



CAMOSUN COLLEGE

School of Arts & Science

Humanities

Phil 250, Biomedical Ethics

Fall, 2005

COURSE OUTLINE

Please note: This outline will not be kept indefinitely. It is recommended students keep this outline for your records.

Instructor Information

- (a) Instructor: Karen Shirley
(b) Office hours: Monday, 1:30 - 2:20; Tuesday, 11:30 - 12:20; Wednesday, 12:30 - 1:20; Thursday, 11:30 - 12:20; Friday, 12:30 - 1:20
(c) Location: Y320 (d) Phone:3703518 Home: 3838164

Intended Learning Outcomes

At the end of the course, students will be able to

- 1) describe and evaluate the classic moral theories and the ethics of care
2) identify the theoretical underpinnings and consequences people's positions on moral issues
3) work through moral dilemmas that arise in the work place
4) critically assess ethical arguments

Required Materials

Philosophy 250 Handout (Available in the bookstore)

Eike-Henner W. Kluge (editor): Readings in Biomedical Ethics: A Canadian Focus

If your grammar needs work, you may wish to purchase a small style guide with a section on common errors in grammar and usage.

Basis of Student Assessment

Summary

Table with 2 columns: Assessment Item, Percentage. Items include 2 exams, Debate, Critical thinking homework, Verbal participation, and Bonus questions.

Formatting Assignments and Exams

- 1. Put the following information on each assignment: a) your student number; b) your section number (1, 2, 3 or 4).
2. Write on both sides of the page, where more than one page is required, and double-space.
Note: Keep all marked assignments in case there is a discrepancy between your record of your marks and my record of your marks.

Grading System

The following percentage conversion to letter grade will be used:

Table with 3 columns: Letter Grade, Percentage Range. Grades include A+, A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, D, and F.

Details of Evaluation

Exams: There will be two exams which are worth 30% each. The exams are closed-book. However, you are encouraged to bring a dictionary and/or style guide. Each exam will consist of one of the study questions from the relevant section below. There will also be a bonus question based on the critical thinking section of the handout. It is worth 2%. Thus, it is theoretically possible for a student to end up with 104% at the end of the course.

Homework: These assignments are intended to help you to hone your critical thinking skills. Students do not need to do them all. Each homework assignment is marked out of 2% of your final grade. You may do them all if you want to in order to try to get a total of 10% or you may be lucky and get 10% after doing 5 assignments. You may pick which homework assignments you wish to do but they must be handed in *within five minutes of the class starting* on the day they are listed on the schedule below. Given the number of homework assignments you can do, there is no acceptable excuse for handing in late homework assignments.

The subject of the homework assignment must be a nursing issue. You are also encouraged to make these assignments witty.

Verbal Participation: Verbal participation is worth 10% of your final grade. You should submit one of the two forms at the end of this outline for each half of your participation mark. Submit the form at the end of the seminar in which you make your contribution or put it under my office door by the end of that same day. No late forms will be accepted. Only two cases of verbal participation count for marks and they must occur during the seminar period.

This is an unusual system. However, it is intended to stop disagreements about the value of a student's participation and to ensure that no one gets marks for merely attending class. It is also intended to limit (to twice) the number of times students participate solely out of a desire for marks. I encourage you to participate as often as you like out of a desire to learn, to help others learn and to keep yourself interested in the class. However, only the two cases of verbal participation be graded.

Debates: You are required to participate in a debate (during the seminar) which is worth 20% of your final grade.

During the first class, students will be divided into groups of two to four people. One or two people in each group will take either the pro or con position on a chosen topic. Each group will be given a topic and a date upon which the group will debate the topic in the seminar period.

You and your interlocutor may wish to get together to debate the topic ahead of time so that you have an opportunity to refine your objections and responses. However, in my experience, debates in which the pro and con sides script the debate beforehand suffer as a result. You will be graded on the strength of your arguments, the knowledge you show on the topic and your ability to present your arguments in a way that helps other students understand the relevant facts and arguments.

Do not read out your part of the debate. If you do read, you will automatically lose 20%. You may *occasionally* refer to notes.

Handouts are forbidden.

If you are at a loss as to what arguments have been made on the topic, see your textbook, especially the references at the end of relevant papers. If you use the internet, be careful to verify any factual claims made by advocacy groups. Once you have an idea of what issues are at stake and of some of the arguments that have been presented on the topic, you should spend time *thinking for yourself* on the topic. What do *you* think the truth of the matter is? What are the best justifications of your position?

Structure of Debates

Concision is a virtue in philosophy.

First,

1. Pro side: *one strong* argument in favour of the claim. (Speak for up to two minutes.)
2. Con side: objection to the above argument. (Speak for up to thirty seconds.)
3. Pro side: response to the above objection. (Speak for up to thirty seconds.)
4. Con side: objection to above response or a second objection to the pro side's original argument. (Speak for up to thirty seconds.)
5. Pro side: response to the second objection. (Speak for up to thirty seconds.)

Second,

6. Repeat steps one through five above, beginning with the con side this time.

Third,

7. Pro and con sides now answer questions put to them by the class.

Schedule and Study Questions

Do the relevant reading *before* the date it is listed in the following schedule.

Week 1: Sept. 5 - 9

First Hour: Course outline; Division into debate groups

Second and Third Hours: lecture on meta-ethical theories

Week 2: Sept. 12 - 16

Readings

- Chapter 1 of textbook
- Section I of handout
- Section II of handout

HW: An example of a strong inductive argument.

Study Q

1. You will be asked to describe an ethical or a meta-ethical theory which I pick out of a hat at the beginning of the exam. (You need not describe the ethics of care as it is covered in the next question.)

Third Hour: Applying the theories in moral dilemmas

Week 3: Sept. – 19 - 23

Readings

- "Can There Be An Ethics of Care?" by Peter Allmark (Find this paper toward the end of the handout.)
- Section II of handout

Study Q

2. What role can the psychological state of caring play in ethical decisions?

HW: An example of a valid but unsound argument

Debate: Therapeutic touch should be an insured procedure. .

Week 3: Sept. 26 - 30

Readings

- Pages 21 – 34 of textbook
- Section III of handout

Study Q

3. Give a prescriptive definition of ‘health’ and defend it in terms of its good consequences and its fit with lexical usage.

HW: lexical, a prescriptive and a persuasive definition of ‘professional’.

Debate: Pedaphiles are not morally responsible for their illegal sexual behaviour with children.

Week 4: Oct. 3 - 7

Readings

- “Should Alcoholics Compete Equally for Liver Transplantation?” p106 of textbook
- “Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation,” in Section V of handout
- Fallacies 1 and 2 in handout

Study Q

4. Using a principle of distributive justice - your own or one discussed in class - explain what types of procedures should and shouldn’t be insured. Ensure that you acknowledge and defend any controversial or unusual consequences of you position. Examples of *types* of procedures are cosmetic procedures, procedures required as a result of dangerous choices (for example, smoking or careless lifting), reproduction-related procedures, etc..

HW: An example of an argument that commits the fallacy of *argumentum ad hominem* and another one that commits the fallacy of appeal to authority.

Debate: Canada should give more money to needy people in other parts of the world, even if that means putting less money into the Canadian health care system.

Week 5: Oct. 10 – 14: Exam 1

Week 6: Oct. 17 - 21

Readings

- “Active and Passive Euthanasia” by James Rachels, p. 372 of textbook
- fallacies 3 and 4 in Section IV of handout

Study Q

5. Critically assess the doctrine of double effect.

HW: An argument that commits the fallacy of equivocation and one that argues from ignorance.

Debate: Whoever helped Sue Rodriguez to die acted immorally by doing so.

Week 7: Oct 24 - 28

Reading

- - “The Status of the Human Foetus,” p. 288 of textbook
 - Present and defend your view on the moral status of the human fetus and newborn.
- fallacy 5

Study Q

1. Was Mary and Abe Ayala’s decision to conceive Marissa morally acceptable?

HW: An example of an argument that commits the fallacy of hypothesis contrary to fact.

Debate: Paying someone to be a surrogate mother is immoral.

Week 8: Oct. 31 – Nov. 4

Readings

- Reread “The Status of the Human Foetus,” p. 288 of textbook
- Fallacy 6

Study Q

HW: An argument that commits the fallacy of *argumentum ad populum*

Debate: An anencephalic newborn is not a moral patient.

Week 9: Nov. 7 - 10

Readings

- “Licensing Parents” by Hugh LaFollette [If the reading is not there, read “The Right to Have Children”, p. 407 of textbook, instead]
- Fallacy 7

Study Q

2. When, if ever, is it morally acceptable to sterilize a person against his or her will? (Do not consider criminals.)

HW: An argument that contains a faulty analogy

Debate: It is always immoral to sterilize someone against his or her will. (Do not consider criminals.)

Week 10: Nov. 14 – 18

Section 2 – do the work for Week 9

Readings

- “Informed Consent: Ethical Considerations for Physicians and Surgeons” by Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, p140 of textbook
- Fallacy 8 and 9

Study Q

4. Is it morally acceptable for a nurse to participate in a circumcision of a baby boy when the proxy decision-maker has chosen to have his or her baby circumcised? (Do not consider medical conditions that require circumcision.)

HW: An example of an argument that commits the fallacy of *Post Hoc Ergo Propter Hoc* and one that is an appeal to pity.

Debate: Winnipeg’s Riverview Health Centre did the morally right thing when it imposed a DNR order on Andrew Sawatzky, against his wife’s wishes.

Week 11: Nov. 21 - 25

Section 2 – do the work for Week 10

Readings

- CMA: “The Medical Record: Confidentiality, Access and Disclosure,” Section V of handout
- Fallacy 10

Study Q

5. Under what circumstances is it morally acceptable for a nurse to tell someone that a person he or she has had contact with or will have contact with is HIV positive? Why?

HW: An argument that presents a fallacious slippery slope.

Debate: If, after persistent efforts to deter an HIV positive sex worker from working, the worker continues to do so without notifying customers of his or her condition and without engaging in safe sex, then it is morally acceptable for the state to incarcerate the sex worker against his or her will.

Week 12: Nov. 28 – Dec. 2 Section 2 only – do the work for Week 11

Readings

- Chapter 19 of textbook
- fallacy 11

Study Q

6. Suggest one change to the CNA Code of Ethics which would improve the Code. Explain why the change is an improvement. (A trivial change will get a trivial mark!)

HW: Confusing correlation with causation.

Debate: Nurses are always morally obliged to abide by the Code because they have implicitly or explicitly promised to do so.

Week 13: Nov. 28 – Dec. 2

Note: Section 2 – do the work for Week 12

Sections 1, 3 and 4: Review class: review will be carried out on the basis of students' questions. Questions should be specific. That is, you may not ask me to go over a whole study question. Rather, you should ask for clarification of a specific point related to the question.

You may lose marks for making the following mistakes on exams

1. Do not use the first or second person. Here are two examples of the first person: “**We** cannot pass students who cannot use the English language adequately,” and “**I** cannot pass students who cannot use the English language adequately.” Here is an example of the second person: “**You** don’t realise that it is not our fault that we were not taught how to write in high school.” The following are examples of sentences written in the third person. “**People** cannot pass the buck forever.” “**One** will find that a style guide is essential in university.”
2. Do not ask rhetorical questions.
3. Do not use a pronoun which disagrees with the noun it refers to. (Students often make this mistake when they are trying to use gender neutral language - something you are advised to try to use.) You are advised that in many cases, pronoun disagreement can be avoided through the use of plural nouns. Here is an example of a sentence in which the pronoun disagrees with the noun: “**A philosopher** should not be so picky about English; **they** are not English teachers.” Here is the corrected version: “**Philosophers** should not be so picky about English; **they** are not English teachers.”
4. Do not confuse “its” with “it’s.” Since you are not allowed to use contractions, you should never use “it’s.”
5. Do not confuse “their” with “there.”
6. Do not add “ly” to “first,” “second” and so on.
7. Do not forget possessive apostrophes and do not put them in the wrong place.
8. Do not use abbreviations or a contractions.
9. Do not use “e. g.”; use “for example.”
10. Do not use “etc.”; use “and so on.”
11. Do not use “i.e.”; use “that is.” Better yet, say it clearly the first time.

This form must be handed in by the end of the day in which the participation took place. You may only hand in two of these forms so you must use your judgment on the matter of when you have made a verbal contribution for which you deserve marks which meet your grade ambitions. The grade on each form will be assessed by me.
Someone said, _____

I said, _____

Mark your participation on the following scale, 1 being equal to 1% and 3 being equal to 3%, and so on. Circle the appropriate number.

2%: Conciseness: .5 1 1.5 2

You get a maximum of 3% if your participation did one (and only one) of the following:

- a) Showed I had done the reading *carefully*: 1 2 3 b) Showed careful reasoning: 1 2 3
- c) Made an original connection between other material in this class: 1 2 3

Your judgment of your total out of 5%: ____% Mine (see other side of page for reasons): ____%
_____ Fold and tear here _____

Seminar Participation Form 2

This form must be handed in by the end of the day in which the participation took place. You may only hand in two of these forms so you must use your judgment on the matter of when you have made a verbal contribution for which you deserve marks which meet your goals. The grade on each form will be assessed by me.

Someone said, _____

I said, _____

Mark your participation on the following scale, 1 being equal to 1% and 3 being equal to 3%, and so on. Circle the appropriate number.

2%: Conciseness: .5 1 1.5 2

You get a maximum of 3% if your participation did one (and only one) of the following:

- a) Showed I had done the reading *carefully*: 1 2 3 b) Showed careful reasoning: 1 2 3
- c) Made an original connection between other material in this class: 1 2 3

Your judgment of your total out of 5%: ____% Mine (see other side of page for reasons): ____%