Arras

Tues, Feb 15: **Obtaining Organs and Tissues for Transplantation**

Readings: “The Mistreatment of Dead Bodies” by Joel Feinberg
“Religious Justifications for Donating Body Parts” by William May
“An Options Market in Cadaveric Organs” by Lloyd Cohen

Thurs, Feb 17: Continued Discussion

Readings: “An Internet Lifeline, in Search of a Kidney” by Sally Satel
“The Ethics of Living Organ Donation” by Arthur Caplan

Tues, Feb 22: **Maternal-Fetal Relations**

Readings: B&C, review pp. 164-168
“Pregnancy Reduction in Jewish Law” by Fred Rosner
“Declaration by the Pontificate Council for the Family regarding Embryonic Reduction”
“The Roman Catholic Position” by Daniel Callahan

Thurs, Feb 24: **Abortion**

Readings: “Roe v Wade: Majority Opinion and Dissent” from the US Supreme Court
Excerpts from the opinion for the Supreme Court in “Planned Parenthood v. Casey”
“Can Aborting ‘Imperfect’ Children be Immoral?” by Adrienne Asch
“The Limits of Conscientious Refusal in Reproductive Medicine”: Committee Opinion from the American College of OBGYN

Tues, Mar 1: “Catch Up” and Review Session

Thurs, Mar 3: **Mid-Term Exam**

Tues, Mar 8: Spring Break—No Class

Thurs, Mar 10: Spring Break—No Class

Tues, Mar 15: **Reproductive Technologies: The Use of Embryos in Stem Cell Research**

Readings: “What Price Parenthood” by Paul Lauritzen
“An Expanded Partnership with God? In Vitro Fertilization in Jewish Ethics” by Aaron Mackler
Testimony of Elliot Dorff, Edmund Pellegrino, Margaret Farley, and Gilbert Meilaender

Thurs, Mar 17: **Cloning**

Readings: “Human Cloning and Human Dignity: An Ethical Inquiry” by the President’s Council on Bioethics
“Hearings on Cloning: Religion-Based Perspectives”: by Lisa Cahill,

Albert Morczewski, Gilbert Meilaender, and Elliot Dorff
“Even If It Worked, Cloning Wouldn’t Bring Her Back” by Thomas
Murray

Tues, Mar 22: **Applied Human Genetics/Genomics: Genetic Counseling, Testing, and Engineering**

Readings: “Extending preimplantation genetic diagnosis: the ethical debate” by
John Robertson
“Poor Prognosis for Preimplantation Genetic Diagnosis?” by John
Kilner
“Hurling Toward Eugenics...Again” by Ben Mitchell

Thurs, Mar 24: Continued Discussion

Readings: “Parables” by Walter Nance
“A World of Their Own” by Liza Mundy
“The Ends Don’t Justify the Genes” by John Kilner

Critical Reflection Paper Two—Due Sun, Apr 3 at 11:59pm

Tues, Mar 29: **Research Involving Human Subjects/Participants**

Readings: B&C pp. 114-141 (Informed Consent); pp. 331-340 (Clinical
Investigation)
“The Nuremburg Code”

Thurs, Mar 31: Continued Discussion

Readings: “Ethics and Human Experimentation” by David Rothman
“What Makes Clinical Research Ethical?” by Ezekiel Emanuel, David
Wendler, and Christine Grady

Tues, Apr 5: **Justice: Access to and Rationing Health Care**

Readings: B&C: “Justice”: pp. 249-267

Thurs, Apr 7: Continued Discussion: **Allocation and Priority**

Readings: B&C: pp. 270-276; pp. 229-232; pp. 237-241; pp. 279-293

Tues, Apr 12: **Who Should Receive Scarce Resources?**

Readings: “Age and the Ends of Medicine” by Daniel Callahan
“Age as a Criterion for Rationing Health Care” by Norman Levinsky
“Should Age Make a Difference in Health Care Entitlement?” by
Joseph Boyle

Thurs, Apr 14: Continued Discussion

Readings: “Should Alcoholics Compete Equally for Liver Transplantation?” by Alvin Moss and Mark Siegler
“Are Alcoholics Less Deserving of Liver Transplants?” by Daniel Brudney

Critical Reflection Paper Three—Due Sun, Apr 24 at 11:59pm

Tues, Apr 19: **Public Health: Personal, Professional, and Societal Rights and Responsibilities**

Readings: B&C pp. 311-324

“Public Health Ethics: Public Justification and Public Trust” by James Childress and Ruth Bernheim

Thurs, Apr 21: Continued Discussion

Readings: Excerpt from “On Liberty” by John Stuart Mill

“Mandatory Immunization Laws and the Role of Medical, Religious and Philosophical Exemptions” by Daniel Salmon

“The Ethics of Quarantine” by Ross Upshur

FINAL EXAM: Date and Time TBD