HPS 0613 – Morality and Medicine

Instructor: Dr. Laura Matthews

Instructor Email: Lkm55@pitt.edu

Instructor Office Hours: Tuesdays, 11:00 am-12:00 pm Cathedral of Learning, 1109E or by appointment

Lecture: Tuesdays and Thursdays 1:00-1:50, CL 244

TA: Tzvetan Moev

TA Email: TZM16@pitt.edu

TA Office Hours: Fridays, 12:00-12:55 and 3:00-4:00 CL 11th floor, grad student wing

Course Description: This course investigates ethical problems in medical practice and research through historical, scientific, and philosophical approaches. We will address topics such as informed consent, euthanasia and assisted suicide, abortion, eugenics and genetic selection, and social issues in access to and administration of healthcare. Throughout the course, students will develop an appreciation for the various perspectives – ethical, political, religious, etc. – which shape people's views on these topics. They will be provided with the analytical tools needed to develop their own considered views on some central ethical issues facing medical practice and research today.

Course Objectives: Students will acquire, develop, or deepen the following skills in this course:

- Close, critical reading of primary texts in bioethics/medical ethics, science, and history of medicine
- Using scientific evidence and historical context to situate and evaluate ethical problems in medical practice and research
- Reconstructing arguments in texts in your own words
- Identifying common informal fallacies in your own and others' arguments; analyzing arguments for their strengths and weaknesses
- Posing philosophical questions of your own and using reasoned argument to develop responses to those questions
- Engaging in productive and respectful dialogue with classmates and expressing opposing viewpoints in ways that facilitate, rather than close off, further discussion
- Developing an understanding of and appreciation for the relevant viewpoints in decisions in medical ethics
- Connecting topics in the course to real-world problems and daily life, using course material to reflect on ethical issues in medical practice as they arise in your own life
- Persuading others by defending your claims with argument/evidence

Required Texts: All required content in this course is provided to you as pdfs through Canvas and Perusall.

Technology Policy: We will be using Top Hat and other online platforms on a regular basis during class. It is therefore required for you to bring some way to access these platforms to class with you each day (laptop, tablet, or at the very least, a smartphone).

Certificate in Conceptual Foundations of Medicine: This class is one of two core courses (along with 0612 Mind and Medicine) required for students to earn the Certificate in Conceptual Foundations of Medicine. This class deals with ethical, legal, and political issues in the practice of medicine and medical research. By contrast, HPS 0612 deals with the conceptual basis of medicine and psychiatry, including their relations to other sciences, their purposes and goals, and the analysis of their core concepts, such as health, illness, and disease. Please see the link above for more details on the Certificate and consider pursuing it if you are not already.

Consider majoring in HPS: Pitt's department in History and Philosophy of Science is consistently ranked among the top departments in the world (see, for example, this ranking of programs by a collection of our peers on various forms of philosophy of science). HPS can therefore be a great resource for students who are interested in taking a more humanistic approach to the sciences. This type of well-rounded approach to the sciences is increasingly being recognized as an important in applicants to medical schools. See, for example, this article from the American Medical Association regarding how a humanities background can improve your application.
Adding HPS as a double major is relatively easy for those already majoring in a science. The additional requirements include:

- Four elective courses; HPS 0613 already counts as one of your electives (so, you'd only need three more). One of the other electives must be a history of science course (which fulfills the history gen-ed requirement) and one must be an upper-level (anything numbered 1xxx).
- One logic course (either HPS 0611 or PHIL 0500) – these also fulfill your gen-ed requirement for Quantitative and Formal Reasoning.
- HPS 1653 Introduction to Philosophy of Science
- HPS 1702/3 Junior/Senior Seminar – this is a writing intensive course that satisfies one of your upper-level writing requirements.
- **In total, 6 additional courses (not counting 613), some of which satisfy your gen-ed requirements, can allow you to double major in HPS so long as you are already taking 15 credits in the social or natural sciences!**
- You can simultaneously double major in HPS and pursue the CFM.

- If you're interested in pursuing a double major, please get in touch with me.

Help! I need a letter of recommendation!: The students in Pitt's Certificate in Conceptual Foundations of Medicine are exceedingly talented, and many of you will soon be applying to post-graduate programs of various kinds. These applications often require letters of recommendation, and you might think a letter from a more humanistic discipline can help make your applications more well-rounded. Unfortunately, it can be relatively difficult for me to get to know students in larger classrooms. If you think you might like to receive a LOR from me, it behooves you to make sure that you stand out from the crowd. This means doing things like: introducing yourself after class, showing up to office hours, and participating during discussions in lecture. Make sure I know who you are and that I will have many positive things to say about you!

Assignments:

Participation:

- Participating in class means coming to class prepared, being actively engaged with the lectures and class activities, discussing the material in groups and full-class discussions, and generally contributing to the atmosphere of the class. Participation will be graded based on your completion of a variety of in-class activities, including things like quizzes, comprehension checks, discussion questions, and other assignments.
- **Groups:** During the second week of class (or so), you will be split into groups. Your group assignment will remain the same throughout the semester. Group activities during class will be with your same group throughout the whole semester. All group assignments will be random. Your in-class groups will be the same as your Perusall groups (see below).

Lecture Participation (5%)

- Participation during lecture will be tracked primarily through Top Hat, an online learning platform provided free of charge by the University. Top Hat participation assignments will include things like closed-ended comprehension checks during lectures, polls, quizzes, and open-ended discussion questions before break-out discussions or class-wide discussions. See more details on Top Hat below.
- Each day, you have the opportunity to earn 2 participation points. There are 27 lectures totaling 54 participation points. Your participation grade will be scored out of 48 points. This means that you can miss up to three classes for any reason while still earning full participation credit. Alternatively, you can earn up to 6 extra credit participation points for missing fewer than three classes.

Recitation Participation (10%)

- Recitation participation assignments will be more substantial and may consist of things like in-class debates, multiple open-ended discussion prompt responses, peer-reviews, worksheets, or drafts of exam cheat-sheets.
- Each recitation you can earn a total of 5 participation points. There are 12 recitations, so you can earn a total of 60 recitation participation points. Your recitation participation score will be calculated out of a total of 50 points. This means you can miss up to two recitations without penalty. Alternatively, if you attend every recitation, you can earn 10 extra credit points.

General note on participation assignments: Participation assignments are those that are listed under the "Participation" group on Canvas. These will always be completed during class. You will never be expected to complete a participation assignment outside of class**. <u>If you miss participation assignments, you are not permitted to make them up.</u>** The sole exception to this policy is during add/drop – if you add the course late, then you may make up the participation assignments you missed by sending me an email and requesting an extended deadline. After add/drop, participation assignments can only be completed by those that are physically present in the class.

Perusall (15%):

- Each day before class, students will be expected to complete the assigned reading for that day.
- Reading assignments will be graded via Perusall. Perusall is an online, collaborative reading platform where students can pose questions, write comments, and interact with each other about course readings. Perusall assignments are graded on a variety of metrics, including the quality and quantity of comments and questions, having your comments upvoted or responded to and upvoting others' comments, how much active time you've engaged with the reading, returning to the reading assignment several times, and reading the assignment to the end. You do not need to do all of these things in order to receive full credit on a Perusall assignment – the assignments are designed such that there are multiple ways to earn full credit, so you should feel encouraged to engage with the readings in the ways that feel most beneficial to you.
- ***Perusall assignments are due at 11:59 pm the night before class meets.*** You're encouraged to begin your Perusall assignments early and to complete them well before the deadline. Your grade does not rely on waiting for other people to comment so that you can reply to them. In fact, you are rewarded with receiving replies, which is an added incentive to get your assignments completed early.

- You can track your score as you complete the Perusall assignment by clicking on the "My Scores" link on the left-hand side of the screen on Perusall. Perusall grades will only be published on Canvas after the deadline has passed.
- **Reading improves with practice**, and you will find that your capacity to understand what an author is saying will develop over the course of the semester with repeated effort. Putting this effort in will also help prepare you for exams and class discussions.
- **Perusall groups will be the same as your in-class discussion groups.** You are encouraged to interact with your group members through Perusall assignments and to reference the comments and questions you pose on Perusall during our in-class discussions.
- **At the end of the semester, I will drop your six lowest Perusall grades.** This gives you a bit of leeway should you get sick or need to budget your time for another course. (With 26 normal days of class, this means that you must complete slightly more than ¾ of the readings to earn full credit.) Use your drops wisely. I recommend staying on top of the reading assignments especially at the beginning of the semester when things are not as busy. You will not receive any extra credit for submitting more than the required number of Perusall assignments.
- ***It is not permissible to generate comments for reading assignments through Chat GPT, other large language models (LLMs), or other forms of artificial intelligence.*** Comments that are copied and pasted into Perusall will be flagged. The first time your comment is flagged, it will be removed and not count towards your Perusall grade for that assignment. The second time your comment is flagged, you will receive a 0 for the assignment. The third time your comment is flagged, I will submit an academic honesty report.

Exams (55%):

- You will have two exams, a midterm and a final. Exams are non-cumulative. They cover the course readings and lectures. The midterm exam consists of a lecture portion, which will take place during a lecture, and a recitation portion, which will take place during your recitation section. The final exam will take place during the finals period for this class (Tuesday, April 30th 10:00-11:50 am). It will also contain a lecture and recitation portion but be completed within the same timeslot. The lecture portion will consist of multiple-choice questions and interpretations of passages from the assigned readings. The recitation portion will contain short-answer questions which require you to present and critically analyze arguments from the assigned readings. Both exams will take place through Canvas using Respondus Lockdown Browser. For the midterm exam, you are permitted to bring a single page, 8.5 x 11 inches, of **handwritten** notes, front and back. After completing the lecture portion of the exam, you will submit your note sheet, and it will be returned to you for the recitation portion. For the final, you may bring two pages of notes, front and back.

Score breakdown:

Midterm:

Lecture portion: 8%
Recitation portion: 15%

Final:

Lecture portion: 12%
Recitation portion: 20%

In-class Bioethics-bowl style debate (15%):

- Sometime around the first week of April, students will engage in an in-class, Bioethics-style debate. The Bioethics Bowl is a national collegiate debate competition. This spring, the Bioethics Bowl competition will take place at the University of Pittsburgh on Saturday April 11th.
- The Ethics Bowl and the Bioethics Bowl are unique from traditional debates because they emphasize the analysis of multiple perspectives on an issue in order to develop a more well-rounded understanding of the morally relevant features of the case. Instead of focusing on "beating" the other term, Ethics Bowl debates are geared towards generating collaborative solutions to ethical dilemmas. Teams are therefore rewarded for their capacity to analyze the situation from multiple perspectives, to acknowledge the strengths in their opponents' arguments, and to remain collegial throughout the competition.
- Your groups will serve as your debate team. Throughout the course, our class will mirror some of the preparation involved in the Bioethics Bowl but on a smaller scale. Instead of the usual 15 cases, your team will prepare responses to (4-5) cases. During class, you will be pitted against another team, and the case you will debate will be chosen at random.
- More information, as well as opportunities to prepare with your group, will be provided later on in the semester.

Top Hat

Sometime at the beginning of the semester, you will be required to create a Top Hat account if you do not have one already. PowerPoint lectures will be administered through Top Hat, so you must bring a mobile device to class to access the slides and any questions that are inserted into the slides. These will always be in-class assignments.

When you miss class, you are not able to make up your Top Hat assignments. Only those students who are physically present in class will be able to submit Top Hat responses. This means that you must allow Top Hat access to your location when we are using it in class.

Missed exams

If you anticipate needing to miss an exam, you must get in touch with me as soon as possible (and before the exam) to schedule another time to take the exam. If I do not hear from you at least 48 hours before the exam, a makeup will only be scheduled in the event of an emergency (e.g., severe illness or other unpredictable event). I must hear from ***as soon as possible*** in these circumstances.

Borderline Grades

I consider borderline grades to be those grades that are less than half a percentage point from the cutoff. Borderline grades will only be rounded up for those students who regularly attend and participate in class and group discussions. When I consider whether to round up a borderline grade, I will base this on the student's participation in class and how well they have contributed to the class environment. **I do not respond to emails during finals requesting extra credit, rounded grades, or special consideration for certain students.**

Academic Integrity

Students in this course will be expected to comply with the University of Pittsburgh's Policy on Academic Integrity. Any student suspected of violating this obligation for any reason during the semester will be required to participate in the procedural process, initiated at the instructor level, as outlined in the University Guidelines on Academic Integrity. This may include, but is not limited to, the confiscation of the examination of any individual suspected of violating University Policy. Furthermore, no student may bring any unauthorized materials to an exam, including dictionaries and programmable calculators.

To learn more about Academic Integrity, visit the Academic Integrity GuideLinks to an external site. for an overview of the topic. For hands- on practice, complete the Academic Integrity ModulesLinks to an external site..

Disability Services

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and Disability Resources and Services (DRS), 140 William Pitt Union, (412) 648-7890, drsrecep@pitt.edu, (412) 228-5347 for P3 ASL users, as early as possible in the term. DRS will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course.

Statement on Classroom Recording

To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas, students may not record classroom lectures, discussion and/or activities without the advance written permission of the instructor, and any such recording properly approved in advance can be used solely for the student's own private use.

Use of large language models (LLMs) such as Chat-GPT

Use of LLMs is prohibited during exams. It is also prohibited to use LLMs to generate comments in Perusall. For this reason, comments that are copied and pasted into Perusall will be flagged and not count towards your score.

Use of LLMs is not prohibited in preparation for the exams, although I expect that those who prepare for the exams on their own will be better prepared.

Email and Canvas Communication

Each student is issued a University e-mail address (username@pitt.edu) upon admittance. This e-mail address may be used by the University for official communication with students. Students are expected to read e-mail sent to this account on a regular basis. Failure to read and react to University communications in a timely manner does not absolve the student from knowing and complying with the content of the communications. Students are also expected to regularly check Canvas for course announcements. Students can have Canvas updates forwarded to their email through Canvas settings.

Please allow at least 24 hours for the instructor or your TA to respond to an email. Note that students' working hours are not necessarily the same as instructors' working hours. Emails sent over the weekend may take longer to respond to.

Grading Scale

A+ 97.0-100	**C+** 77-79.99
A 94.0-96.99	**C** 74-76.99
A- 90.0-93.99	**C-** 70-73.99
B+ 87.0-89.99	**D+** 67-69.99
B 84-86.99	**D** 64.0-66.99
B- 80-83.99	**D-** 60.0-63.99

A Note on Civil Discourse: This course will require discussion of controversial issues. Philosophical inquiry is not limited in its scope – no questions are off limits. In philosophy, we always consider multiple perspectives and multiple answers to a question. Some of these perspectives may challenge you in ways that will feel uncomfortable. It is important to be able to weigh the strengths and weaknesses of an argument from an objective standpoint and to refrain from rejecting positions outright based on emotional reactions to those positions. Furthermore, your peers will often present positions with which you

disagree. You may feel particularly strongly about these disagreements. Nevertheless, it is of the utmost importance that we remain respectful in expressing differing opinions. Discussions in class are always most interesting and most fruitful when everyone feels comfortable expressing their opinions and when students express a variety of different views. It is my priority to establish an environment in which everyone feels comfortable to express their views. Should you ever feel that our classroom does not live up to these standards, please feel free to approach me in person or over email to discuss potential improvements.

Tentative Schedule:

1/13: Introduction to moral theory and logical fallacies

Module 1 – Informed Consent and Autonomy

1/15: Tom Beauchamp, "Informed Consent: Its History, Meaning, and Present Challenges"

1/16: recitations

1/20: Menikoff, "Could Tuskegee Happen Today?"

1/22: selections from Saks, *Refusing Care: Forced Treatment and the Rights of the Mentally Ill*

1/23: recitations

1/27: Giordano, "Anorexia Nervosa: A case for exceptionalism in ethical decision making"

1/29: Chapter 3 of *Medical Ethics: Accounts of Ground-Breaking Cases*: "Comas: Karen Quinlan, Nancy Cruzan, and Terri Schiavo"

1/30: recitations

Module 2 – End of Life

2/3: selections from Chapter 2 of *Medical Ethics: Accounts of Ground-Breaking Cases*, "Requests to Die: Terminal and Non-Terminal Patients"

2/5: James Rachels, "Active and Passive Euthanasia"; AMA official position on euthanasia; selections from Chapter 2 of *The Basics of* Bioethics, "The Hippocratic Oath and Its Challengers"

2/6: recitations

2/10: Joshua Hatherly, “Is the exclusion of psychiatric patients from access to physician-assisted suicide discriminatory?”

Module 3 – Abortion and Pregnancy

2/12: selections from *The Facts of Life: Science and the Abortion Controversy*

2/13: recitations

2/17: McSpedon, “A Long History of Abortion”; selections from Reagan, *When Abortion Was A Crime*

2/19: Midterm exam – lecture portion (covers Modules 1 and 2)

2/20: Midterm Exam – recitation portion (covers Modules 1 and 2)

2/24: selections from Thomson, “A Defense of Abortion”

2/26: selections from Bernstein and Manata, “Moral Responsibility and the Wrongness of Abortion”

2/27: recitations

3/3: Mcleod, “The Medical Nonnecessity of In Vitro Vertilization”

Module 4 – Genetics

3/5: selections from Adam Rutherford, *Control: The dark history and troubling present of eugenics*

3/6: recitations

3/10: spring break – no class

3/12: spring break – no class

3/13: spring break – no class

3/17: Parens and Asch, “Disability Rights Critique of Prenatal Genetic Testing: Reflections and Recommendations”

3/19: Sparrow, "Imposing Genetic Diversity"

3/20: recitations

3/24: selections from Anomaly, *Creating Future People*

3/26: selections from Anomaly, *Creating Future People*

3/27: recitations – Bioethics bowl debate prep

3/31: Bioethics bowl debate prep

4/2: Bioethics Bowl Debate

4/3: Bioethics Bowl Debate

4/7: TBA/catch-up

Module 5 – Social Issues in Healthcare

4/9: selections from Chapter 17 of *Medical Ethics: Accounts of Ground-Breaking Cases*

4/10: recitations

4/14: selections from Chapter 17 of *Medical Ethics: Accounts of Ground-Breaking Cases*

4/16: Burley et al., "The Ethics of Automating Therapy" and

4/17: recitations

4/21: Marks, "Lessons from Corporate Influence in the Opioid Epidemic: Toward a Norm of Separation"

4/23: podcast, Jonathan Haidt, *The Anxious Generation*

4/24: recitations

The final exam will take place on Thursday April 30th from 10:00-11:50 in our normal classroom. The final will cover modules 3, 4, and 5.

Note: The preceding is a general plan for the course. Deviations from the readings and schedule may prove necessary. Any such changes will be clearly communicated through Canvas and posted as updates to this syllabus. It is each student's responsibility to remain updated with the most recent iteration of the syllabus.