Theories of Medical Ethics
179-524

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Office Hours (call first to see that I am available):
8:30am -5:00pm

Theories of Medical Ethics is a course combining lecture presentation, class discussion, and student presentations. The objective of the course is to explore various cultural, religious, social, and professional traditions that contain more or less systematic positions on ethical issues in medicine. While some of these traditions are richly developed and have medical ethical systems that may be justifiably called "theories of medical ethics," others have only rudimentary positions in the area. The course will explore the mainstream of Western medical ethics as articulated by physicians and physicians' professional groups as well as a wide range of other secular and religious traditions including:

- Judaism
- Roman Catholicism
- Protestantism
- Liberal Western political philosophy
  (contract theory and the Patients' Rights Movement)
- Socialist and Post-Soviet perspectives
- Islam
- Chinese thought
- Hinduism
- Japanese medical ethics
- Professional ethical traditions in health care
  (nursing, social work, pharmacy, dentistry, etc.)

Each student will be responsible for all the reading in the course and will be expected to prepare two written statements. The first will be a detailed analysis of some important aspect of the metaethical theory selected from a series of topics to be distributed in class. This paper will be due no later than February 22. The second written statement will be a final examination, which will be a take-home exam. The final exam may be written whenever and wherever the student chooses, but must be submitted on the day the final exam is scheduled or before. It will consist of three essay questions and considerable choice will be permitted.
THEORIES OF MEDICAL ETHICS  
179-524  
READING LIST

Texts:


[Note: Only sections will be read. Use library copy if you prefer].


Many of the other readings for the course are included in the first or second edition of *Cross Cultural Perspectives in Medical Ethics*, edited by Robert M. Veatch. Boston: Jones and Bartlett. The first edition appeared in 1989. The second edition is in page proof, a copy of which is on reserve in the Kennedy Institute library (the National Reference Center for Bioethics Literature), Healy 102. It may be freely photocopied. Reading from these sources are coded in the reading list as CC 1, CC2, or CC (for both editions).

Other readings are on reserve in the Kennedy Institute library. These readings are marked with an [R] symbol.

I. Hippocrates, the Popes, Ahimsa, and Patients' Rights: Introduction to a History of Diversity

JANUARY 18


A. The Hippocratic Tradition

Lilian Temkin, editors. Baltimore, Maryland: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1967, pp. 3-64. [Note: All readings designated by the letters, CC, are available in Cross Cultural Perspectives in Medical Ethics. The reprinted version is sometimes shortened. In all cases, the shortened version will be satisfactory for purposes of this course.]

[CC2] "Medical Ethics." extracted from Percival, Thomas. Medical Ethics; or, a Code of Institutes and Precepts, adapted to the Professional Conduct of Physicians and Surgeons: To which is added An Appendix; containing A Discourse on Hospital Duties; [by Rev. Thomas Bassnett Percival, LL.B.] and Notes and Illustrations Manchester: Printed by S. Russell, for J. Johnson, St. Paul's Church Yard, and R. Bicherstaff, Strand, London, 1803.


[CC2] "Principles of Medical Ethics (1957)." from the American Medical Association.


* Additional reading for reference only.
B. The Dominant Western Competitors


1. Judaism


2. Catholicism


3. Protestant Thought


4. Secular Liberal Thought and the Patients' Rights Movement


C. Medical Ethics Outside the Anglo-American West


1. Socialist and Post-Soviet Medical Ethics


2. Islamic Culture


3. Hinduism


4. Chinese Culture

[CC2] "Sun Szu-miao and the Origins of the Debate on Medical Ethics in China." from


5. Japanese and Buddhist Cultures

[CC] "The 17 Rules of Enjuin: For Disciples in Our School."

[CC2] "Buddhism, Zen and Bioethics." from Nolan, Kathleen. "Buddhism, Zen, and


II. The Metaethics of Medical Ethics

FEBRUARY 8

A. The Grounding of Hippocratic Medical Ethics


B. Alternatives for Grounding Medical Ethics


FEBRUARY 29

III. Normative Ethics in Medical Ethics


A. Theories of Virtue


B. Care Theory

MARCH 14

C. The Principles of Medical Ethics


1. Beneficence and Nonmaleficence


MARCH 21

2. Fidelity: The Duty to Keep Contracts or Promises


MARCH 28

3. Autonomy


APRIL 4

4. Veracity


APRIL 11

4. Avoiding Killing


5. Justice


APRIL 25

D. The Relationship of Principles, Rules, and Cases

1. The Relation Among Principles


MAY 2

2. The Relation Between Rules and Cases


