

# ***Biomedical Ethics***

***A course in the Upper Division Contemporary Health Issues Theme  
California State University, Chico  
Fall, 2009***

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**Course:** PHIL 327, Sections 01, 02 and 05

**Meetings:** Section 01: MWF 10-10:50 AM  
Section 02: MWF 11-11:50 AM  
Section 05: MWF 9-9:50 AM

**Instructor:** **Dr. Eric Gampel**

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Office Hours: MW 12:30-2; Tu 11-1

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## ***Course Description***

An examination of moral issues arising in medical practice and biomedical research. Among the topics discussed are the responsibilities of health care professionals, the allocation of scarce medical resources, genetic engineering, and the harvesting of fetal tissue. This is an approved GE course.

## ***Course Goals***

The course will give you tools for reasoning about ethical issues at individual and societal levels. Students will:

- discover the moral issues and controversies arising in medicine and biomedical research;
- learn and apply philosophical tools to resolve moral dilemmas.

## ***General Education Goals***

PHIL 327 fulfills the Area C requirement for GE Upper Division Theme, Contemporary Health Issues. You must have completed at least 45 credits to gain credit for the theme. This course has a 2500-word writing requirement, which will be met through the daily writing assignments and essay exams.

All courses in the CHI theme address topics of life-long importance. They examine subjects from multiple perspectives, enabling you to integrate knowledge from sciences, social sciences, and humanities to understand your world.

**Texts:**

- Ronald Munson, *Intervention and Reflection* (8<sup>th</sup> Edition), available through the AS Bookstore or Amazon
- *On-line Readings*, available through WebCT Vista course site
- *Video and Audio*, available through Web CT Vista course site

## ***Class Format***

Lecture, discussion, small-group. You will be asked to express and support your own views on controversial ethical issues. Sometimes I will call on you.

## ***Course Requirements***

- (1) *Exams (two midterms and a final, each worth 25% of the course grade)*. Exams will be based on lecture and class discussions, so doing well will typically require regular class attendance. Midterms will have an in-class part, and a take-home part due at the start of the in-class exam. The final will be cumulative. Before each exam, I will provide sample questions, a list of topics to be covered, and an explanation of my expectations. Any student caught cheating on an exam will be turned over to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs for disciplinary action (for more information, see [www.csuchico.edu/sjd](http://www.csuchico.edu/sjd)). See dates in Calendar below.
- (2) *Think Pieces (25%)*. Every class session a one-page Think Piece will be due on an assigned topic. The purpose of the Think Pieces is to encourage regular reading and reflection, so that you will do your best in the course, and so that class discussions will be well-informed and lively. Think Pieces will be graded pass/fail.

Think Pieces may be hand-written or typed, and they are due at the start of each class session. Do not send them as attachments to an email, and do not place them in my mailbox – they will not receive credit, even if they are delivered to me before the class session in which they are due.

Late Think Pieces will also not be accepted, even for serious illness or deaths in the family. To deal with such situations:

You are allowed to not turn in (or fail) three Think Pieces throughout the semester without penalty.

After those three, each additional Think Piece you do not turn in (or fail) will reduce your Think Piece grade by 10 points (from 95 to 85 to 75 etc.). So turn in your Think Pieces, and save your three freebies for when you might really need them later in the course, rather than using them up at the start!

Here are the only exceptions:

- 1) If you must miss class due to a University-sponsored activity, just give me written documentation during office hours in advance and we can work out an alternative assignment;
- 2) If illness, injury, or other unforeseeable serious events end up requiring that you miss more than three Think Pieces, please provide me with evidence about those events and we can work out an alternative assignment for those Think Pieces.
- 3) You have the alternative of writing a 20-page, graded term paper, if you foresee that your schedule will not allow you to write regular Think Pieces. In this case, please see me by the end of the first week of classes.

# Semester Calendar

## I. Cases and Techniques

- 8.24 First day of class; no readings
- 8.26 *Case Presentation: Face Transplant* (Munson, 3-6, also Web CT Vista reading )  
Eric Gampel, *Ethics and Health Care* (WebCT Vista)
- 8.28 *Social Context: Shopping for Mr. Goodsperm* (M 365-367)  
Watch video episode "The Case Against Perfection: Michael Sandel".  
Think Piece assignment due by 9 PM via WebCT Vista e-mail.  
(No class meeting today: floating Furlough day.)
- 8.31 *Case Presentation: Donald (Dax) Cowart Rejects Treatment – and is Ignored* (M 98-101)  
Eric Gampel, *Major Moral Principles* (WebCT Vista)
- 9.2 *Case Presentation: The Prisoner Who Needed a Heart* (M 455-456)  
*Principles of Distributive Justice* (M 774-744)
- 9.4 *Case Presentation: Robert Ingram: Dilemma of the Working Poor* (M 510-511)  
Eric Gampel, *A Procedure for Moral Reasoning: the AJ Method* (WebCT Vista)
- 9.7 No class: Labor Day
- 9.9 *Case Presentation: The Death of Robyn Twitchell and Christian Science* (123-5)  
Eric Gampel, *A Sample Case* (WebCT Vista)
- 9.11 *Case Presentation: The Agony of Bente Hindriks* (M 623-624)  
*The Principle of Nonmaleficence* (M 770-771)  
*The Principle of Beneficence* (M 771-773)
- 9.14 *Case Presentation: Terri Schiavo* (M 676-681)  
*The Principle of Utility* (M 773-774)
- 9.16 *Social Context: The "Partial-Birth Abortion" Controversy* (M 565-569)
- 9.18 Review
- 9.21 \*\*\*First Midterm\*\*\*

## II. Research Ethics and Informed Consent

- 9.23 Introductory readings from Munson (M 6-26)
- 9.25 Samuel Hellman and Deborah S. Hellman, *Of Mice but not Men* (M 61-65)
- 9.28 Peter Singer: *Animal Experimentation* (M 79-86)
- 9.30 Singer, continued
- 10.2 Carl Cohen: *The Case for the Use of Animals in Biomedical Research* (M 86-92)

## III. Physicians, Patients, and Others: Autonomy, Truth Telling, and Confidentiality

- 10.5 Introductory readings from Munson (M 101-113)
- 10.7 Dax Cowart and Robert Burt, *Confronting Death: Who Chooses, Who Controls? A Dialog* (M 134-138)
- 10.9 Mack Lipkin: *On Telling Patients the Truth* (M 152-154)  
*The Principle of Autonomy* (M777-782)
- 10.12 Susan Cullen and Margaret Klein: *Respect for Patients, Physicians, and the Truth* (M 154-161)

## IV. Race, Gender, and Medicine

- 10.14 Introductory readings from Munson (M 212-227)
- 10.16 James Dwyer: *Illegal Immigrants, Health Care, and Social Responsibility* (M 245-251)
- 10.19 Dwyer, continued

## V. Scarce Medical Resources

- 10.21 Introductory readings from Munson (M 456-475)
- 10.23 Janet Radcliffe-Richards et al.: *The Case for Allowing Kidney Sales* (M 484-487)  
Listen to audio episode: "Should We Legalize the Market for Human Organs?" Think Piece assignment due by 9 PM via WebCT Vista e-mail.  
(No class meeting today: floating Furlough day.)
- 10.26 Kishore D. Phadke and Urmila Anandh, *Ethics of Paid Organ Donation* (487-9)
- 10.28 George J. Annas: *The Prostitute, the Playboy, and the Poet: Rationing Schemes for Organ Transplantation* (M 500-504)
- 10.30 Annas continued, and Review
- 11.2 No class: State Budget Closure Day (Furlough)  
Extra study day!
- 11.4 \*\*\***Second Midterm**\*\*\*

## VI. Paying for Health Care

- 11.6 Introductory readings from Munson (M 511-525)
- 11.9 Allen Buchanan: *Is There a Right to a Decent Minimum of Health Care?* (M 525-529)
- 11.11 No class: Veteran's Day
- 11.13 Robert Sade: *Medical Care as a Right: A Refutation* (WebCT Vista)
- 11.16 Reading TBA
- 11.18 Henry Shue, *Basic Positive Subsistence Rights* (WebCT Vista)
- 11.20 Shue continued  
\*\*\***Thanksgiving Break 11/23-11/27**\*\*\*

## VII. Abortion

- 11.30 Introductory readings from Munson (M 547-573)
- 12.2 John T. Noonan Jr.: *An Almost Absolute Value in History* (M 573-576)
- 12.4 Judith Jarvis Thomson: *A Defense of Abortion* (M 576-586)  
Watch two videos:
  - [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F\\_X4mxSuYyY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F_X4mxSuYyY)
  - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W8tyiJi4PAk&feature=related>Think Piece assignment due by 9 PM via WebCT e-mail.  
(No class meeting today: floating Furlough day.)
- 12.7 Thomson continued
- 12.9 Mary Anne Warren: *On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion* (M 586-594)
- 12.11 Warren continued, and review

### Final Exam Schedule:

Section 01 (usually meets at 10 AM): **Wednesday, 12/16, 10-11:50 AM**

Section 02 (usually meets at 11 AM): **Monday, 12/14, 12-1:50 PM**

Section 05 (usually meets at 9 AM): **Monday, 12/14, 10-11:50 AM**

## CASES FOR DISCUSSION

**CASE A:** A 5-year old girl was in progressive kidney failure, and undergoing dialysis. Her physician, Dr. Helen Karp, told her parents that the prognosis was not very good; the only hope was for a kidney transplant. The parents decided to undergo tissue typing to discover a compatible donor. The girl's two siblings were too young, and the mother was not compatible. But the father was compatible, and Dr. Karp met alone with him to tell him the news. The father was not enthusiastic, and said he did not want to donate his kidney after all. He knew this could well mean the death of his daughter, but he was afraid of the risks of surgery and of losing a kidney. So the father asked Dr. Karp to tell his wife and children that he was not compatible, fearing that if they knew the truth, it would "wreck the family."

**CASE B:** A new survey has found that doctors at many teaching hospitals learn techniques by practicing upon people who have just died, but rarely ask permission from the patients' families. A survey of 449 training centers was conducted. Of the 353 centers that responded, 39% said they used the bodies of people who had just died to teach medical procedures, such as putting a tube in the trachea, putting needles in the liver or bones, or even opening the chest to massage the heart, but just 10% of the centers required the patients' families' consent. Most physicians believe that there is no substitute for practicing the above mentioned techniques on an actual human body.