

SE0045

SYLLABUS - MEDICAL ETHICS, 1986WEEK #1Tuesday, January 7th:

9: 00 AM - Introduction to Course - Dr. Pence

9:10 AM - Case-study: An artist, paralyzed below the neck in an accident, wants to be allowed to die in the hospital and is rebuffed by the Chief of Intensive Care. Movie: Whose Life is it, Anyway? (Note: this is the original, famous, funny, sexy, sad movie shown in medical schools over the past two decades, not the commercial make-over of recent years starring Richard Dreyfus)

10:20 AM - Discussion of ethical, legal, and philosophical issues in cases with class, Dr. Pence.

Assignment: Chapter 1: "Moral Philosophy and Its Application to Medicine," Chapter 2 (1st half): "Ethical Perspectives," Ethical Options in Medicine, (EOM), Gregory E. Pence.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 9th:

GENERAL CLASS TOPIC FOR THURSDAY: WORLD VIEWS AND MEDICAL ETHICS:

9:00 AM - A Non-religious, Philosophical Perspective: G. Lynn Stephens, Ph.D. Department of Philosophy, UAB.

10:00 AM - A Religious Perspective - Paul Perry, MD, Associate Clinical Professor, OB-GYN, Brookwood Medical Center.

~~Assignment:~~ Finish Chapter 2, "Ethical Perspectives, EOM."

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WEEK #2TUESDAY, JANUARY 14th:

9:00 AM - TOUCH PANEL ("TODAY OUR UNDERSTANDING of CANCER is Hope"). Oncology patients (including former UAB medical students and residents) discuss ethical and social problems of dealing with cancer, physicians, families, and lives. Marilyn Doss, MS, Comprehensive Cancer Center; Steve Davis, MD, Obstetrics, St Vincent's Hospital; Louis Josof, Coordinator, Cancer Center, St Vincent's Hospital.

(6 people)  
(asms)

10:00 AM - Case-study: a blind, 26-year old bachelor, a former high school athlete and ex-Air Force pilot, refuses treatment for his 67% body burns. He is forcibly treated against his will in a Hubbard tank each day. Videotape and Film: Dax's Case.

10:30 AM - Discussion, Dr. Pence.

Assignment: Chapter 3, "Euthanasia, Death, and Dying," EOM.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 16TH:

9:00 AM - Case-study: Movie: Bertha. Bertha is a rural, attractive, white teenager who is socially active with boys. Although she speaks well and has good social skills, her Stanford-Binet IQ is 68 and her mother is seriously retarded. If Bertha becomes pregnant, she'll probably not marry and live on welfare (AFDC) and food stamps. To prevent this, physicians inserted an IUD without anyone's consent. We'll hear social workers, pediatricians, and adolescent psychiatrists discuss an urgent problem in public-health medicine today, plus discuss it some ourselves.

Discussion.

10:00 AM - Case-Study: the original, 1971 Baby Doe case at Johns Hopkins. Parents of a Downs Syndrome baby decide not to correct its duodenal atresia and let it die by dehydration. Film: Who Should Survive? (Movie discussants: John Flethcer, Th.D.; (from Birmingham); Robert Cook, MD; William Curran, JD (and author of "Law-Medicine Notes" in NEJM); Sidney Callahan, PhD (from Birmingham); Rene Fox, PhD).

Discussion.

Assignment: First half, Chapter 5, "Procreative Decisions;" Rachels, "Active and Passive Euthanasia," New Eng. J. of Med., (in course materials from Word-Handling).

WEEK #3

TUESDAY, JANUARY 21st:

9:00 AM - Baby Doe cases in everyday pediatrics and obstetrics: Kathleen Nelson, MD, UAB Dept. of Pediatrics, and Robert Goldenberg, MD, UAB Dept. of Obstetrics.

10:00 AM - Problems of AIDS Patients

1. Historical Overview of irrational reactions to unknown diseases and their causes. Dr. Pence

2. Problems of AIDS Patients - C. Kirk Avent, MD, Dept. of Infectious Diseases, UAB; Sherry Woodson, Disease Intervention Specialist, Alabama Department of Public Health, Division of Sexually Transmitted Diseases; and (maybe) AIDS and pre-AIDS patients.

Assignment: Finish Chapter 5, "Procreative Decisions," EOM.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 23rd:

9:00 AM - More Baby Doe cases: two films.

10:00 AM - Medical Care for the Poor and Homeless: The Case of Vincent, Dr. Pence.

Assignment: Chapter 7, "Relationships and Virtues," EOM.

WEEK #4

TUESDAY, JANUARY 28TH: \* This class may be re-scheduled due to exams.

9 A.M. - "The Oedipal Double Helix: Ethical Issues in a Definitive Genetic Marker for Huntington's Disease," Dr. Pence.

10 AM - "Ethical Issues in Widespread Use of the Artificial Heart," Dr. Pence.

Assignment: Chapter 4, "The Right to Medical Care," EOM.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 30TH:

9:00 AM - "The Sanctity of Life," James Rachels, PhD, University Professor, Philosophy Department, UAB.

10:00 AM - Would a normal American adult or medical student kill an innocent stranger if ordered to do so by a legitimate authority? Answer: yes. Movie and case-study: Obedience, by Stanley Milgram.

Assignment: Milgram, "Obedience" (in course materials from Word-Handling ); "The Using of Baby Fae," TIME editorial.

WEEK #5

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 4TH:

9:00 AM - Medical experimentation in the United States and Alabama: Will the poor and vulnerable continue to be the main source of American medicine's research subjects? Film: The Ultimate Experimental Animal: Man.

10:00 AM - Real and Pseudo Issues in the Tuskegee Syphilis Studies, Dr Pence.

Assignment: Begin Chapter 6, "Experimentation with Human Beings,"  
EOM.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6TH:

9:00 AM - Denton Cooley vs. Michael DeBakey vs. Mrs. Haskell Karp (wife of first patient to receive totally implantable artificial heart) - The first artificial heart case and the resulting trial of Denton Cooley. Nova videotape.

10:00 AM - Money and Medicine: What is medicine for?

Panelists:

William Goetter, M.D., Department of, UAB.  
Jeffrey H. Cohn, M.D., Urologist, St Vincent's Hospital.  
Max Michael, M.D., Chief of Staff, Cooper Green Hospital.

Assignment: Finish Chapter 6, "Experimentation with Human Beings,"  
EOM.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 7th - Afternoon - Possible one-hour review session (at discretion of Coursemaster)

WEEK #6

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 10th:

Noon-1 PM - Possible one-hour review session (at discretion of Coursemaster).

FINAL EXAMINATION, Lecture Room A, 2-5 PM

December 17, 1985

Dear First-Year Medical Student:

Your course in Medical Ethics begins this year on Tuesday, January 7th at 9:00 AM and will continue on Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 9 - 11:00 AM until February 6th.

The objective of this course is not to teach official, right answers, but to expose you to new questions, new answers, new perspectives, and perhaps, new feelings. For those who've had undergraduate courses in medical ethics, you'll find this is more medically oriented than your previous courses. For those who've had no such prior course, you'll be rounding out your medical education by reflecting on some broader issues. (Warning: Just because you had a prior course in medical ethics doesn't mean you shouldn't attend class or study. Several people who flunked in the past assumed so incorrectly.)

This course is graded Pass/Fail. If you fail the course, the Basic Science Promotions Committee (composed of all coursemasters, including Ethics and Behavioral Sciences) requires that the initial failing grade be recorded on the permanent transcript. You will be allowed to take another test if you fail, but after passing, the final grade for Medical Ethics on your transcript will read: "Medical Ethics - F/P." Those who fail usually miss significant numbers of classes and/or fail to study the text. If you meet me half-way, i.e., come to classes, read the text (before the night before the final), and study for the final, you should pass the course regardless of your talents for philosophy and medical ethics. I will try to treat the class fairly, honestly, and with compassion (and I will assume that you will do the same with me.)

The grade is based on the final exam on February 11th (Lecture Room A, 2-5 PM). It will consist of 40 multiple-choice questions, with roughly half coming from class, and half from the text. Although the primary goal of this course is your own personal development, experience has proved that an exam is necessary to motivate medical students to come to class and study the book (in law school and in the Dental School's ethics course, ethics courses have become so rinky-dink that sheets are passed around to prove required attendance). Past medical students have said this course was interesting and important, especially in reminding them that they are in medical school and not simply in advanced science courses. They usually wish they had more time for the course. This is one reason it was moved to the first year from the second.

The textbook, Ethical Options in Medicine, written by me, has been specifically written for ethics courses in medical schools, unlike such books used in undergraduate courses. As such, you'll find it dovetails with this course without much duplication (because it especially fits this course). Some of the more difficult points will, however, be given a different slant in class, e.g., on letting defective babies die. A copy of the textbook is on reserve in both the Lister Hill and Sterne Libraries. You have my permission to xerox a copy of the text if you do not wish to purchase it.

With this letter, you should receive a syllabus and several required articles, e.g., "Active and Passive Euthanasia," by James Rachels, and an excerpt from Stanley Milgram's Obedience. Look on the syllabus for when these are scheduled to be read.

My office is across campus in Building #3 in room 420 in the middle of the top floor. My extension is 4805.

Your generation of physicians, as perhaps no other, will grapple with the issues presented in this course. Some of these seem unsolvable to today's physicians but your generation must find answers to them. Because of new methods of reimbursement to physicians (DRG's, preferred providers, etc.), new answers are needed, not as a matter of reflection of philosophical consistency, but as a necessity. Medicine is changing and you are part of that change. The ethics of physicians in the last two decades was partly based on not having to base decisions on cost, but that is now drastically changing. Ideally, now is the time for some brief attention to these issues in a cool, calm hour before you begin clinical rotations and passion runs high. For ultimately, you must keep this fact in mind: one day soon, everyone else's opinion will not matter; you alone will act on your judgment and moral beliefs; you alone will be responsible for what happens. This is a heavy future responsibility, one requiring some preparation and forethought. Although Biochemistry and Physiology are important, the issues in Medical Ethics are the ones which will haunt you in actual medical practice, making you sleepless at night or furious at colleagues.

Finally, if any problems occur with this course, please come to me or call me immediately. I will work with you if you work with me. I believe that one teaches compassion, in part, by treating students with compassion, and I will work to make this an enjoyable course for you. If you're unable to reach me, you may also leave messages for me with Norka Gonzalez in the Philosophy Department or Faye Reames in the Office of Medical Students Affairs. Have a good course and a good year.

Best wishes,

Gregory E. Pence, Ph.D.  
Coursemaster, Medical Ethics

Associate Professor,  
School of Medicine & Department of  
Philosophy

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