

**PHIL 242: Introduction to Medical Ethics**  
**SYLLABUS**  
**M-F 1:10-2:10pm**  
**SAV 138**

**Primary Instructor:**

Blake Hereth (sbhereth@uw.edu)  
Office: Big Table, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor of Savery Hall  
Office Hours: M & F 11:10am-12:10pm and by appointment

**Course Website:**

<https://canvas.uw.edu/courses/1206417>

**Course Description:**

Most of us have spent some amount of time in the hospital or under someone's medical care, or know someone who has. That gives us good reason to care about doing medicine ethically. Most of us have been concerned, angry, sorrowful, relieved, or delighted at the care we or others have received. That gives us good reason to think we're already doing medical ethics. The point of this course is to learn a little about how to do it *well* by (1) gaining an understanding of some of the important issues in contemporary medical ethics, (2) becoming familiar with the variety of perspectives, arguments, and people involved in these debates, (3) learning to make valid and sound arguments of your own and applying them to the issues we discuss, and (4) revising your arguments in light of feedback.

**Course Goals:**

- To get familiar with and understand some central philosophical issues in medical ethics, such as: the ethics of procreation (anti-natalism, eugenics, and disability), using nonhuman animals in biomedical research, organ donation, compulsory vaccinations, and assisted suicide.
- To reconstruct the arguments we find on the issues above and evaluate them charitably and critically.
- To develop arguments of our own that are valid and sound.
- To revise our arguments in light of feedback.

**Required Textbook** (available at the University Bookstore):

*Arguing About Bioethics*. Edited by Stephen Holland. New York: Routledge, 2012.

**Other Readings:**

Any other readings will be provided by the instructor on Canvas.

**Assignments:**

- Participation: Students should take an active role in class. You should ask questions and listen carefully. You should also make an active effort to *appear* like a participating member,

avoiding things that make it look like you aren't (e.g., being on your phone, excessive glancing at your laptop, etc.).

- **In-Class Logic Exercises**: These are handouts designed to help you gain practice making good arguments. We'll work on them in groups during class. (They're easy. Don't freak out.)
- **Critical Reading Responses**: Each student will write five (5) critical reading responses. All you need to do is (1) briefly explain what the argument is you're evaluating and (2) raise an important criticism of the argument. Each reading response should be one page long. It's up to you which reading you pick, but I recommend that you get started early.
- **Term Paper: First Draft**: Each student will write a first draft (3-5 double-spaced pages) of their final term paper on an important issue in medical ethics. It should explain the issue and advance an original argument. This will be due Friday, July 13, at 5pm on Canvas. I'll give each student extensive comments on their draft, which they will then revise.
- **Term Paper: Second Draft**: Each student will revise their first draft in light of my comments. This means revising your main argument and adding a section where you raise and deal with objections to your argument. This draft should be 7-10 double-spaced pages. This will be due Monday, August 6, at 5pm on Canvas.
- **Odegaard Writing Center Visit**: Each student will take their Second Draft to the Odegaard Writing Center for final review. (Note: Specific dates will be assigned for you to do this, so wait for further information from me.)
- **Term Paper: Final Draft**: Each student will revise their Second Draft in light of comments from me and the Odegaard Writing Center, and then submit that revised draft to Canvas for final review. This will be due Friday, August 17, at 5pm on Canvas.

### **Grading:**

Participation	10%
In-Class Logic Exercises	5%
Critical Reading Responses	20%
Term Paper: First Draft	10%
Term Paper: Second Draft	20%
Odegaard WC Visit	5%
Term Paper: Final Draft	30%

### **Assignment Policies:**

- **Late Assignments**: There are *no* extensions or make-ups for Participation or the In-Class Logic Exercises. Critical Reading Responses are due by the last day of class via Canvas, with no possibility of extensions. The Odegaard Writing Center visit must occur *after* you've completed your Second Draft; I'll set aside some time for students to make visits, but otherwise it's up to you when you go. Drafts of the term paper will not be accepted except in cases of documented emergency or a prior, reasonable arrangement with me.
- **"W" Credit**: To pass this course, which carries "W" writing credit, you must submit all three drafts of your term paper.
- **Plagiarism**: Essays with plagiarism will result in failure of the course and will be sent directly to UW Academic Misconduct. It's your responsibility to know what does, and doesn't, count as plagiarism, but feel free to ask me about it if you're unsure. (I'm happy to help you.)

## **Tentative Schedule of Topics & Readings**

### **Week 1 (June 18-22): Course Introduction, Logic, & Procreation**

#### Readings:

- (1) Syllabus
- (2) J. Savulescu, "Procreative Beneficence: Why We Should Select the Best Children"

#### Note:

- (1) In-Class Logic Exercises will occur during this week.

### **Week 2 (June 25-29): Procreation (cont.)**

#### Readings:

- (1) E. Parens and A. Asch, "The Disability Rights Critique of Prenatal Genetic Testing: Reflections and Recommendations"
- (2) D. Benatar, "The Asymmetry Argument" (**via Canvas**)

### **Week 3 (July 2-6): Informed Consent**

#### Readings:

- (1) O. O'Neill, "Some Limits of Informed Consent"
- (2) J. Savulescu and R.W. Momeyer, "Should Informed Consent Be Based on Rational Beliefs?"

#### Notes:

- (1) This week will include a viewing of the *20/20 Special* on Dax Cowart.
- (2) There will be **no class** on July 4<sup>th</sup> (Independence Day).

### **Week 4 (July 9-13): Organ Donation**

#### Readings:

- (1) C. Cohen, "The Case for Presumed Consent to Transplant Human Organs After Death"
- (2) T.M. Wilkinson, "What's Not Wrong with Conditional Organ Donation?"

#### Assignments:

- (1) **Term Paper: First Draft** due Friday, July 13, at 5pm via Canvas

### **Week 5 (July 16-20): Nonhuman Animals**

#### Readings:

- (1) A.L. Caplan, "Is Xenografting Morally Wrong?"
- (2) J.L. Nelson, "Moral Sensibilities and Moral Standing: Caplan on Xenograft 'Donors'"

#### Note:

- (1) In-Class Logic Exercises will occur during this week.

### **Week 6 (July 23-27): Public Health**

Readings:

- (1) D. Isaacs, H.A. Kilham, and H. Marshall, "Should Routine Childhood Immunizations Be Compulsory?"
- (2) S. Chapman, "Banning Smoking Outdoors is Seldom Ethically Justifiable"
- (3) N. Daniels, "Health-Care Needs and Distributive Justice"

**Week 7 (July 30 – August 3): Assisted Suicide**

Readings:

- (1) R. Dworkin, T. Nagel, R. Nozick, J. Rawls, T. Scanlon, and J.J. Thomson, "Assisted Suicide: The Philosopher's Brief"
- (2) J.M. Dieterle, "Physician-Assisted Suicide: A New Look at the Arguments"

**Week 8 (August 6-10): OPEN TOPIC**

Readings:

TBD (by you!)

Assignments:

- (1) **Term Paper: Second Draft** due Monday, August 6, at 5pm via Canvas.
- (2a) Although there will be class on Thursday, August 9, **please try to visit the Odegaard Writing Center that day** (either before or after class). Ideally, half of you will visit this day and the other half will visit Monday, August 13.
- (3) There will be **no class** on Friday, August 10. (I'll be at a conference.)

**Week 9 (August 13-17): OPEN TOPIC (cont.) & Finals Week**

Readings:

No new readings. Focus on your papers.

Assignments:

- (1) There will be **no class** on Monday, August 13. Please use this day, including our regular class time, to visit the Odegaard Writing Center.
- (2) **Term Paper: Final Draft** due Friday, August 17, at 5pm via Canvas
- (3) Any remaining **Critical Reading Responses** due Friday, August 17, at 5pm via Canvas

**Policies, Rules, and Resources:**

- Distractions: Cell phones and pagers should be turned off and put away before you come to class. Laptops may be used for taking notes only. If you are found using your laptop for some other purpose, I will ask you to shut it down and put it away. You may bring food and drinks to class, but please to be respectful to your fellow students - strong odors and crinkly packaging are distracting!
- Atmosphere: It is quite common for students to feel a bit uncomfortable speaking up during class, especially when dealing with complicated or new material. Since a large portion of the class will be discussion based, it is important that we foster an open and engaging class atmosphere, in which everyone can feel free to ask questions and express their ideas without fear about "being wrong". A productive discourse can only be generated and maintained by being courteous and respectful to our peers. This is absolutely necessary,

since we may be exposed to ideas or points of view different from our own and may even find ourselves presenting/defending ideas that are not actually ours. Thus, it is important that students be mindful that we are engaging with and evaluating philosophical positions and ideas, **not each other.**

- **Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is defined as the use of creations, ideas or words of publicly available work without formally acknowledging the author or source through appropriate use of quotation marks, references, and the like. Plagiarizing is presenting someone else's work as one's own original work or thought. This constitutes plagiarism whether it is intentional or unintentional. The University of Washington takes plagiarism very seriously. Plagiarism may lead to disciplinary action by the University against the student who submitted the work. Any student who is uncertain whether his or her use of the work of others constitutes plagiarism should consult the course instructor for guidance before formally submitting the course work involved. (Sources: UW Graduate School Style Manual; UW Bothell Catalog; UW Student Conduct Code)
- **Incompletes:** An incomplete is given only when the student has been in attendance and has done satisfactory work until within two weeks of the end of the quarter and has furnished proof satisfactory to the instructor that the work cannot be completed because of illness or other circumstances beyond the student's control. (Source: UW General Catalog Online, "Student Guide/Grading")
- **Grade Appeal Procedure:** A student who believes he or she has been improperly graded must first discuss the matter with the instructor. If the student is not satisfied with the instructor's explanation, the student may submit a written appeal to the chair of the Department of Philosophy with a copy of the appeal also sent to the instructor. The chair consults with the instructor to ensure that the evaluation of the student's performance has not been arbitrary or capricious. Should the chair believe the instructor's conduct to be arbitrary or capricious and the instructor declines to revise the grade, the chair, with the approval of the voting members of his or her faculty, shall appoint an appropriate member, or members, of the faculty of the Department of Philosophy to evaluate the performance of the student and assign a grade. The Dean and Provost should be informed of this action. Once a student submits a written appeal, this document and all subsequent actions on this appeal are recorded in written form for deposit in a School file. (Source: UW General Catalog Online, "Student Guide/Grading")
- **Concerns About the Course or the Instructor:** If you have any concerns about a Philosophy course or your instructor, please see the instructor about these concerns as soon as possible. If you are not comfortable talking with the instructor or not satisfied with the response that you receive, you may contact the chair of the program offering the course (names available from the Department of Philosophy, 361 Savery Hall), or the Graduate School at G-1 Communications Building (543-5900).
- **Equal Opportunity:** The University of Washington reaffirms its policy of equal opportunity regardless of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, disability, or status as a disabled veteran or Vietnam-era veteran in accordance with University of Washington policy and applicable federal and state statutes and regulations.
- **Disability Accommodation:** The University of Washington is committed to providing access, equal opportunity and reasonable accommodation in its services, programs, activities, education and employment for individuals with disabilities. For information or to request disability accommodation contact:
  - Disabled Students Services (Seattle campus) at (206) 543-8924/V, (206) 543-8925/TTY, (206) 616-8379/Fax, or e-mail at [uwdss@u.washington.edu](mailto:uwdss@u.washington.edu)
  - Bothell Student Affairs at (425) 352-5000/V; (425) 352-5303/TTY, (425) 352- 5335/Fax, or e-mail at [uwbothel@u.washington.edu](mailto:uwbothel@u.washington.edu);
  - Tacoma Student Services at (253) 552-4000/V, (253) 552-4413/TTY, (253) 552-4414/Fax.
- **Sexual Harassment:** Sexual harassment is defined as the use of one's authority or power, either explicitly or implicitly, to coerce another into unwanted sexual relations or to punish another for his or her refusal, or as the creation by a member of the University community of an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or educational environment through verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. If you believe that you are being harassed, seek help—the earlier the better. You may speak with your instructor, your teaching assistant, the undergraduate advisor (363 Savery Hall), graduate program assistant (366 Savery Hall), or the chair of the Philosophy Department (364 Savery Hall). In addition, you should be aware that the University has designated special people to help you. They are:
  - University Ombudsman and Ombudsman for Sexual Harassment (for complaints involving faculty members and teaching assistants) Susan Neff, 301 Student Union (HUB), 543-6028; and the

University Complaint Investigation and Resolution Office, 616-2028. (Sources: UW Graduate School, CIDR, Office of the President)

- Office of Scholarly Integrity - The Office of Scholarly Integrity is housed in the Office of the Vice-Provost. The Office of Scholarly Integrity assumes responsibility for investigating and resolving allegations of scientific and scholarly misconduct by faculty, students, and staff of the University of Washington. The Office of Scholarly Integrity coordinates, in consultation and cooperation with the Schools and Colleges, inquiries and investigations into allegations of scientific and scholarly misconduct. The Office of Scholarly Integrity is responsible for compliance with reporting requirements established by various Federal and other funding agencies in matters of scientific or scholarly misconduct. The Office of Scholarly Integrity maintains all records resulting from inquiries and investigations of such allegations. University rules (Handbook, Vol. II, Section 25-51, Executive Order #61) define scientific and scholarly misconduct to include the following forms of inappropriate activities: intentional misrepresentation of credentials; falsification of data; plagiarism; abuse of confidentiality; deliberate violation of regulations applicable to research.

Students can report cases of scientific or scholarly misconduct either to the Office of Scholarly Integrity, to their faculty adviser, or the department chair. The student should report such problems to whomever he or she feels most comfortable. (Sources: <http://www.grad.washington.edu/OSI/osi.htm>; minutes of Grad School Executive Staff and Division Heads meeting, 7/23/98)

- **Campus Safety and Violence Prevention:** Preventing violence is everyone's responsibility. If you're concerned, tell someone.
  1. Always call 911 if you or others may be in danger.
  2. Call 206-685-SAFE (7233) to report non-urgent threats of violence and for referrals to UW counseling and/or safety resources. TTY or VP callers, please call through your preferred relay service.
  3. Don't walk alone. Campus safety guards can walk with you on campus after dark. Call Husky NightWalk 206-685-WALK (9255).
  4. Stay connected in an emergency with UW Alert. Register your mobile number to receive instant notification of campus emergencies via text and voice messaging. Sign up online at [www.washington.edu/alert](http://www.washington.edu/alert)

For more information visit the SafeCampus website at: [www.washington.edu/safecampus](http://www.washington.edu/safecampus)

PHIL 242 A  
Introduction To Medical Ethics  
Course type: Face-to-Face  
Taught by: Blake Hereth  
**Instructor Evaluated: Blake Hereth-Other**

Evaluation Delivery: Paper  
Evaluation Form: A  
Responses: 13/18 (72% very high)

**Overall Summative Rating** represents the combined responses of students to the four global summative items and is presented to provide an overall index of the class's quality:

Combined Median	Adjusted Combined Median
4.2	4.3
(0=lowest; 5=highest)	

**Challenge and Engagement Index (CEI)** combines student responses to several *IASystem* items relating to how academically challenging students found the course to be and how engaged they were:

<b>CEI: 4.1</b>
(1=lowest; 7=highest)

**SUMMATIVE ITEMS**

	N	Excellent (5)	Very Good (4)	Good (3)	Fair (2)	Poor (1)	Very Poor (0)	Median	Adjusted Median
The course as a whole was:	13	23%	62%	15%				4.1	4.1
The course content was:	13	23%	62%	15%				4.1	4.1
The instructor's contribution to the course was:	13	54%	38%	8%				4.6	4.6
The instructor's effectiveness in teaching the subject matter was:	13	46%	46%	8%				4.4	4.4

**STUDENT ENGAGEMENT**

	N	Much Higher (7)	(6)	Average (4)	(3)	(2)	Much Lower (1)	Median
<b>Relative to other college courses you have taken:</b>								
Do you expect your grade in this course to be:	12			58%	33%	8%		4.6
The intellectual challenge presented was:	12	8%	8%	50%	17%	17%		4.8
The amount of effort you put into this course was:	12	8%	25%	8%	33%	25%		4.2
The amount of effort to succeed in this course was:	12	17%	25%	8%	33%	17%		4.5
Your involvement in course (doing assignments, attending classes, etc.) was:	12		17%	42%	25%	17%		4.7

On average, how many hours per week have you spent on this course, including attending classes, doing readings, reviewing notes, writing papers and any other course related work?

**Class median: 6.8 Hours per credit: 1.4 (N=12)**

Under 2	2-3	4-5	6-7	8-9	10-11	12-13	14-15	16-17	18-19	20-21	22 or more
8%	17%	8%	25%	17%	8%	17%					

From the total average hours above, how many do you consider were valuable in advancing your education?

**Class median: 4.8 Hours per credit: 1 (N=12)**

Under 2	2-3	4-5	6-7	8-9	10-11	12-13	14-15	16-17	18-19	20-21	22 or more
17%	17%	25%		17%	17%	8%					

What grade do you expect in this course?

**Class median: 3.5 (N=12)**

A (3.9-4.0)	A- (3.5-3.8)	B+ (3.2-3.4)	B (2.9-3.1)	B- (2.5-2.8)	C+ (2.2-2.4)	C (1.9-2.1)	C- (1.5-1.8)	D+ (1.2-1.4)	D (0.9-1.1)	D- (0.7-0.8)	F (0.0)	Pass	Credit	No Credit
8%	58%	25%		8%										

In regard to your academic program, is this course best described as:

**(N=12)**

In your major	A core/distribution requirement	An elective	In your minor	A program requirement	Other
17%	17%	8%	17%		42%

**STANDARD FORMATIVE ITEMS**

	N	Excellent (5)	Very Good (4)	Good (3)	Fair (2)	Poor (1)	Very Poor (0)	Median	Relative Rank
Course organization was:	13	23%	62%	15%				4.1	12
Clarity of instructor's voice was:	13	77%	15%	8%				4.8	1
Explanations by instructor were:	13	38%	54%	8%				4.3	6
Instructor's ability to present alternative explanations when needed was:	13	46%	38%	15%				4.4	5
Instructor's use of examples and illustrations was:	13	54%	23%	23%				4.6	3
Quality of questions or problems raised by the instructor was:	13	38%	54%	8%				4.3	8
Student confidence in instructor's knowledge was:	13	54%	38%	8%				4.6	7
Instructor's enthusiasm was:	13	77%	23%					4.8	2
Encouragement given students to express themselves was:	13	46%	31%	23%				4.4	10
Answers to student questions were:	13	54%	31%	15%				4.6	4
Availability of extra help when needed was:	13	38%	23%	38%				4.0	16
Use of class time was:	13	38%	31%	23%	8%			4.1	11
Instructor's interest in whether students learned was:	13	46%	31%	23%				4.4	9
Amount you learned in the course was:	13	31%	23%	46%				3.7	17
Relevance and usefulness of course content were:	13	38%	23%	31%	8%			4.0	15
Evaluative and grading techniques (tests, papers, projects, etc.) were:	13	15%	23%	46%	15%			3.2	18
Reasonableness of assigned work was:	13	38%	38%	23%				4.2	13
Clarity of student responsibilities and requirements was:	13	38%	38%	15%	8%			4.2	14



IASystem Course Summary Reports summarize student ratings of a particular course or combination of courses. They provide a rich perspective on student views by reporting responses in three ways: as frequency distributions, average ratings, and either comparative or adjusted ratings. Remember in interpreting results that it is important to keep in mind the number of students who evaluated the course relative to the total course enrollment as shown on the upper right-hand corner of the report.

**Frequency distributions.** The percentage of students who selected each response choice is displayed for each item. Percentages are based on the number of students who answered the respective item rather than the number of students who evaluated the course because individual item response is optional.

**Median ratings.** IASystem reports average ratings in the form of item medians. Although means are a more familiar type of average than medians, they are less accurate in summarizing student ratings. This is because ratings distributions tend to be strongly skewed. That is, most of the ratings are at the high end of the scale and trail off to the low end.

The median indicates the point on the rating scale at which half of the students selected higher ratings, and half selected lower. Medians are computed to one decimal place by interpolation.<sup>1</sup> In general, higher medians reflect more favorable ratings. To interpret median ratings, compare the value of each median to the respective response scale: *Very Poor, Poor, Fair, Good, Very Good, Excellent (0-5); Never/None/Much Lower, About Half/Average, Always/Great/Much Higher (1-7); Slight, Moderate, Considerable, Extensive (1-4)*.

**Comparative ratings.** IASystem provides a normative comparison for each item by reporting the decile rank of the item median. Decile ranks compare the median rating of a particular item to ratings of the same item over the previous two academic years in all classes at the institution and within the college, school, or division. Decile ranks are shown only for items with sufficient normative data.

Decile ranks range from 0 (lowest) to 9 (highest). For all items, higher medians yield higher decile ranks. The 0 decile rank indicates an item median in the lowest 10% of all scores. A decile rank of 1 indicates a median above the bottom 10% and below the top 80%. A decile rank of 9 indicates a median in the top 10% of all scores. Because average ratings tend to be high, a rating of "good" or "average" may have a low decile rank.

**Adjusted ratings.** Research has shown that student ratings may be somewhat influenced by factors such as class size, expected grade, and reason for enrollment. To correct for this, IASystem reports **adjusted medians** for summative items (items #1-4 and their combined global rating) based on regression analyses of ratings over the previous two academic years in all classes at the respective institution. If large classes at the institution tend to be rated lower than small classes, for example, the adjusted medians for large classes will be slightly higher than their unadjusted medians.

When adjusted ratings are displayed for summative items, **relative rank** is displayed for the more specific (formative) items. Rankings serve as a guide in directing instructional improvement efforts. The top ranked items (1, 2, 3, etc.) represent areas that are going well from a student perspective; whereas the bottom ranked items (18, 17, 16, etc.) represent areas in which the instructor may want to make changes. Relative ranks are computed by first standardizing each item (subtracting the overall institutional average from the item rating for the particular course, then dividing by the standard deviation of the ratings across all courses) and then ranking those standardized scores.

**Challenge and Engagement Index (CEI).** Several IASystem items ask students how academically challenging they found the course to be. IASystem calculates the average of these items and reports them as a single index. *The Challenge and Engagement Index (CEI)* correlates only modestly with the global rating (median of items 1-4).

**Optional Items.** Student responses to instructor-supplied items are summarized at the end of the evaluation report. Median responses should be interpreted in light of the specific item text and response scale used (response values 1-6 on paper evaluation forms).

<sup>1</sup> For the specific method, see, for example, Guilford, J.P. (1965). *Fundamental statistics in psychology and education*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, pp. 49-53.