2016

312-01 Christian Health Care Ethics

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Ordinarily, I will respond to e-mail within 24 hours.  
Office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:00AM-11:30AM and 1:00PM-2:00PM. I am also happy to meet during regular university hours by appointment. Please e-mail me to set up a time.

Course Description

As an undergraduate level introduction to the sub-discipline of Christian Health Care Ethics, this course integrates lecture and active case discussion to deliver both the necessary theoretical grounding and the practical real-world skills of analysis sought by students. By providing an introduction to basic ethical theory and to various approaches to clinical ethical decision-making, the course will expose students to the ethical dimensions of clinical medicine and offer them the basic language and methodology with which to critically examine these dimensions. In considering contemporary ethical issues in the context of clinical biomedical ethics, the course will also engage practical issues that are specific to the clinical setting and to the professional-patient relationship such as patient confidentiality and the role of patient autonomy in relation to informed consent and to the limitations of treatment. Students will investigate these ethical and practical issues through in-class discussion and periodic written analysis of cases.

THEO 312 is part of the Xavier Core Curriculum, which seeks to address the whole person – intellectually, morally, and spiritually – and to shape students “by deepening their understanding, developing their abilities, and promoting openness and respect.” This course falls under the Ethics/Religion and Society (E/RS) component of the undergraduate core curriculum at Xavier, which serves to promote the ethical and religious analysis of socially significant issues from the perspectives of the humanities, social sciences, and sciences. (http://www.xavier.edu/ers/index.cfm) As a “Theological Perspectives” course, this course builds on and extends the methodology of “THEO 111: Theological Foundations”, which introduces students to the discipline of theology understood as a critical dialogue between Christian traditions and contemporary human experience and considers foundational religious and ethical questions concerning the meaning and value of human life. As a “Humanities Elective” course, this course engages ethical issues from an inter-disciplinary perspective.

Credit Hours: 3 Credits

Prerequisite: This course presumes the successful completion of “THEO 111 - Theological Foundations”

This course counts as a “Theological Perspectives” course, an E/RS elective, or a “Humanities Elective”.

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**Course Objectives and Student Learning Outcomes**

The overarching objectives of this course are, first, to familiarize students with the main methods and approaches to ethical reflection and judgment within the sub-discipline of contemporary Christian Health Care Ethics in order that, second, students might better understand how these approaches might be brought practically to bear on contemporary issues of ethical concern. In so doing, students will gain a deeper appreciation of the ethical resources of religious traditions (and more specifically, the Christian tradition) and how dialogue with these sources as well as with contemporary philosophical perspectives can serve to deepen one’s own practical ethical commitments and inform personal and collective moral action. Moreover, in engaging in critical theological reflection on ethical and religious questions of social significance, you will deepen your capacities for moral and religious insight and understanding while enlarging your moral capacities for a sense of justice and a sense of compassion. On completing this course, you will be able to:

1) Demonstrate a foundational understanding of significant texts, methods, and approaches in the discipline of contemporary Christian Health Care Ethics;
2) Analyze and explain the ways in which contemporary secular and religious ethical perspectives interact and inform one’s consideration of bioethical issues within the context of clinical medicine and healthcare;
3) Identify connections between sophisticated bioethical theories and their practical applications in real-world situations via the analysis of clinical cases;
4) Articulate the basic vocabularies, principles, and methodology of clinical bioethics;
5) Employ the analytical and normative tools of clinical bioethics to identify and to critically assess the multiple dimensions of bioethical issues in order to reach rationally defensible conclusions;
6) Develop analyses of case studies of contemporary bioethical issues; and
7) Formulate and appraise ethical arguments.

**Course Texts**

Nicanor Austriaco, *Biomedicine and Beatitude*. (Xavier Library E-Collection)

Lisa Cahill, *Theological Bioethics*. (Recommended but not required)


Helga Kuhse and Peter Singer, Eds., *A Companion to Bioethics*. (Xavier Library E-Collection)

Therese Lysaught et al., Eds. *On Moral Medicine: Theological Perspectives in Medical Ethics*. (Xavier Library E-Collection)

***Other course readings – including case studies – will be made available through Canvas (canvas.xavier.edu).

Course readings will typically be distributed via our course space in Canvas and by e-mail.
Course Requirements/Methodology and Grading

Course Medium: The course will run in a twice weekly lecture and discussion-intensive style format, and will integrate the reading/viewing, analysis, and discussion of texts, films, and other media.

Course Assignments and Responsibilities:

1/ Class Attendance, Class Preparation, and Class Participation

Class Attendance: As this is a discussion-intensive course (please see below under “Class Participation”) regular and punctual attendance is required and you will be expected to have prepared for lectures and class discussions through a careful consideration of the assigned readings. In order to be recorded as present for any particular class day, you must arrive punctually and be prepared to begin at the scheduled class start time. Tardiness without a reasonable excuse will constitute an unjustified class absence.

If you are unable to attend a scheduled class meeting for any reason, please notify me by e-mail in advance, whenever possible. If the absence is necessitated by personal illness, death in the immediate family, or duties performed for the University, you should seek an excused absence through the appropriate office and designated procedure as specified in the Student Handbook (http://www.xavier.edu/handbook/). Upon consultation with the instructor, you may be permitted to make up any course work missed as the result of the excused absence.

Unexcused absences for more than two classes will automatically result in a lowering of your grade by one (numerical) point per subsequent missed class, and more than three unexcused absences may result in automatic failure of the course. I will notify you in writing (i.e. by e-mail) once you have two unexcused absences.

Class Preparation: What does it meant to be “prepared” for this class? Carefully complete all of the assigned readings prior to coming to class, and take notes on the readings. The purpose of these notes is to allow you to participate fully in class discussion and to provide you with a study resource for exams. Whatever you read for a given day should be brought to class on that day. Successful class preparation depends on practicing good study habits. Here are a few suggestions:

1. Schedule a fixed period of time for class preparation.
2. Do your readings in an environment where you will be least distracted (e.g., in the library).
3. Preparation includes both reading and note-taking. Try to summarize that day’s readings in your own words, as though you were explaining the thesis of the reading selection to a friend who is not in the course. Your summary should include questions that you can raise during class discussion.
4. Discuss each day’s reading assignment with a friend in the class. After completing steps one through three, get together with a friend (at Starbucks or elsewhere) and compare your individual notes.

Readings: This is a reading-intensive course, so you should schedule your time to allow you to complete all of the assigned readings carefully. Diligent completion of assigned reading is an essential foundation for understanding class lectures, participating in class discussion, and for completing writing assignments. If you do not understand some part of the reading, please do not hesitate to e-mail me or to come to see me with questions.

When you read, keep the following questions in mind:

1. What are the most important points in the text? Why are they important?
2. Do you agree with the claims that the author is making? Why or why not?
3. Is there anything in the reading that you do not understand?
Class Participation: This is a discussion-intensive course. Given the nature of the class, participation in class discussion is essential. The goal of these discussions is to help you to better understand the readings and lectures, and also to provide you with practice in engaging these challenging ethical issues with others. Intensive class discussion provides you with ongoing opportunities to develop your abilities to think critically and to articulate and defend your particular point of view. This in turn requires an environment where everyone is willing to listen to and to rationally consider arguments that they may disagree with so that everyone feels comfortable to communicate their own views. Even though there may be divergent and even opposing opinions amongst us on different issues covered by the course, it is essential that you develop the intellectual and dialogical virtues to engage and to discuss such issues in a charitable and constructive way.

⇒ Regular class attendance, class preparation, and class participation will comprise 30% of your overall grade.

2/Exams: There will be two take-home written examinations in the course. The Take-Home Midterm Examination, which will be due (submitted via Canvas) by 5PM on Friday, October 14th, 2016, will cover the material that is treated in the first half of the course and it will comprise 30% of your overall grade; the Take-Home Final Examination for the course, which will cover the material that is treated over the entire course and will comprise 40% of your overall grade, will be due by 5PM on Friday, December 16th, 2016 (submitted via Canvas). The examinations, which will be comprised of short essay formats, will cover all of the assigned reading as well as the class lectures. The examinations will require you to synthesize and to apply what you have learned through class lectures and discussions. According to University policy, an unexcused absence (i.e., failure to electronically submit the examination by the submission deadline) for either the midterm or final examination will result in a student receiving a grade of no credit. The instructor and the student’s Dean will determine whether the cause of the absence is sufficient to permit a later re-administration of the examination.

⇒ The Midterm and Final Examinations will together comprise 70% of your overall grade.

Course Grading:

Class Preparation, Class Attendance, Class Participation 30%
Midterm Examination 30%
Final Examination 40%

My expectation is that you will observe the basic requirements of grammar and syntax in all of your written work. Aside from the basics of correct grammar and syntax, your overall performance will be assessed in relation to: 1) your overall comprehension of the material (apprehension and understanding of the facts, terms and concepts in the readings and class discussions); 2) your analysis of the material (the ability to understand the structure of and relationship between the parts of a given text); 3) your synthesis of the material (the ability to relate items of a given text or idea to other texts and ideas, creating new ideas in the process); 4) your overall contribution to class discussion; and 5) your clarity and charity of communication (your ability to communicate what you have comprehended, analyzed, and synthesized to others in a way that is respectful of differences in moral viewpoint or perspective). (For more on grading see, http://www.xavier.edu/theology-department/Grading-Policy.cfm )

In accordance with Academic Regulations, the following grading scale will be used:
Undergraduate Grading Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Quality Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Exceptional</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Failure</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VF</td>
<td>Failure to officially withdraw</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>Official withdraw</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Incomplete</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AU</td>
<td>Audit, no credit, no effect on GPA</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>Satisfactory, credit earned, no effect on GPA</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory, no credit earned, GPA is effected</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NC</td>
<td>No credit earned, non-graded</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NR</td>
<td>Not reported</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Incomplete Work - Undergraduates

Course assignments are due at the time specified by the instructor. Extension is time beyond the termination of the course is rarely granted and only for a serious reason. If an extension of time is granted, the grade of "I" (Undergraduate Incomplete) will be assigned and calculated as an "F" in the grade point average. Unless the work is completed and submitted by the fifteenth calendar day of the academic semester following the course, the student will fail the course and the "I" will be permanently changed to an "F" (summer term is excluded). Exceptions to this policy must be approved in writing by the appropriate dean prior to that date. The faculty member initiates the grade change process once the student has made up the incomplete work.
If the student is deferred for graduation due to a grade of "I" (Incomplete), he or she may be eligible for the original date of graduation. Work must be completed, graded and recorded within thirty days of that term's graduation date.

**Extra-Credit Opportunities**

There will be many opportunities to earn “Extra-Credit” throughout the course, and these opportunities will typically involve attending a campus event (e.g., the various lectures that are scheduled throughout the semester, including but not limited to the E/RS lecture series [http://www.xavier.edu/ers/lecture-series.cfm](http://www.xavier.edu/ers/lecture-series.cfm) and then submitting a written response (minimum 1 single-spaced page, 12 point font, 1-inch margins) which engages thoughtfully with the content of the event (interview, lecture, panel, film).

**Students with Special Needs**

Students with documented disabilities are entitled to reasonable accommodations as needed in accordance with general academic regulations. If you need accommodations, please contact me as soon as possible. Accommodations will not be granted retroactively.

**Academic Integrity Policy**

Please **cite your sources** on all assignments prepared outside of class (both papers and case studies). **Quoting or paraphrasing work without properly citing it constitutes plagiarism.** Plagiarism on an assignment will result in a failing grade for that assignment and possibly a failing grade for the semester. Cheating on an examination will likewise result in a failing grade for that assignment and possibly a failing grade for the semester.

**Grade Disclosure Policy**

It is a violation of federal law for me to communicate with you about your grades by e-mail or over the telephone; this constitutes a breach of privacy because these media are not fully secured. Grades will be provided in the report of academic achievement that is sent at the end of each term. Should you have questions about your grades, I would be pleased to speak with you personally after class or to make an appointment to meet with you at another time.

**Classroom Technology Policy**

We live in an age where technology is an integral part of many people’s lives. And while the educational use of technology brings with it many benefits, extensive studies have also shown that the recreational use of certain forms of technology (e.g., social networking tools) in the classroom setting can constitute a significant distraction and a hindrance to deep learning. **Accordingly, while our class will incorporate a variety of forms of learning media (written texts, film, video clips, music, art), our classroom will also be a “technology free zone” where the personal/recreational use of technology (cell/smart phones, I-Pads/tablets, laptop computers) in the classroom is not permitted.** Given how “plugged in” many of us are, this may prove a challenge to some, but I would encourage you to consider our class time as an opportunity for you to “unplug” from your everyday habits involving technology and to enter into a more reflective space.
SEQUENCE OF CLASS TOPICS (FA 2016)

Sequence of Course Topics:

1. Religion/Spirituality and the Context of Health Care
   a. Institutional Context of Health Care – Social Practice of Health Care
   b. Religion and Medicine/Theology and Bioethics
   c. Spirituality and Illness

2. Theoretical and Methodological Issues
   a. Ethical Approaches
   b. Normative Theories

3. Ethical Issues in Health Care

4. Principles of Health Care Practice
   a. Confidentiality
   b. Truth-telling
   c. Informed Consent and Patient Autonomy
   d. Patient Directives
   e. Ethics Committees

5. Justice in Healthcare
   a. Access to Healthcare
   b. Resource Allocation
   c. Global Bioethics (Public and Global Health)