

DEPARTMENT OF MEDICAL HISTORY AND ETHICS
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE - UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON
MHE 511A, "MEDICAL ETHICS SEMINAR"
AUTUMN QUARTER, 1988

Instructor: Dr. Nancy S. Jecker
Office: A204P, Health Sciences Bldg
Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday, 10:00-10:30am and 11:30-12:00pm
Department phone: 543-5447
Meeting Times and Places: 10:30-11:20am, T474, Health Sciences Bldg

Course Syllabus

I PERSONHOOD

A. Abortion and New Reproductive Technologies

1. the status of the fetus

September 26 Introduction
October 3 FILM: "Hard Choices: Boy or Girl, Should the Choice be Ours?"
October 10 Noonan, "An Almost Absolute Value in History" (M)

2. new reproductive technologies

October 17 FILM: "The Babymakers"
Purdy, "Genetic Diseases: Can Having Children Be Immoral?" (M)
(recommended)
Jecker, "Reproductive Risk Taking and the Nonidentity Problem"
(X) (recommended)
Jecker, "The Ascription of Rights in Wrongful Life Suits" (X)
(recommended)

3. the conflict of rights

October 24 Thomson, "A Defense of Abortion" (M)

B. Euthanasia

1. definition of death

October 31 Introduction
Supreme Court of New Jersey, Quinlan Case (M)

2. legal issues in withdrawing nutrition and hydration

November 7 GUEST LECTURE: Dr. Clark Shores
Supreme Court of New Jersey, Conroy Case (M)

II JUSTICE BETWEEN PERSONS

A. Just Health Care

November 14 Jonsen, "Conceptual Foundations for an Ethics of Medical Care"
(X) (recommended)

B. Rights to Health Care

Fried, "Equality and Rights in Medical Care" (M)

III PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

A. Patient Rights

November 21 Sade, "Medical Care as a Right" (M)

B. Professional Responsibility

November 28 FILM: "Hard Choices: Doctor, I Want"

December 5 Camenisch, "On Being A Professional" (X)

Texts

The above assignments correspond to the following texts:

(M): Ronald Munson ed., *Intervention and Reflection: Basic Issues in Medical Ethics*
3rd ed (Belmont: Wadsworth Publ. Co., 1988)

(X): Xeroxed Materials, available at the Health Sciences Copy Center, Room A206.

Grades

For medical students, a grade of "pass" is earned by regular attendance and informed class participation. Honors may be earned by completing an independent project, such as a paper, dealing with one of the issues discussed in class in more depth.

For non-medical students, a grade of 3.8 is earned by regular attendance and informed class participation. A grade of 4.0 may be earned by completing an independent project.

If you plan to complete extra work to earn honors or a grade of 4.0, be sure to consult with the instructor at the beginning of the quarter to discuss your project in more detail.

Medical History and Ethics, 511
Selected Topics in Biomedical Ethics
Fall 1988, Professor Nancy S. Jecker
Sections A and C

This course studies ethical problems that arise in the clinical setting of medicine and introduces the student to philosophical analysis and argument in practical contexts. The course divides into three parts. The first part focuses on the topics of abortion, euthanasia, and new reproductive technologies. Our aim is to make more perspicuous the reasons why we regard certain beings as worthy of moral consideration in their own right. Part two takes up the subject of justice in health care. We consider questions such as the following: What justification is there for thinking that individuals have a right to health care? What responsibilities, if any, would such a right impose upon society or health practitioners? For example, would an AIDS patient's right to health care impose a duty upon health professionals to treat AIDS patients? The third and final section of the course examines the subject of professional responsibility in more detail. We consider what ethical responsibilities, if any, persons undertake by presenting themselves as and functioning as health professionals. All readings are from contemporary authors and accessible to persons with no previous philosophical background. There will be two in-class exams consisting of essay and multiple choice questions.

Texts

Ronald Munson ed., Intervention and Reflection: Basic Issues in Medical Ethics, 3rd ed. (Belmont: Wadsworth Publ. Co., 1988)

Xeroxed materials available at the Copy Center (Health Sciences Bldg., Room A206)

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"Perhaps 'unethical' was the wrong word; I meant sort of complex — legally complex . . ."