Philosophy 215: Bioethics

INSTRUCTOR: DeenDayal Reddy, MS, MA, PhD / Phone: 011+91+7093744365
email: dreddy@linfield.edu OR deen.reddy@gmail.com fax: none

Text:

Course Description:
This is an interactive online course in bioethics, a type of applied ethics and moral theory. Case studies and primary source readings will highlight central theories, issues, and problems in bioethics, generally, and biomedical ethics, specifically. Bioethical concerns will be addressed including the right to live and die, paternalism versus autonomy and the patient’s bill of rights, biomedical experimentation and research, reproductive technologies, social and institutional justice, and healthcare duties, responsibilities, and relationships. Both normative ethics and metaethics will be considered. 4 credits (UQ)

No previous knowledge of ethical or moral theory or bioethical dilemmas is required for this course. Students will be introduced to elements of moral theory, ethics, and logical argumentation. Once this framework is in place, students will have the tools to evaluate arguments on all sides of a controversial issue as well as construct reasoned and thoughtful analysis of their own positions. The topics covered in this course are generally controversial, morally unsettling, and often emotionally charged. One of the key tasks of the course, then, is to enable students to analyze and argue within the philosophical framework of ethical theory. This course also introduces students to new research in medicine and law.

A Note on Learning Online:
Though online, this is NOT a self-paced course. It is essential that you are present in Blackboard at least four times per week to engage with content presented and the ideas of your classmates.

Assignments:

1) 11 quizzes, corresponding to each chapter of the book, on Blackboard. The quizzes may be completed at any time in the week in which they are scheduled, but once started MUST be finished in one sitting (no time limit, but be aware that Blackboard is a fickle beast about letting you stay logged in for days at a time) and they may NOT be re-taken. 20%
2) Discussions. Corresponding to each chapter/topic there will be a discussion question that challenges you to articulate an ethical argument. Plan to post your initial thoughts no later than Thursday each week. Reply to three of your classmates posts, and any replies or questions to your own post and any questions I raise during the remainder of the week. I look to see that you are posting on multiple days to show you are keeping up with the discussion as it progresses. 30%

3) A paper proposal (one paragraph/half page). You will be writing a 4-6 page paper on one aspect of one bioethical dilemma. Please write a statement of the issue you are interested in and an outline of the position you think you will take. Many people begin thinking they will argue one side of the issue but come to a new conclusion by the time they are done writing the paper, once they fully understand the arguments involved. This is called intellectual honesty. I will comment and make suggestions on your proposal within 3 business days. Paper proposal must be completed no later than Sunday, (Date). 10%

4) Rough draft. This should be your nearly complete paper. It should contain at least your main argument, the main argument against your position, and your response. I will comment on the content and structure of your essay and make suggestions for improvement. Rough draft due no later than Sunday, (Date). 10%

5) Final paper. There will be a detailed guide to the final paper posted on the Blackboard site. Final paper due no later than Sunday, (Date). 20%

6) Critical Reflection (2-3 pages). This short paper is an essay on any one topic OTHER than the one you wrote your final paper on. You are to discuss one topic, case, argument, or decision that you initially had an opinion on that changed over the course. Explain your initial opinion/gut feeling on the issue and detail what readings/arguments/other helped you to come to a new, nuanced conclusion. Due by Sunday, (Date). 10%

You are absolutely encouraged to find a topic for your paper and begin writing as early in the semester as you like, AFTER week 2. The first two chapters on method and moral theory will provide essential background framing for your paper.

Note that your rough draft, final paper and critical reflection, will be submitted through Turnitin. This is a tool in Blackboard that compares your writing to other student papers and a very large database of texts. You will receive an originality report to help you avoid plagiarism. Plan to post your paper early so that you benefit from this review and the chance to resubmit. If you have questions about plagiarism or the report you receive, please don’t hesitate to ask me.

Grading:
All grades are on a standard 100-point scale:

A=94-100
A-=90-93
B+=87-89
B=84-86
B-=80-83
C+=77-79
C=74-76
C-=70-73
D+=67-69
D=64-66
F=0-63

Reading Schedule:

Part 1: Principles and Theories
1. September 5-11—Chapter 1 Moral Reasoning in Bioethics, pp.1-33
2. Sept. 12-18—Chapter 2 Bioethics and Moral Theories, pp. 34-78

Part 2: The Medical Professional and Patient
4. Sept. 26-Oct 2—Chapter 4 Truth-Telling and Confidentiality, pp. 144-164
5. Oct. 3-9—Chapter 5 Informed Consent, pp. 196-207, 213-222

Part 3: Life and Death
8. Oct. 24-30—Ch.7 cont., abortion, personhood, pp. 326-348, 589-599
10. Nov. 7-13—Ch. 8 Cont., surrogacy, pp. 473-504
11. Nov. 14-20—Chapter 9 Genetic Choices, pp. 539-585, 613-624
12. Nov. 21-27—Chapter 10 Euthanasia & Physician-Assisted Suicide, pp. 625-681
(talk to your family about DNRs and Living Wills at Thanksgiving week!)
13. Nov. 28-December 4—Ch. 10 cont., end of life issues, pp. 682-709

Part 4: Justice and Health Care

[** Dates will vary per start date and year. Check with instructor]

Catalog Descriptions & Learning Objectives

UQ: Courses with this designation are designed to encourage students to articulate and evaluate unexamined assumptions and paradigmatic ways of acquiring
knowledge through a critical analysis of fundamental beliefs, cultural practices, and competing truth claims with the aim to develop greater self-knowledge and wisdom, the ability for meaningful dialogue, social responsibility and understanding, and appreciation for questions that lead to deeper insights into our actions and the reasons for them. While this mode of inquiry strongly emphasizes an assessment of cognitive systems and symbols, such courses also explore metaphors and language that penetrate to pre-cognitive or post-cognitive levels of people’s action (ethics) and ways of belonging (sociology) often associated with the sacred. Ultimate Questions courses are designated UQ in this catalog and each semester's registration materials.

Learning Objectives:

This course directly facilitates the following learning objectives:

1. Students will articulate and evaluate unexamined assumptions and paradigmatic ways of acquiring knowledge through the study of moral reasoning, ethical theories, diverse viewpoints and the application of these ideas in discussion and writing.

2. Students will analyze critically fundamental beliefs, cultural practices, and competing truth claims through applying the philosophic methods they learn about over the course of the semester and discussing the merits of claims made by the authors they read and critically reflecting on their own beliefs.

3. Students will develop greater self-knowledge and wisdom, the ability for meaningful dialogue, social responsibility and understanding through critically engaging with the texts on topics such as ethics and rationality.

4. Hopefully, students will appreciate questions that lead to deeper insights into our actions and the reasons for them by following the examples of the authors in this course who espouse critical methodologies and the value of such inquiries.

Academic Integrity Statement

Academic work is evaluated on the assumption that the work presented is the student’s own, unless designated otherwise. Anything less is unacceptable and is considered academically dishonest. Academic dishonesty includes:

Cheating. Use or attempted use of unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic work submitted for credit.

Plagiarism. Submission of academic work for credit that includes material copied or paraphrased from published or unpublished works without documentation.
Fabrication. Deliberate falsification or invention of any information or citation in academic work.

Facilitating Academic Dishonesty. Knowingly helping or attempting to help another to violate the college’s policy on academic dishonesty.

Students guilty of such acts are subject to disciplinary action.

Disability Statement:
Students with disabilities are protected by the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. If you are a student with a disability and feel you may require academic accommodations contact Cheri White, Program Director of Learning Support Services (LSS), as early as possible to request accommodation for your disability. The timeliness of your request will allow LSS to promptly arrange the details of your support. LSS is located in Loveridge Hall, Room 24, (503-413-8219). We also encourage students to communicate with faculty about their accommodations.

INSTRUCTOR BIOGRAPHY:
This is DeenDayal Reddy. DEEN for those who will have difficulty in pronouncing my name. I am from Hyderabad, South India. For the past 40 years, I've been living in the US. Since 2012, I've been shuttling back and forth between Seattle and Hyderabad. Ever since I came to America, I attended school full-time and worked full-time. My academic preparation includes a Bachelors with a triple major in Biology, Respiratory Therapy, Journalism; a double Masters in Education, Ethics; and a PhD in Biomedical Ethics. With the exception of Biology, I earned the rest of the degrees from major universities, all within USA. My work experience revolved around the pharmaceutical industry where I held positions of increasing responsibility within Clinical Research. Well, after forty-some years of continuous work, I decided to hang up my (real-world) gloves and return back to academia to pursue an energizing purpose closer to my heart: Share with others the importance of “critical thinking” in the day to day affairs. For the past few years I have been teaching (online) Bioethics at Linfield College and Clinical Research Ethics at Creighton University in Omaha. I also teach regular classroom courses in Biomedical Ethics and head the department of Biomedical Ethics at Apollo Medical Sciences & Research (AIMSR), in India. I am truly excited to have the opportunity to teach BIOETHICS (Phil-215) again. I invite you all to get in touch with me via email or over the phone. I encourage you to first set up an appointment via email for a phone conference, as I will be in India while teaching this course.

Identity Verification  Students enrolled in Online and Continuing Education courses and programs at Linfield College are required to periodically verify their identity through UCard. This ensures that students taking classes through Online and Continuing Education are the people doing the work. The authentication process will be required at the start of each term and then at random times during the term. Instructions will be provided. For identity verification, students will need a webcam enabled computer and a legal form of picture ID (such as a drivers license or a passport). If you have questions about or problems with the authentication process contact the OCE office at (503) 883.2447; (oce@linfield.edu)