

Morality and Medicine (HPS 0613)

Fall 2020

Tuesday, Thursday 1:15PM-2:30PM
Carnegie Music Hall 00 Auditorium

Instructor: Dana Matthiessen
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Office hours: Online by Zoom, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:30AM-12:30PM
Claim a 15 minute slot using “Find Appointments” on Canvas calendar
Or drop in (you may to wait), or email for alternate time
Office hours will be held using Zoom: <https://pitt.zoom.us/j/7784657942>

Ethical dilemmas in the practice of health care continue to proliferate and receive increasing attention from members of the health care profession, ethicists, policy makers, and the general public as health care consumers. In this course we will examine a number of ethical issues that arise in the context of contemporary medical practice and research by analyzing articles and decision scenarios. Topics to be covered typically include the physician-patient relationship; informed consent; medical experimentation; termination of treatment; genetics; reproductive technologies; euthanasia; resource allocation; and health care reform.

Objectives: Students who successfully complete this course will be able to...

- Identify and analyze different philosophical approaches to selected issues in medical ethics.
- Have gained insight into how to read and critically interpret philosophical arguments.
- Have developed skills that will enable them to think clearly about ethical questions as future or current health care providers, policy makers, and consumers.

This course is part of a core sequence leading to certification in the Conceptual Foundations of Medicine Certificate Program and is a companion course to HPS 0612 (Mind and Medicine) but may be taken independently. The course is of particular interest to pre-medical and pre-health care students.

Readings

All course readings will be made available on Canvas or from links in this syllabus.

Please note that this is a reading-focused course. Students will be expected to arrive at class having digested the assigned readings enough that they can contribute to possible discussion and ask informed questions. Do not despair! Do your best to grasp the gist of the texts, bring your notes and readings to class, and we will work together in class to clarify and synthesize the material for that week. You are strongly encouraged to consult some of the guides on reading philosophy available online, such as...

Hugh Wilder, “How to Read Philosophy” myweb.facstaff.wvu.edu/wasserr/114/how_to_read.pdf
 Russo, “Reading a philosophical text” sophia-project.org/uploads/1/3/9/5/13955288/rosso_reading.pdf

Operational postures and COVID-related classroom adjustments

The university has defined the following “operational postures” as guides for how students and faculty are to conduct themselves during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. You can find which posture is currently adopted at the Pittsburgh campus at www.coronavirus.pitt.edu/operational-postures. Below are the instructions for each posture and a brief explanation of how classes will be conducted.

During any of these phases, virtual attendance and participation will be available for all students who are not able to attend in person via the following Zoom link:

<https://pitt.zoom.us/j/96954854951>

Meeting ID: 969 5485 4951

Password: m&m20

All materials will be available in the “Files” folder for each week on the Canvas page. Any in-class hand-outs will also be available as editable documents in the corresponding “Assignments” folder.

Operational Posture	STUDENTS	FACULTY AND STAFF
GUARDED RISK Meets Minimum Standards of PA Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most instruction is in person, except large lectures • Housing open with virus mitigation and isolation interventions in place • Shared spaces open • Gatherings capped at 250 people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work from home encouraged wherever possible • Those who need to support permitted activities allowed on campus • Research staff on campus based on Principal Investigator determination
• Most activities are in person, with virtual options and limited restriction		
ELEVATED RISK Meets Minimum Standards of PA Yellow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruction primarily virtual; some in-person learning occurring • Housing open with virus mitigation and isolation interventions in place • Some shared spaces open • Gatherings capped at 25 people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work from home encouraged wherever possible • Those who need to support permitted activities allowed on campus • Virtual work encouraged for research personnel; some permitted on campus
• Some activities are in person, but most are virtual		
HIGH RISK Meets Minimum Standards of PA Red	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruction nearly all virtual, except select clinicals and labs • Housing open with virus mitigation and isolation interventions in place • Shared spaces open only to support on-campus students and staff • Campus life activities not permitted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work from home encouraged wherever possible • Those who need to support permitted activities allowed on campus • Research as permitted by senior leadership
• Pitt is open, but activities are heavily restricted		

Class will be conducted with the option that all students who are able can attend the class in person. Lecturing or guidance of class discussion will be primarily done in person, but virtual access will be made available.

Office hours/contact: as above.

Lecturing and discussion will be entirely virtual.

Office hours/contact: as above.

Lecturing and discussion will be entirely virtual.

Office hours/contact: as above.

See the grading and assignment schedule section below to note how participation and assessment may change under different operating postures.

NOTE: If I am not able to instruct the class in person during the “guarded” or “elevated” posture, say, due to a need to self-quarantine, then I will either (1) appear on a screen in the room and conduct the class, or (2) team teach with another instructor who will be present.

Grading and assignment schedule (more info in “Assignments” folder on Canvas)

- **Week four video and active reading assignment: 10% (submit by the beginning of class Sept 8)**
 - o For the second week of class, students are required to either print the reading assignment by Rachels and bring in notes taken while actively reading the text, or submit photographs or a digital version of notes via the assignment page on Canvas (5%).
 - Note-taking should strive to identify and label the main thesis of the paper, identify components of the argument supporting this thesis—supporting claims for the thesis and the primary lines of evidence/argumentation meant to back them up—and record any points of confusion or critical comments the student has in response to specific points or terminology in the paper (e.g., written in the margins).
 - The note-taking may be on the reading assignment itself (encouraged), or on a separate piece of paper, which properly identifies the parts of the paper each note refers to.
 - o In addition, students will be required to complete a brief written assignment in response to the documentary, *How to Die in Oregon* (5%).
- **Reading responses and course participation: 40% (every week after Aug 25)**
 - o Being able to engage in reasoned interpersonal discourse is crucial to skillful reflection on the kind of complex issues we will encounter in class. With that in mind, I have arranged the course to emphasize discussion. While I will provide some framing and moderation, my aim is for a good portion of the class content to be generated by the questions and interests that come from student participants, either through in-class discussion or through use of the course’s online discussion board.
 - o Starting on August 25, I will ask students to prepare and submit (via email) a brief *analytical comment* each week. This should isolate what the student considers a central claim in one assigned text. In response to this claim the student will (1) provide at least one reason that the author gives in support of this claim, (2) state whether or not they agree, and (3) provide a supporting reason for their dis/agreement. *Consult the hand-out for this assignment for guidance on what counts as a supporting reason and what does not (e.g., “because that’s just how I feel” or “because my parents said so” do not count).*
 - Except for special circumstances, students are required to submit these before class via . Since I will not be taking attendance, they serve as a proxy for their being “in” class.
 - These will be given a grade of either 2 (fully complete), 1 (part incomplete), or 0 (significantly incomplete). Ten responses will be graded. Students can hand in

more if they like and the ten best scores will be counted. If fewer than ten are submitted, the remainder will be given a score of 0.

- The remaining 20 participation points will be given in ½ point increments based on substantive contributions to in-person or online discussion, attendance of office hours, and other clear signs of engagement with the content of the course. *Note: to enhance discussion it may be useful to have a way to access the papers during class time.*
 - To enable online discussion, I will create a new topic for each reading assignment every week in the “Discussions” section of the course Canvas page. Students are encouraged to respond to the article by posting comments, questions, or criticisms, or by responding to other students’ posts.
 - A substantive contribution is on topic, does not simply repeat previous remarks or your reading response, and is something that gives some supporting reasons or context, rather than a single sentence or utterance. A few more guidelines will be provided in a pinned post on the discussion board.
 - If these forms of participation are difficult for you, please contact me and we can work out an alternative way to earn credit, including the following:
 - Additional active reading assignments.
 - Sending me an email with an article that is relevant to our weekly reading, along with your thoughts on its contents.
 - A more detailed version of the analytical comment assignment, that includes additional criticisms or raises a “big picture” question or comment with respect to the reading.
 - Directly emailing me with questions or comments regarding the ideas and debates discussed in class.
 - Something else.
- **Unit quizzes: 20% (complete online before 11:59PM on the Monday before each new unit)**
 - For units 2-5; these will be a mixture of short answer questions meant to demonstrate understanding of the material covered in each unit.
 - Tests will be made available in the “Quizzes” section on Canvas after the last class of each unit. Tests will be open book, but time constrained, so some prep is important.
- **Second video response: 10% (submit by the beginning of class Nov 10)**
 - Students are required to submit a written assignment in response to the documentary, *Care: Care Workers, Their Clients, and a Coming Crisis*.
- **Final short paper: 20% (email by 5:00pm Dec 3)**
 - Every student will be required to submit a 1200-1500 word essay at the end of term.
 - The topic will be of their own design, but should engage with some of the issues, literature, and/or ethical frameworks covered during the course.
 - We will schedule meetings during the second half of the term to help plan these papers.

NOTE: If you find yourself struggling with the course material or are concerned about your grade, please act sooner than later. Come to office hours and we will work to identify the source of your difficulties and improve your understanding of tricky subjects.

A note on classroom discussion

All students are encouraged to ask questions, raise points of concern, and contribute their own knowledge and reflections whenever they can. We will be surveying a wide range of material, much of which I am not an expert in, and I expect there is a great deal we can learn by hearing what each other thinks and picks up from the readings. Ample space will be given for discussions of this sort.

It is paramount that everyone maintain a respectful attitude toward one another during these discussions. It may be that certain topics will grip you and generate enthusiasm that can lead to heightened emotions and even intellectual controversy, but this is absolutely no excuse to disparage, dismiss, talk over, or otherwise disrespect your fellow classmates. Any abusive, bigoted, or harassing behavior or language will not be tolerated. Any students who are experiencing behavior that is affecting their ability to concentrate and learn or otherwise have concerns about social dynamics of the class are strongly encouraged to contact me privately, and we will figure out how to best resolve the issue.

NOTE: in order to make the class maximally accessible to those who can't attend due to illness, time zone differences, and the like, I am expected to record the Zoom component of each class. That means any participation (by speaking or posting a question in chat) will be recorded. If you do not want to be recorded, you can choose to be silent (if attending in person) or mute your video and mic (if attending virtually). If you have any questions or concerns about this, please feel free to voice them to me at any time.

Health and Safety Statement

In the midst of this pandemic, it is extremely important that you abide by public health regulations and University of Pittsburgh health standards and guidelines. While in class, at a minimum this means that you must wear a face covering and comply with physical distancing requirements; other requirements may be added by the University during the semester. These rules have been developed to protect the health and safety of all community members. Failure to comply with these requirements will result in you not being permitted to attend class in person and could result in a Student Conduct violation. For the most up-to-date information and guidance, please visit coronavirus.pitt.edu and check your Pitt email for updates before each class.

Writing center

I encourage all of you to take advantage of the Writing Center, located at 317B O'Hara Student Center. For information about the center, visit: www.writingcenter.pitt.edu
You can easily make an appointment with a writing consultant online.

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.

Disability services

If you have a disability that requires special testing accommodations or other classroom modifications, you need to notify both the instructor and Disability Resources and Services no later than the second week of the term. You may be asked to provide documentation of your disability to determine the appropriateness of accommodations. To notify Disability Resources and Services, call (412) 648-7890 (Voice or TTD) to schedule an appointment. The Disability Resources and Services office is located in 140 William Pitt Union on the Oakland campus.

Email communication policy

Each student is issued a University e-mail (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. The university provides an e-mail forwarding service that allows students to read their e-mail via other service providers (e.g., Hotmail, AOL, Yahoo). Students that choose to forward their e-mail from their pitt.edu address to another address do so at their own risk. If e-mail is lost as a result of forwarding it does not absolve the student from responding to official communications sent to their University e-mail address. To forward e-mail sent to your University account, go to <http://accounts.pitt.edu>, log into your account, click on Edit Forwarding Addresses, and follow the instructions on the page. Be sure to log out of your account when you have finished. (For the full E-mail Communication Policy, please go to www.bc.pitt.edu/policies/policy/09/09-10-01.html.)

Copyright notice

Course materials may be protected by copyright. United States copyright law, 17 USC section 101, et seq., in addition to University policy and procedures, prohibit unauthorized duplication or retransmission of course materials. See Library of Congress Copyright Office and the University Copyright Policy.

Statement on additional 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.

A note on Title IX

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, etc. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources at <https://www.titleix.pitt.edu/resources> (Please note that faculty and staff are considered required reporters—this means that if you disclose to me, or another employee of Pitt, that you have been a victim of sexual violence we have the obligation to report the situation. My report does not mean that you are officially reporting the incident – rather, this process is in place so that our schools can make sure you are able to receive the support and resources you need. Additional information may be found at the following website (including confidential sources on and off campus): <https://www.titleix.pitt.edu/resources/university-and-community-resources>

Course schedule

Note: readings for each day are marked with a bullet point. Readings marked *Recommended* are not required, but help round out a topic if you have time for them. All readings without links are available Canvas. If there are multiple assignments, I've chosen them so they do not take up more reading time than a single long one. In general, journalism articles do not need to be read as closely.

Thursday 8/20: Introduction to Ethics

Unit One: Personal Reasoning and Health-related Decision-making

Tuesday 8/25: Basics of argument analysis; moral choices during COVID-19

- Yascha Mounk, "Four theories for why people are still out partying"
- Alison Hills, "'Can I sunbathe in the park?' is now a deep moral question" (<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/apr/10/sunbathing-park-deep-moral-questions-philosophers-coronavirus-individual>)
- Keisha Ray, "Going Back to School During a Global Pandemic: A Case Study"

Thursday 8/27: The patient-doctor relation: consent and autonomy

- The Hippocratic Oath
- Julian Savulescu, "Autonomy, the Good Life, and Controversial Choices"
- Karen Stohr, "Is it okay to protest during a pandemic?" (<https://www.washingtonian.com/2020/06/04/is-it-ok-to-protest-during-a-pandemic-the-coronavirus-ethicist-has-the-answer/>)

Unit Two: The End and Beginning of Life

Tuesday 9/1: Death in the era of life-sustaining medicine

- Stuart Youngner, “The Definition of Death”
- Samantha Stein and Justin Clapp, “Death during COVID-19: Redefining terminal illness” (<https://blogs.bmj.com/medical-ethics/2020/06/08/death-during-covid-19-redefining-terminal-illness/>)
- *Recommended:* Rachel Aviv, “What Does it Mean to Die?”

Thursday 9/3: End-of-life decisions and the good death

- Timothy Quill, “Death and Dignity”
- Zehra Edison, “Negotiating the ‘Good Death’: Saying Goodbye in the Time of COVID-19”
- Melanie Smith et al., “‘You Can See Your Loved One Now.’ Can Visitor Restrictions During Covid Unduly Influence End-of-Life Decisions?” (<https://www.thehastingscenter.org/you-can-see-your-loved-one-now-can-visitor-restrictions-in-the-covid-era-unduly-influence-end-of-life-decision-making/>)

Tuesday 9/8: Euthanasia

- Watch over weekend and complete video response assignment: *How to Die in Oregon* (<https://tubitv.com/movies/310499/how-to-die-in-oregon>)
- Read and do active reading assignment: James Rachels, “Active and Passive Euthanasia”

Thursday 9/10: Euthanasia, cont.

- Daniel Callahan, “When Self-Determination Runs Amok”
- John Lachs, “When Abstract Moralizing Runs Amok”

Tuesday 9/15: Abortion

- Don Marquis, “Why Abortion is Immoral”

Thursday 9/17: Abortion, cont.

- Judith Thomson, “A Defense of Abortion”
- Jia Tolentino, “Interview With a Woman Who Recently Had an Abortion at 32 Weeks” (<https://jezebel.com/interview-with-a-woman-who-recently-had-an-abortion-at-1781972395>)

Tuesday 9/22: Pregnancy and birthing ethics

- Jennifer Torres and Raymond De Vries, “Birthing Ethics”

Thursday 9/24: Pregnancy, cont.

- Quill (Rebecca) Kukla, “The Ethics and Cultural Politics of Reproductive Risk Warnings”
- Marielle Gross et al., “Rethinking ‘Elective’ Procedures for Women’s Reproduction during Covid-19”

Unit Three: Disability and Health Care (complete unit two quiz by end of Monday!)

Tuesday 9/29: Disability and “quality of life”

- Timothy Murphy, “Deaf Culture and Babies”
- Elizabeth Barnes, “Valuing Disability, Causing Disability”

Thursday 10/1: Disability and childbirth

- GUEST SPEAKER: Tal Levin-Decanini (Ethics consultant for UPMC Children’s Hospital)
- Adrienne Asch, “Prenatal Diagnosis and Selective Abortion: A Challenge to Practice and Policy”
- *Recommended:* Tal Levin-Decanini, Amy Houtrow, Aviva Katz, “The Evolution of Spina Bifida Treatment Through a Biomedical Ethics Lens”

Tuesday 10/6: Disability and quality of care

- Havi Carel and Ian Kidd, “Epistemic injustice in healthcare: a philosophical analysis”
- Shelley Tremain, “COVID-19 and the Naturalization of Vulnerability”
(<https://biopoliticalphilosophy.com/2020/04/01/covid-19-and-the-naturalization-of-vulnerability/>)

Thursday 10/8: Genetic modification

- Nicholas Agar, “There is a Legitimate Place for Human Genetic Enhancement”
- Edwin Black, “Reply to Agar”

Unit Four: Health Care Disparities and Race (complete unit three quiz by end of Monday!)

Tuesday 10/13: Stereotyping

- David Wasserman, “Is Racial Profiling More Benign in Medicine Than Law Enforcement?”
- *Recommended:* Diana Burgess, Steven Fu, Michelle van Ryn, “Why Do Providers Contribute to Disparities and What Can Be Done About It?”

Thursday 10/15: From clinical to public health perspectives

- Onora O’Neill, “Public Health or Clinical Ethics: Thinking beyond Borders”
- *At least read highlights:* Center for Reproductive Rights, “Racial and Gender Discrimination in U.S. Healthcare”

Tuesday 10/20: Understanding racial disparities

- Dorothy Roberts, “Debating the Cause of Health Disparities: Implications for Bioethics and Racial Equality”
- *Recommended:* David William et al, “Racism and Health: Evidence and Needed Research”

Thursday 10/22: Ongoing health crises and social determinants

- Merlin Chowkwanyun and Adolph Reed Jr., “Racial Health Disparities and Covid-19—Caution and Context”
- Linda Villarosa, “Pollution is Killing Black Americans. This Community Fought Back.”

- *Recommended:* Olúfẹ́mi Táíwò, “Coronavirus lays bare the staggering class inequalities that divide America” (<https://theappeal.org/coronavirus-lays-bare-the-staggering-class-inequalities-that-divide-america/>)
- *Recommended:* Christopher Flavelle, “Climate Change Tied to Pregnancy Risks, Affecting Black Mothers Most”

Unit Five: Research, Resources, and Political/Economic Dimensions of Health Care (quiz by Mon!)

Tuesday 10/27: Research ethics, failures and precautions

- James Jones, “The Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment”
- *Recommended:* William Haseltine, “Human COVID 19 Vaccine Trials Are Unnecessary, Uninformative, and Unethical”
- *Recommended:* Kyle Ferguson and Arthur Caplan, “Accepting the Challenge: Covid Vaccine Trials Can Be Ethically Justified”

Thursday 10/29: Further challenges for human research

- Samuel Hellman and Deborah Hellman, “Of Mice But Not Men: Problems of the Randomized Control Trial”
- *At least skim:* Oonagh Corrigan, “Empty ethics: the problem with informed consent”
- *Recommended:* Michael Keane, “CoViD-19: Time to rethink the RCT and consider more efficient and ethical approaches to clinical knowledge acquisition”

Tuesday 11/3: Triage and allocation of scarce medical resources

- Ezekiel Emanuel et al., “Fair Allocation of Scarce Medical Resources in the Time of Covid-19”
- Harald Schmidt, “The Way We Ration Ventilators is Biased”
- Kathleen Moore, “My Husband Would Not Survive a Triage Decision”

Thursday 11/5: Public policy and health

- H. Orri Stefánsson, “Three Mistakes in the Moral Reasoning About the Covid-19 Pandemic”
- Emily Bazelon et al., “Restarting America Means People Will Die. So When Do We Do It?”

Tuesday 11/10: Health care as an industry

- Watch over weekend and complete video response: *Care: Care Workers, Their Clients, and a Coming Crisis* (<https://pitt.kanopy.com/video/care>)
- Leigh Phillips, “The Political Economy of Ebola” (<https://www.jacobinmag.com/2014/08/the-political-economy-of-ebola/>)
- Arthur Gale, “Drug Company Compensated Physicians’ Role in Causing America’s Deadly Opioid Epidemic: When Will We Learn?”
- Meena Aladdin, “New Study Finds Pharmaceutical Marketing of Opioid Products to Doctors is Linked to Increased Opioid-Related Deaths” (<https://www.citizen.org/article/new-study-finds-pharmaceutical-marketing-of-opioid-products-to-doctors-is-linked-to-increased-opioid-related-deaths/>)

Thursday 11/12: Universal health care

- John Geyman, “The United States of America Should Adopt Universal Healthcare”

- Mildred Solomon et al., “An Open Letter to the White House Coronavirus Task Force and the U.S. Congress”

Tuesday 11/17: Universal health care, cont.

- Glen Whitman, “The United States of America Should Not Adopt Universal Healthcare”
- *Recommended:* Atul Gawande, “Is Health Care a Right?”

Thursday 11/19: Bioethics and global inequality

- Thomas Pogge, “Responsibilities for Poverty-Related Ill Health”
- Mathias Risse, “Do We Owe the Global Poor Assistance or Rectification?”

Complete unit five quiz by the end of the following Monday 11/23!