

Phil 3316 Medical Ethics

Spring 2017

Section MW12 RegCode 22063

Monday, Wednesday 12:50 – 2:05pm

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Have you ever wondered whether our system of medical care treats people fairly? Or whether we ought to be able to choose when, and how, to die? Or perhaps about the connection between the law, public policy, and your access to a doctor? Or whether our society is ready to deal with the possibility of global epidemics and pandemics, such as the current Ebola crisis? All of these questions, and more, reflect a rapidly-changing world of emerging biotechnologies, laws, and health care practices, placing significant pressures on our understanding of ourselves and our society. To ask difficult questions about how we are born, how we live, and how we die -- and to begin to offer some responses -- is the work of medical ethics. Specifically, this course provides an introduction to medical ethics by addressing issues arising from the application of various models of ethical decision-making (moral theory) to questions of medical care, biomedical research, and healthcare justice. We will also consider some critiques of the ethical models themselves, and then ask what kinds of social policies (if any) might adequately address the complexities inherent in biomedicine.

Topics to be discussed will include physician-nurse-patient relationships, human and animal research, emerging biotechnologies (such as stem cell research and cloning), neuroethics, health care and justice, public health and pandemics, and others. The format of the course is seminar-style discussion, with an emphasis on active student participation. There are no prerequisites for this course.