

Type of Request:

Renew

Subject code

PHL

Course Number

321

Catalog Year

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Course Title

Philosophy & Biomedical Ethics

College/School

College of Humanities and Sciences

Department

Philosophy

Level

Undergraduate (U)

Campus

Mountain Campus

Semesters offered

Intermittent

Description & Purpose

This course contributes to the objectives of general education at UM that are stated in the Preamble: "to develop competent and humane individuals who are informed, ethical, literate, and engaged citizens of local and global communities." It examines the moral dimensions of the health professions in select issues, including the professional-patient relationship, medical decisionmaking and caregiving, treatment obligations, caretaking at the end-of-life, assisted death, prenatal genetic testing, genetic modification, cloning and stem-cell research, human subjects research, and health care access. Numerous cases will be used to highlight moral issues.

Justification/explanation

This course meets these conditions.

Additional Information (For OCHE Database):

In which MUS Core Category, does this course fit?

Humanities/Fine Arts

Does the course include content regarding cultural heritage of American Indians?

No

Attachments

Syllabus

[PHL_321.syllabus.docx](#)

Other

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Criteria

Briefly explain how this course meets the criteria for the group:

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Courses focus on one or more of the specific traditions of ethical thought (either Western or non-Western), on basic ethical topics such as justice or the good life as seen through the lens of one or more traditions of ethical thought, or on a professional practice within a particular tradition of ethical thought.

In this course, students will develop a basic understanding of major traditions and theories of ethics, and will develop a basic understanding of a number of moral dimensions of health care and medical decisionmaking generally. Students will learn principles of medical ethics found within medical ethics literature and learn how to apply them in particular situations. They will also learn about the relationships between medical ethics and ethical values in the larger society.

Courses provide a rigorous analysis of the basic concepts and forms of reasoning which define the traditions, the ethical topics, or the professional practices that are being studied.

In addition to defining and analyzing the fundamental concepts that are central to various issues that arise in the health professions, this course also focuses on understanding and evaluating the arguments that are provided in support of various issues and concepts.

Student Learning Goals

Briefly explain how this course will meet the applicable general education learning goals.

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Correctly apply the basic concepts and forms of reasoning from the tradition or professional practice they studied to ethical issues that arise within those traditions or practices.

Students will be given the opportunity to apply the basic concepts and forms of reasoning they encounter in class readings and lectures in multiple ways, including interacting on a class Moodle discussion board, writing (and revising) a case study, and completing a midterm and final exam.

Analyze and critically evaluate the basic concepts and forms of reasoning from the tradition or professional practice they studied.

In addition to gaining an ability to apply correctly the basic concepts and forms of reasoning they encounter in class readings and lectures, students will be tasked with analyzing and criticizing these basic concepts and forms of reasoning, especially as part of their class Moodle discussion board posts and in the case study paper they complete. Questions will typically either ask for a close, rational reconstruction of a position or view, or ask students to clarify and critically examine the views which arise in the class readings and discussions.

Learning Outcomes Assessments

How are the learning goals for the General Education Group measured?

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Correctly apply the basic concepts and forms of reasoning from the tradition or professional practice they studied to ethical issues that arise within those traditions or practices.

Moodle posts, a case study paper, and exams are the primary means used to assess the degree to which students have learned to apply the basic concepts and forms of reasoning they encounter in class readings and discussions. For example, here is a question that students are given on the midterm exam that asks them to explain the debate surrounding whether or not to use anencephalic babies as organ donors. As part of their answers, students are asked to define utilitarianism and Kantian deontology (two central moral theories they have been exposed to) and then to reason morally about this debate by employing both theories.

1. There is a debate in medical ethics about whether to use anencephalic babies as organ donors. Anencephalic babies are born without an upper brain—there is only a brain stem to regulate the autonomic nervous system (heartbeat, respiration, etc.). They typically only live a short time, but by the time they die a natural death, their bodily organs have typically degenerated to the point of being unusable. Because of a severe shortage of organs for children, one option would be to define these babies as dead upon birth so that the organs from even a single baby could potentially the lives of several other children. Briefly define utilitarianism and then in a couple of sentences describe a utilitarian position on this issue. Then briefly define a deontological approach to ethics and briefly make an opposing argument based on a deontological perspective.

Analyze and critically evaluate the basic concepts and forms of reasoning from the tradition or professional practice they studied

Some of the assignments in this course include prompts that ask students to analyze and critically evaluate the basic concepts and forms of reasoning they encounter in the class readings and lectures. For example, here is a question that students are given on the final exam that asks them to explain prenatal genetic testing, then provide both moral justifications for making use of this kind of testing and objections to doing so. Good answers will draw on the different moral theories that students have been exposed to, and will indicate their understanding of some of the respects in which a given theory may fall short in what it can and cannot explain about a given moral situation.

3. Briefly describe three justifications for, and two objections to prenatal genetic testing. For full credit, one of the objections should be from the disability rights critique.

General Education Assessment Report

If this information is not yet available, this section must be completed after the next offering (re-submit the entire form with these sections completed by the curriculum deadline). Your course will be granted provisional status until the report is received. Report not required for one-time-only general education offerings.

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Achievement Targets

This course will next be taught in spring 2022. The instructor (Mark Hanson) will provide achievement targets, assessment findings, and assessment feedback immediately following the end of the spring semester.

Assessment Findings

See note in Achievement Targets.

Assessment Feedback

See note in Achievement Targets.

Learning Outcomes

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Credits

Credit Hours	
Min	Max
-	-
Value	Operator
-	-

Contact Hours	
Min	Max
-	-
Value	Operator
-	-

Billing Hours	
Min	Max
-	-
Value	Operator
-	-

Lecture Hours	
Min	Max
-	-
Value	Operator
-	-

Lab Hours	
Min	Max
-	-
Value	Operator
-	-

Other Hours	
Min	Max
-	-
Value	Operator
-	-

Academic Progress Hours	
Min	Max
-	-
Value	Operator
-	-

Financial Aid Hours	
Min	Max
-	-
Value	Operator
-	-

Course Count

-

Repeatable

No

Number Of Repeats

-

Number Of Credits

-

Topics

-

Requisites

No Requisites

Components

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