

Medical Ethics (Phil 384)

Christopher Newport University, Spring 2023

Meeting Info	Dr. Chris Tweedt chris.tweedt@cnu.edu	PHIL 384 Sec. I Forbes 2027E, TR 4-5:15 pm
Office Hours	McMurrin 202 Tues., Thurs. 9:30-10:45 am, 12:30-1:15 pm	By appointment (704) 941-9079
Textbook	<i>Bioethics: Principles, Issues, and Cases</i> , by Lewis Vaughn All other readings will be hyperlinked below. If they're broken, check the Readings tab on Scholar or email me.	
Purpose	The purpose of this class is to help you <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. clearly and informedly think through ethical decisions in a clinical setting,2. gain an understanding of some arguments and viewpoints relevant to central medical ethics debates3. learn to discuss polarizing issues in a charitable and respectful manner, especially in the presence of strong disagreement, and4. develop the ability to charitably and accurately interpret, summarize, and critique philosophical arguments in the context of medical ethics.	
Overview	<p>The focus of this course is on value issues in medicine. The aspects of moral theory relevant to problems in medicine are treated, and recent biomedical technology is examined briefly to discover where value issues arise. The moral problems attending birth and death are treated, abortion and the beginning of human life, severe congenital defects, rights of the dying, the definition and the determination of death. Moral issues in the relation between the health care provider and the patient are treated: confidentiality, informed consent, how much the patient should be told, screening for genetic disease and experimenting with human subjects.</p> <p>The course is divided into three sections.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. First, we consider the goal of medical treatment: health. What is it? Should we, as clinical practitioners, try to promote it at all costs? Should we extend life indefinitely if we could? What is emotional health, and how is it achieved? What is the difference between therapy and enhancement? Should we care about what is natural to a patient, and how do we apply this in the case of patients in a PVS? Should we kill patients or assist in their death?2. Second, we compare results and rights as a basis for right action. We first consider the view that we should focus on results. We give arguments for and against the view and apply it to genetic engineering and privacy/confidentiality. We also consider what happens when physicians know better than patients what would result in better outcomes for patients. We then consider a rights focus, show how informed consent fits into the rights focus, and then apply the rights focus to lying and deception in a clinical context.3. Last, we address difficult choices in a medical context. We cover moral dilemmas and the doctrine of double effect as ways of making these difficult choices, then we apply the theories discussed so far to address difficult decisions that arise when others make decisions for patients, when deciding whether to end the life of the unborn, when choosing whether to enter into business deals, and how to acquire knowledge when that acquisition conflicts with one's obligation to treat.	

Schedule

Week	Topic, Reading, Cases
Aug 22	Introduction to Philosophy & the Course, Facts & Opinions KevinMD, "A rude awakening for many medical students" AI and the Value of Physicians Hippocratic Oath, ancient version Hippocratic Oath, modern version
The Goal of Treatment: Health	
Aug 24	What is Health? WHO, definition of health Boorse, "On the distinction between disease and illness" Engelhardt's "The Disease of Masturbation: Values and the Concept of Disease" Case 1 , Case 2
Aug 29	Physical Health: Life Extension Minds, "If you're alive in 30 years, it's likely you will be alive in 1000 years" The Verge, "Elon Musk launches Neuralink, a venture to merge the human brain with AI" Joe Rogan's interview with Elon Musk Case 3 , Case 4
Aug 31	Emotional Health: Virtue Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics Book I, Chs. 1-3, 5, 7, 9, 13; Book II, Ch. 1. Aristotle's Nichomachean Ethics Book IV (Sample each chapter; each is about a virtue) Beauchamp and Childress on virtue Daniel Sokol's "Doctors shouldn't reveal so much" Case 5 , Case 6
Sep 5	Emotion Management: Stoicism Epictetus' Enchiridion, Chs. 1-21 Aeon, "Against Mourning" How to be a Stoic, "Seneca on Anger Pt. 1" Case 7 , Case 8
Sep 7	Beyond Treatment: Therapy v. Enhancement U.S. Bioethics Counsel, "Distinguishing Therapy and Enhancement" Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology News, "Therapy and Enhancement: Is there a moral difference?" The Atlantic, "A new way to be mad" (See "Readings" in Scholar if behind paywall) Johnston & Elliott's "Healthy limb amputation: ethical and legal aspects" Washington Post article on age fluidity Case 9 , Case 10
Sep 12	Natural v. Unnatural: Natural Law Theory Besong's <i>An Introduction to Ethics: A Natural Law Approach</i>, Ch. 3 Aquinas' <i>Summa Theologica</i> I-II.19-21 (McDermott trans.) No cases for today

Sep 14	Discontinuing Treatment: PVS Ronald Munson, "Terri Schiavo" Case 11 , Case 12
Sep 19	Killing: Euthanasia, Physician-Assisted Suicide Vaughn, 551-564 AMA's Statement on PAS James Rachels, "Active and passive euthanasia" (Vaughn, 678-681) Daniel Callahan, "When self-determination runs amok" (Vaughn, 658-662) Ronald Munson, "Jack Kevorkian: Moral Leader or Doctor Death?" Case 13 , Case 14
Sep 21	Review
Sep 26	Test I
Outcomes v. Rights	
Sep 28	Focus on Results: Utilitarianism Vaughn, 39-54 Mill's Utilitarianism (Vaughn 60-61) Current Affairs, "Now Singer argues it might be okay to rape disabled people" Case 15 , Case 16
Oct 3	Choosing What Kind of People Get to Live: Genetic Engineering Vaughn, 466-481 BioSpace's Report: CRISPR is currently being used to modify human fetuses Simonstein and Mashiach-Eizenberg, "Attitudes toward Autism spectrum disorders among students of allied health professions" McMahan's "The Morality of Screening for Disability" (Vaughn, 494-498) Glannon, "Genetic Enhancement" (Vaughn, 524-528) Pontifical Academy's Statement on use of embryonic stem cells (Vaughn, 549-550) Case 17 , Case 18
Oct 5	Public v. Private Goods: Privacy/Confidentiality Vaughn, 173-177 James Rachels, "Why privacy is important" (Vaughn, 186-191) Daniel Sokol's "Is doctor-patient confidentiality dying a slow death?" Mark Siegler, "Confidentiality in Medicine, a decrepit concept" (Vaughn, 192-195) Tarasoff v. Regents of the University of California (Vaughn, 195-199) [HIPAA guide: Federal guide to privacy of patient information] Case 19 , Case 20
Oct 10	No Class: Fall break
Oct 12	When Patients Don't Know What's Best: Paternalism v. Autonomy Vaughn, 98-104 Terrence Ackerman, "Why doctors should intervene" (Vaughn, 126-131) Robert Schwartz, "Autonomy, Futility, the Limits of Medicine" (Vaughn, 131-135) Case 21 , Case 22
Oct 17	Patient Rights: Deontology & Principlism – The Pillars of Medical Ethics

Vaughn, 9-13
Kant's Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals (Vaughn, 61-67)
No cases today

Oct 19	Permission and Entitlement-Lifting: Informed Consent Vaughn, 200-207 Canterbury v. Spence (Vaughn, 234-237) Case 23 , Case 24
Oct 24	Trust and Entitlement to Expectations: Lying and Deception Vaughn, 170-173 Cullen and Klein, "Respect for Patients, Physicians, and the Truth" Lipkin, "On Telling Patients the Truth" (Vaughn, 181-182) Schwartz, "Is it ever okay to lie to patients?" (Vaughn, 183-186) Case 25 , Case 26
Oct 26	Review
Oct 31	Test 2 *First audio case study due by midnight
How to Make Difficult Choices in a Medical Context	
Nov 2	When Choices Have Bad Outcomes: Moral dilemmas, Doctrine of Double Effect Beauchamp and Childress on moral dilemmas Vaughn, 46-47 Case 27 , Case 28
Nov 7	When Others Make Decisions for Patients: Proxies' Decisions "Bouvia v Superior Court" (Vaughn, 104-105 [156-160]) AMA Council on Ethical and Judicial Affairs, "Fundamental Elements of the Patient-Physician Relationship" (Vaughn 161) Ronald Munson, "Faith and Medicine" Washington Post, "The dying child who became an ideological football" The Catholic Weekly's "Charlie Gard will die. But is it murder?" Case 29 , Case 30
Nov 9	Deciding to Kill the Unborn 1: Reasons against the Permissibility of Abortion Vaughn, 307-316 Calum Miller, "Why be pro-life?" Case 31 , Case 32
Nov 14	Deciding to Kill the Unborn 2: Reasons for the Permissibility of Abortion Thompson's "A defense of abortion" (Vaughn, 323-334) Giubilini and Minerva's "After-birth Abortion: Why Should the Baby Live?" Roe v. Wade (Vaughn, 378-383) Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization No cases today

Nov 16

Conflicts of Interest in Medical Practice: The Corporate Practice of Medicine
[NPR, "Drug company payments mirror doctors' brand-name prescribing"](#)
[National Institutes of Health, "Conflicts of Interest and Medical Practice," Ch. 6](#)
[Case 33, Case 34](#)

Nov 21

Conflicts between Medical Goals: Medical Research on Humans

Vaughn, 238-250

[NYT, "Patients lose sight after stem cells are injected in their eyes"](#) (See "Readings" in Scholar if behind paywall)

[Munson, "From Vioxx to the ASR Implant"](#)

Nuremberg Code, Declaration of Helsinki, Belmont Report (Vaughn, 258-265)

[Case 35, Case 36](#) ("Research and Medicine Collide in Haiti," Vaughn, 254-255)

Nov 23

No Class: Thanksgiving Break

Nov 28

Review

Nov 30

Test 3 *Second audio case study due by final exam time

Assessments: 500 points total

3 Tests 100 points each	Tests focus on content from the most recent part of class. Tests will be taken over Scholar's testing software in class. Format will vary; I'll describe each test's format in class. You do not get points just for trying. You need to show me you know the answer. Test dates are on the schedule above.
10 Case Papers 10 points each	10 case papers are due only during class times for which there are cases. Papers must answer all questions for both cases for the day. Papers must contain no more than 200 words per case. Papers resemble lab write-ups. I will describe how to write your papers in class. Papers will be graded only on insight or thoughtfulness in your answers. Papers are due before the start of each class, uploaded to Scholar. You get an automatic 0/100 on all papers if you plagiarize on one paper.
2 Audio Case Studies 50 points each	Must be in an audio format, maximum 3 minutes, delivered to me electronically. The first part must contain a description of an ethically difficult medical case you've found. The second part must contain an analysis using what we learned in class. <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What is the action you are evaluating?2. Who is affected by your possible actions, and how?3. What should you do, and why?4. How could someone rationalize acting differently?5. Why is the rationalization incorrect? Students will only be graded on depth and accuracy, not smoothness. Due dates are on the schedule. Students can opt to do more other research instead by agreement.

A	500-460	B+	449-440	C+	399- 390	D+	349-340
A-	459-450	B	439-410	C	389-360	D	339-310
F	299-0	B-	409-400	C-	359-350	D-	309-300

University Syllabus Statements:

Honor Code	<p>By being enrolled in this class, each student is expected to read, understand, and abide by the CNU's honor code. CNU reserves the right to penalize any student whose academic conduct at any time is, in its judgment, detrimental to the University. This conduct includes plagiarism, collusion, cheating, giving or receiving or offering or soliciting information in examinations, the use of AI or LLMs for assignments, or the use of previously prepared material in examinations or quizzes.</p> <p>Class Policy: You'll receive an automatic F in the course if you display any of the conduct in the above paragraph. The purpose of these assessments is to test your knowledge. If you provide other students with the questions or answers, it undermines the testing process. If you have someone or something else do your work, it does not show me what you know. If you discover someone sharing questions and report it to me, I will buy you ice cream or a dairy-free equivalent. Also, I'll report all seeming-plagiarism to CHECS and give the seeming-plagiarizer a 0 for the course. I won't argue with you whether you did it intentionally. We all know how that will go. You'll argue that you didn't mean to do it, just like people who do it intentionally argue. So I'm not even going to ask. Please be intentional about not doing it.</p>
Copyright, Permissions	<p>All content created and assembled by the faculty member and used in this course is to be considered intellectual property owned by the faculty member and Christopher Newport University. It is provided solely for the private use of the students currently enrolled in this course. To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas, students may not make available any of the original course content, including but not limited to lectures, discussions, videos, handouts, and/or activities, to anyone not currently enrolled in the course without the advance written permission of the instructor. This means that students may not record, download, screenshot, or in any way copy original course material for the purpose of distribution beyond this course. A violation may be considered theft. It is the student's responsibility to protect course material when accessing it outside of the physical classroom space.</p>
Disability, Accommodation	<p>In order for a student to receive an accommodation for a disability, that disability must be on record in the Office of Student Affairs, 3rd Floor, David Student Union (DSU). If you believe that you have a disability, please contact Jacquelyn Barnes, Student Disability Support Specialist in Student Affairs (594-7160) to discuss your needs.</p> <p>Students with documented disabilities are to notify the instructor at least seven days prior to the point at which they require an accommodation (the first day of class is recommended), in private, if accommodation is needed. The instructor will provide students with disabilities with the reasonable accommodations approved and directed by the Office of Student Affairs. Work completed before the student notifies the instructor of his/her disability may be counted toward the final grade at the sole discretion of the instructor.</p>
Academic Support	<p>I want you to succeed in this course and at Christopher Newport. I encourage you to contact me during office hours or to schedule an appointment to discuss course content or to answer questions you have. During the Coronavirus pandemic, our conversations may need to be via electronic means. If I become concerned about your course performance, attendance, engagement, or well-being, I will contact you first. I also may submit a referral through our Captains Care Program. The referral will be received by the Center for Academic Success as well as other departments when appropriate (Counseling Services, Office of Student Engagement). If you are an athlete, the Athletic Academic Support Coordinator will be notified. Someone will contact you to help determine what will help you succeed. Please remember that this is a means for me to support you and help foster your success at Christopher Newport.</p> <p>The Center for Student Success (CSS) provides numerous free resources to help students succeed in their courses. These resources include individual peer tutoring and group/test review sessions. The Center also houses the Alice F. Randall Writing Center. Writing consultants can help you at any stage of the writing process, from invention to development of ideas, to polishing a final draft.</p> <p>You may contact the Center for Student Success to request a tutor, meet with a writing consultant, or make an appointment to talk with a staff member about study skills and strategies. The Center is located in Christopher Newport Hall, first floor, room 124. You may email studentsuccess@cnu.edu, call (757) 594-7684, or visit https://my.cnu.edu/academicsuccess/.</p>
Diversity, Inclusion	<p>The Christopher Newport University community engages and respects different viewpoints, understands the cultural and structural context in which those viewpoints emerge, and questions the development of our own perspectives and values, as these are among the fundamental tenets of a liberal arts education.</p>

Accordingly, we affirm our commitment to a campus culture that embraces the full spectrum of human attributes, perspectives, and disciplines, and offers every member of the University the opportunity to become their best self.

Understanding and respecting differences can best develop in a community where members learn, live, work, and serve among individuals with diverse worldviews, identities, and values. We are dedicated to upholding the dignity and worth of all members of this academic community such that all may engage effectively and compassionately in a pluralistic society.

If you have specific questions, suggestions or concerns regarding diversity on campus please contact Diversity.Inclusion@CNU.edu

Public Health

The university will provide guidance on public health issues, and students will be expected to comply with university protocols.