January 16, 1992, 548SYL92.COU

Robert M. Veatch
Professor of Medical Ethics
The Kennedy Institute of Ethics
Georgetown University

The Ethics of Terminal Care
179-548-01 (1992)

The ethical problems of the care of the terminally ill have been among the most controversial issues in medical ethics over the past decade. This course will explore those issues combining lecture, discussion, and film. The course will not emphasize the sociological and psychological aspects of death and dying, concentrating instead on philosophical, ethical, and public policy issues.

There will be a mid-term March 17 during the first hour of class and a final exam. The final exam will be a take-home final distributed the last day of class and due on the scheduled examination date.

Primary texts for the course will be:


For reference you may want to consult:


Some of the readings for this course will be available in a reading packet in the Kennedy Institute Library. Those are marked with an (*). Other readings can be found in the following anthologies. In the reading list they are identified by the editors' names in brackets.


Phil. 179-548-01 The Ethics of Terminal Care

Jan 21  Introduction: Film "Who Shall Survive?" (Lauinger Library, Room 156)

Jan 28  Definition of Death

Feb 4   What to Tell the Dying Patient and Informed Consent

Feb 11  Suicide

Feb 18  Videotape: "Please Let Me Die" (Lauinger Library, Room 156)

The Ethics of Decisions for Competent Patients:
Videotape "Please Let Me Die."

1. Active killing and letting die//Direct/indirect

2. Ordinary and Extraordinary Means

Mar 3   3. Withholding Food, Fluids, and Medications

Mar 17  Formerly Competent Patients: Living Wills/Powers of Attorney/Natural Death Acts

MID-TERM EXAM

Mar 24  The Role of Guardians (Quinlan, Saikewicz, Dinnerstein, Becker, Cruzan)

Mar 31  The Role of Guardians (continued)

Apr 7   Hospital Ethics Committees

Apr 14  Neonates and the Baby Doe Rule

Apr 21  The Social Ethics of Terminal Care: Resource Allocation

Apr 28  The Social Ethics of Terminal Care: The Role of Age
Reading List

Jan 21-28: Definition of Death

Reading


Additional Reading


Reading


Ross, W.D. *The Right and the Good*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1939, chapter 2. [Beauchamp; Reiser; Veatch, 1989]


Additional Reading


Feb 11: Suicide

Reading


Additional Reading


Feb 18: Ethics of Decisions for Competent Patients
1. Active Killing and Letting Die
   Direct/Indirect Killing

Videotape: "Please Let Me Die"

Reading


Additional Reading


Feb 25: The Ethics of Decisions for Competent Patients
2. Benefits and Burdens (Ordinary and Extraordinary Means)

Reading


Additional Reading


Reading


Additional Reading


Cruzan, by Cruzan v. Harmon 76 S.W.2d 408 (Mo. banc 1988).

Mar 17: Formerly Competent Patients: Living Wills, Powers of Attorney, and Natural Death Acts

Reading

*Concern for Dying.* "A Living Will." No date. [Beauchamp and Walters, 1982]
*In re Quinlan, 137 N.J. super 227 (1975).* [Beauchamp and Perlin]
*In re Quinlan.* 70 N.J. 10, 355 A. 2d 647 (1976) [Beauchamp and Perlin; Shannon; Arras and Rhoden].

Additional Reading

Reading

Superintendent of Belchertown State School v. Saikewicz. 370 NE 2d 417, 1977. [Beauchamp and Walters, 1982; Shannon; Arras and Rhoden]

*Cruzan, by Cruzan v. Harmon 76 S.W.2d 408 (Mo. banc 1988).


Additional Reading


Reading


Additional Reading


New Jersey Guidelines for Prognosis Committees. "Guidelines for Health Care Facilities to Implement Procedures Concerning the Care of Comatose Non-Cognitive Patients." No date.
Reading


Additional Reading


Reading


Additional Reading


Apr 28: The Social Ethics of Terminal Care: The Role of Age

Reading


Additional Reading


Jecker, Nancy S. "Disenfranchising the Elderly from Life-Extending Medical Care." Public Affairs Quarterly 2 (July, 1988):51-68.
