

## **MEDICAL ETHICS: PHIL4380.501**

**Instructor: Morton D. Prager**

**Meeting time: Tuesday 7:00 – 9:45 pm**

**Place: Founders Building 3.616**

### **Pre-requisites**

There are no pre-requisites although some knowledge of biology and/or chemistry will be helpful.

### **Content of the Course**

Developments in science are coming with ever increasing rapidity, and many are impacting the practice of medicine. Attention will be given to intriguing questions arising from these developments that no one had to think about in earlier times. The underlying principles of medical ethics, namely, personal autonomy, beneficence, nonmaleficence, and justice will be examined as philosophic issues and in their application to specific medical problems. Part of the decision making process must be with consideration of the context of the patient's problem (e.g., social, financial) and the quality of life to be achieved by medical intervention. More specifically, discussion will encompass end of life issues (hastening death vs. permitting to die, euthanasia, assisted suicide), beginning of life issues (assisted reproduction, abortion, surrogate motherhood), what to do about inherited abnormalities, research protocols involving human subjects, allocation of scarce medical resources, and compulsory immunization. All of these issues require careful ethical thinking and evaluation.

### **Objectives for Students**

The student should develop a heightened awareness of the sensitive issues involved in personal relations that accompany the application of medicine to a wide variety of circumstances. Sensitivity to interpersonal issues applies, of course, to all kinds of personal interactions. In addition, the student should come away with enhanced knowledge of a variety of scientific issues that compel ethical thinking on the part of the lay public. In a democratic society coping with ethical concerns growing from developments in science is not the province of scientists alone but should be tackled by an enlightened public.

### **Readings**

One book is to be purchased:

Albert R. Jonsen, Mark Siegler, and William J. Winslade, *Clinical Ethics*, McGraw-Hill, Inc. Health Professions Division, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2010.

ISBN: 0071634142; ISBN-13: 9780071634144, 978-0071634144

Essays written by Dr. Prager will be made available in class. These include

End of Life Decisions

Abortion, with Historical Perspective

Stem Cells

Other readings will be made available as pertinent for the discussions.

**Books recommended for consultation:**  
Tom L. Beauchamp and James F. Childress, *Principles of Biomedical Ethics*, Oxford University Press, 1989. ISBN 0-19-505901-8; ISBN 0-19505902-6 (pbk).  
Jerome Groopman, *How Doctors Think*, Houghton Mifflin Co., 2008.  
ISBN-13/EAN: 978-0-547-05364-6 (pbk.)

### **Grading and attendance**

Final exam 25%, mid-term exam 20%, research paper 30%, medical case histories (2 presented by instructor) to be analyzed for the ethical issues involved 15%, class participation and attendance 10%. Class participation and regular attendance are critical. Ethical principles applied to specific situations become complex; therefore being involved in class discussions is important for helping to formulate reasonable views. More than two unexcused absences will result in a lowering of grade.

Research papers will deal with ethical issues confronting modern medicine. They should be 8-10 pages in length, double-spaced, typed. Good documentation is required. The source for all quotes should be given. Suitable topics will be suggested, but the student may select his own topic with agreement of the instructor.

Two short papers, 350-500 words in length, will involve analyzing the ethical concerns arising from a case when underlying principles are in conflict.

### **Course outline**

- 1) Moral principles guiding medical ethics
  - Ethical theories and principles
  - Essential features of clinical care: medical indication, patient preferences, quality of life, context of the case
- 2) Patient preferences
  - Autonomy, informed consent, mental competence, refusal of treatment, non-compliance, family involvement
- 3) End of life issues
  - Death is an event; dying, a process
  - Definition of death, hastening death vs. permitting to die, euthanasia, assisted suicide, "Do not resuscitate" orders, advance directives, double effect
- 4) Inherited disease patterns
  - Genetics is not destiny
  - Genetic testing, genetic counseling, marriage counseling
- 4) Beginning of life issues
  - Assisted reproduction, in vitro fertilization, abortion, fetal abnormalities, fetal reduction, surrogate motherhood, epi-genetics
- 5) Quality of Life
  - Who determines quality, prejudices affecting judgment, diminished capacity, proportionality, hospital ethics committees, Institutional Review Board
- 6) Stem cell research
  - Potential benefits, sources of stem cells, theological views, politicization of the issue, synthetic "stem cells"

**7) Rationing of medical services**

**Allocation of scarce resources, organ transplantation, criteria for patient selection**

**8) Immunization**

**Compulsory immunization, personal autonomy, idiopathic response, public health issues**

**9) Contextual Features**

**Professional, familial, religious, financial, legal, institutional**

**Other course policies**

**Dates for exams and for papers to be completed will be announced well in advance.**

**Late work will be accepted and make-up exams provided only if arranged in advance and with suitable documentation for the reason.**

If you experience any problems with your UTD account you may send an email to: [assist@utdallas.edu](mailto:assist@utdallas.edu) or call the UTD Computer Helpdesk at 972-883-2911.

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**Field Trip Policies**

**Off-campus Instruction and Course Activities**

*Off-campus, out-of-state, and foreign instruction and activities are subject to state law and University policies and procedures regarding travel and risk-related activities. Information regarding these rules and regulations may be found at the website address [http://www.utdallas.edu/BusinessAffairs/Travel\\_Risk\\_Activities.htm](http://www.utdallas.edu/BusinessAffairs/Travel_Risk_Activities.htm). Additional information is available from the office of the school dean. Below is a description of any travel and/or risk-related activity associated with this course.*

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**Student Conduct & Discipline**

The University of Texas System and The University of Texas at Dallas have rules and regulations for the orderly and efficient conduct of their business. It is the responsibility of each student and each student organization to be knowledgeable about the rules and regulations which govern student conduct and activities. General information on student conduct and discipline is contained in the UTD printed publication, *A to Z Guide*, which is provided to all registered students each academic year.

The University of Texas at Dallas administers student discipline within the procedures of recognized and established due process. Procedures are defined and described in the *Rules and Regulations, Series 50000, Board of Regents, The University of Texas System*, and in Title V, Rules on Student Services and Activities of the university's *Handbook of Operating Procedures*. Copies of these rules and regulations are available to students in the Office of the Dean of Students, where staff members are available to assist students in interpreting the rules and regulations (SU 1.602, 972/883-6391) and online at <http://www.utdallas.edu/judicialaffairs/UTDJudicialAffairs-HOPV.html>

A student at the university neither loses the rights nor escapes the responsibilities of citizenship. He or she is expected to obey federal, state, and local laws as well as the Regents' Rules, university regulations, and administrative rules. Students are subject to discipline for violating the standards of conduct whether such conduct takes place on or off campus, or whether civil or criminal penalties are also imposed for such conduct.

## **Academic Integrity**

The faculty expects from its students a high level of responsibility and academic honesty. Because the value of an academic degree depends upon the absolute integrity of the work done by the student for that degree, it is imperative that a student demonstrate a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work.

Scholastic Dishonesty, any student who commits an act of scholastic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.

Plagiarism, especially from the web, from portions of papers for other classes, and from any other source is unacceptable and will be dealt with under the university's policy on plagiarism (see general catalog for details). This course will use the resources of turnitin.com, which searches the web for possible plagiarism and is over 90% effective.

## **Copyright Notice**

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted materials, including music and software. Copying, displaying, reproducing, or distributing copyrighted works may infringe the copyright owner's rights and such infringement is subject to appropriate disciplinary action as well as criminal penalties provided by federal law. Usage of such material is only appropriate when that usage constitutes "fair use" under the Copyright Act. As a UT Dallas student, you are required to follow the institution's copyright policy (Policy Memorandum 84-I.3-46). For more information about the fair use exemption, see <http://www.utsystem.edu/ogc/intellectualproperty/copypol2.htm>

## **Email Use**

The University of Texas at Dallas recognizes the value and efficiency of communication between faculty/staff and students through electronic mail. At the same time, email raises some issues concerning security and the identity of each individual in an email exchange. The university encourages all official student email correspondence be sent only to a student's U.T. Dallas email address and that faculty and staff consider email from students official only if it originates from a UTD student account. This allows the university to maintain a high degree of confidence in the identity of all individual corresponding and the security of the transmitted information. UTD furnishes each student with a free email account that is to be used in all communication with university personnel. The Department of Information Resources at U.T. Dallas provides a method for students to have their U.T. Dallas mail forwarded to other accounts.

## **Withdrawal from Class**

The administration of this institution has set deadlines for withdrawal of any college-level courses. These dates and times are published in that semester's course catalog. Administration procedures must be followed. It is the student's responsibility to handle withdrawal requirements from any class. In other words, I cannot drop or withdraw any student. You must do the proper paperwork to ensure that you will not receive a final grade of "F" in a course if you choose not to attend the class once you are enrolled.

## **Student Grievance Procedures**

Procedures for student grievances are found in Title V, Rules on Student Services and Activities, of the university's *Handbook of Operating Procedures*.

In attempting to resolve any student grievance regarding grades, evaluations, or other fulfillments of academic responsibility, it is the obligation of the student first to make a serious effort to resolve the matter with the instructor, supervisor, administrator, or committee with whom the grievance originates (hereafter called "the respondent"). Individual faculty members retain primary responsibility for assigning grades and evaluations. If the matter cannot be resolved at that level, the grievance must be submitted in writing to the respondent with a copy of the respondent's School Dean. If the matter is not resolved by the written response provided by the respondent, the student may submit a written appeal to the School Dean. If the grievance is not resolved by the School Dean's decision, the student may make a written appeal to the Dean of Graduate or Undergraduate Education, and the dean will appoint and convene an Academic Appeals Panel. The decision of the Academic Appeals Panel is final. The results of the academic appeals process will be distributed to all involved parties.

Copies of these rules and regulations are available to students in the Office of the Dean of Students, where staff members are available to assist students in interpreting the rules and regulations.

## **Incomplete Grade Policy**

As per university policy, incomplete grades will be granted only for work unavoidably missed at the semester's end and only if 70% of the course work has been completed. An incomplete grade must be resolved within eight (8) weeks from the first day of the subsequent long semester. If the required work to complete the course and to remove the incomplete grade is not submitted by the specified deadline, the incomplete grade is changed automatically to a grade of **F**.

## **Disability Services**

The goal of Disability Services is to provide students with disabilities equal educational opportunities. Disability Services provides students with a documented letter to present to the faculty members to verify that the student has a disability and needs accommodations. This letter should be presented to the instructor in each course at the beginning of the semester and accommodations needed should be discussed at that time. It is the student's responsibility to notify his or her professors of the need for accommodation. If accommodations are granted for testing accommodations, the student should remind the instructor five days before the exam of any testing accommodations that will be needed. Disability Services is located in Room 1.610 in the Student Union. Office hours are Monday – Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., and Friday 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. You may reach Disability Services at (972) 883-2098.

Guidelines for documentation are located on the Disability Services website at <http://www.utdallas.edu/disability/documentation/index.html>

## **Religious Holy Days**

The University of Texas at Dallas will excuse a student from class or other required activities for the travel to and observance of a religious holy day for a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property tax under Section 11.20, Tax Code, Texas Code Annotated.

The student is encouraged to notify the instructor or activity sponsor as soon as possible regarding the absence, preferably in advance of the assignment. The student, so excused, will be allowed to take the exam or complete the assignment within a reasonable time after the absence: a period equal to the length of the absence, up to a maximum of one week. A student who notifies the instructor and completes any missed exam or assignment may not be penalized for the absence. A student who fails to complete the exam or assignment within the prescribed period may receive a failing grade for that exam or assignment.

If a student or an instructor disagrees about the nature of the absence [i.e., for the purpose of observing a religious holy day] or if there is similar disagreement about whether the student has been given a reasonable time to complete any missed assignments or examinations, either the student or the instructor may request a ruling from the chief executive officer of the institution, or his or her designee. The chief executive officer or designee must take into account the legislative intent of TEC 51.911(b), and the student and instructor will abide by the decision of the chief executive officer or designee.

***These descriptions and timelines are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.***

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