DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY
CENTER FOR HEALTHCARE ETHICS
McANULTY COLLEGE AND GRADUATE SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS

COURSE HCE-656: END OF LIFE ETHICS

Spring 2013 (version 14 November 2012)
College: McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts
Syllabus: HCE-656, END OF LIFE ETHICS, Spring 2012
Course: Tuesday 3:05-5:45 pm., Fisher Hall 628
Office hours: Appointment, Fisher Hall 300
Tel. (412) 396-4504
Email: tenhaveh@duq.edu
Course instructor: Henk ten Have, M.D., Ph.D.
Director and Professor, Center for Healthcare Ethics
Duquesne University, 600 Forbes Avenue, Pittsburgh

OUTLINE

The course will focus on 3 research competencies in relation to end-of-life ethics:

1. Historical analysis
   - Focus on relevant moral traditions in healthcare
     i. Hippocratic tradition
     ii. Sanctity of life tradition
     iii. Enlightenment tradition
   - Death and dying in history
2. Systematic examination of relevant fundamental philosophical issues
   - goals of medicine and healthcare
   - suffering
   - futility
   - compassion
3. Critical clarification of ethical debates and concerns
   - withholding and withdrawing treatment
   - artificial food and nutrition
   - euthanasia
   - assisted suicide
   - palliative and hospice care

COURSE OBJECTIVES

a) Course description. The course will make students familiar with ethical issues related to the end of life. It will focus on the historical, philosophical and ethical analysis of these issues. Starting from a historical examination of the major moral traditions (Hippocratic tradition, sanctity of life tradition and Enlightenment tradition) as well as the philosophical debate on the goals of health care, the notions of suffering, futility and compassion specific ethical problems in end of
life care will be analyzed: withholding and withdrawing treatment, artificial food and nutrition, palliative care, euthanasia, and assisted suicide.

b) **Research competencies.** Upon completion of the course students should master the following competencies, as should be demonstrated both in specific research projects and in the research essay:

a. A historical analysis of the present-day debate on end-of-life issues, explaining on the one hand the moral traditions that are involved in this debate, and on the other hand the evolution of attitudes towards death and dying over time;

b. Systematic examination of fundamental philosophical issues, understanding and explaining how the contemporary debate is informed and framed by fundamental interpretations of basic notions such as goals of medicine and healthcare, suffering, futility and compassion;

c. Critical clarification of ethical debates and concerns regarding practical issues in healthcare ethics, viz. withholding and withdrawing treatment, artificial food and nutrition, euthanasia, assisted suicide, palliative and hospice care.

c) **General HCE Program Learning Outcomes.** Several of these Learning Outcomes pertain to HCE-656.

a. **Fundamental Knowledge.**
Students can understand and analyze HCE theory and methods as well as major applied topics in end-of-life ethics.

b. **Multi-disciplinary Study.**
Students can critically relate HCE with multi-disciplinary fields in health care, specifically in connection to the historical background and the philosophical interpretation of fundamental notions and evolving social and cultural attitudes.

c. **Scholarship**
Students can research and write scholarly essays, teach and communicate effectively, and present academic papers that:

- present cogent arguments(s),
- engage scholarly literature, and
- demonstrate critical thinking and analysis.

**COURSE PROCEDURES.**

a) **Course components**
The Spring semester will be divided into four components:

i. Research Project #1 (10 pages), week 2-5; due Friday Feb.1 for Seminar #2, Feb.5

ii. Research Project #2 (10 pages), week 6-10; due Friday Mar.8 for Seminar #3, Mar.12

iii. Research Project #3 (10 pages), week 11-14; due Friday Apr.5 for
   2. Option to submit mid-term essay. For students who want to be assisted in their progress, a draft of the essay can be submitted for feedback; by Friday Mar. 8.

b) Research projects
1. **Reading Requirements.** Each 10-page Research Project will require students to critically engage the equivalent of 2 books to (a) master the relevant knowledge and (b) engage in critical reading and writing.
2. **Research competencies.** The research competencies in the course are identified by the three Research Projects: (a) historical analysis, (b) systematic examination of fundamental philosophical issues, and (c) critical clarification of ethical debates and concerns. Each Research Project will demonstrate that the student has mastered the specific competency.
3. **Relation of Projects with Essay.** The three 10-page Research Projects may be integrated into the Research Essay but not in a manner of cut-and-paste from one to the other. The Research Essay typically demonstrates that the student can apply and integrate all three research competencies in relation to a specific topic or issue in end-of-life ethics.
4. **Projects:**
   i. Research competency of historical analysis:
      10 Page Project:
      Provide a critical analysis of changing attitudes concerning death in relation to changing moral traditions.
      Format: 10 pages (font 12; double-spacing) plus approximately 30 references/end notes
      Required Readings:
      1. Philippe Aries, *Western attitudes towards death: From the Middle Ages to the present*;
      2. Various chapters and articles on moral traditions.
   ii. Research competency of systematic examination of fundamental philosophical issues:
      10 Page Project:
      Analyze the notion of compassion in relation to the goals of medicine and healthcare.
      Format: 10 pages (font 12; double-spacing) plus approximately 30 references/end notes
      Required Readings:
      1. Eric Cassell, *The nature of suffering and the goals of medicine*;
      2. Daniel Callahan, *The Troubled Dream of Life: In Search of
iii. Research competency of critical clarification of ethical debates and concerns:

**10 Page Project:**
Provide a critical assessment of moral arguments used to distinguish between euthanasia, assisted suicide and palliative sedation.

Format: 10 pages (font 12; double-spacing) plus approximately 30 references/end notes

**Required Readings:**
2. Henk ten Have & David Clark (eds.), *The ethics of palliative care*.

c) **Research Seminars.** There will be four seminars introducing each of the three research competencies.

1. **Week 1.** Seminar #1 to introduce Research Project #1
   i. Introduction to the area of end-of-life ethics
   ii. Discussion of research essay requirements
   iii. Research Essay thesis and 1-page outline with basic bibliography to be submitted by end of week 5
2. **Week 5.** Seminar #2 to introduce Research Project #2
   i. Discussion of progress on research essays
   ii. Discussion of completed Research Project #1
3. **Week 9.** Seminar #3 to introduce Research Project #3
   i. Discussion of progress on research essays
   ii. Discussion of completed Research Project #2
4. **Week 14.** Seminar #4 to discuss the Research Essay
   i. Discussion of completed Research Project #3
   ii. Brief presentations (10 min) of the research essays

d) **Research essay.** The course research essay will require students to substantively apply the Course Research Competencies to a particular issue (theoretical or practical). Requirements:

1. Start to reflect on the thesis of your research essay from the beginning of the course.
2. Thesis and 1-page outline with basic bibliography to be submitted by the end of week 5 (Feb. 1) (email to tenhaveh@duq.edu).
3. You will receive feedback before and in Seminar #2.
4. Progress will be reported in the Seminars.
5. Each student will briefly present the research essay (max. 10 minutes) during the final Seminar and submit a copy of the essay by date assigned.
6. The essay length should be **30 pages**, double-spacing.
7. Students must adopt the format of the *Chicago Manual of Style*, as required by the College for dissertation submissions.
8. Select an Essay Title that identifies a research thesis. For example:
   i. “The usefulness of the notion of futility in the debate on withholding life-sustaining treatment” (combining historical, philosophical and ethical analysis).
   ii. Another example: ‘Is terminal sedation ethically justified in the context of palliative care?’


10. Notes to the references made in the essay.
   i. Use end notes (as opposed to foot notes at the bottom of the page).
   ii. Do not use notes for narrative explanations – they belong in the main text.
   iii. There should be approximately 100 end notes in the essay.

11. Bibliography. List all the references in alphabetical order. Only list items actually referred to in the essay.

12. Divisions and subdivisions. Use major divisions and subdivisions, evenly distributed throughout the essay, to lay out the sequence of concepts.

13. Use of online references. Online references must be accurately identified with complete web address etc, including the date of access.

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**HCE HANDBOOK.** The Center for Healthcare ethics has developed a *Handbook* of Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines to guide students in all curriculum related matters.

**COURSE GRADE.** There will be no examinations. The course grade will be assigned based on the quality of the course research essay and the three research projects. The grade will be a combination of 10% for each of the three research projects and 70% for the final essay.

No midterm grades will be assigned. End of term grades will be assigned adopting grading policy in the McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts, as follows:

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**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY.** This syllabus incorporates the “Expectations of Academic Integrity.” Cheating and plagiarism cannot be tolerated. All relevant policies of the McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts apply.
REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS.
Students with documented disabilities are entitled to reasonable accommodations if needed. If you need accommodations, please contact the Office of Freshman Development and Special Student Services in 309 Duquesne Union (412-396-6657) as soon as possible. Accommodations cannot always be granted retrospectively.
**COURSE READINGS**

HCE 656, End of Life Ethics, 2013 Spring

**Required reading: Books**

Philippe Aries: *Western attitudes towards death: From the Middle Ages to the present.* The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1974.


Daniel Callahan: *The Troubled Dream of Life: In Search of a Peaceful Death* (Simon & Schuster, 1993; Georgetown University Press, 2004);


**ERES Course Readings:** The ERES link to the readings is: [http://duquesne.docutek.com/eres/coursepass.aspx?cid=1108](http://duquesne.docutek.com/eres/coursepass.aspx?cid=1108)

The password is: HCE656

**Research competency #1: Historical analysis**

**Book:**

Philippe Aries: *Western attitudes towards death: From the Middle Ages to the present.* The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1974.

**Other literature:**

1. **Relevant moral traditions - Hippocratic tradition**

2. **Relevant moral traditions - Sanctity of life tradition**


3. **Relevant moral traditions - Enlightenment tradition**

4. **Death and dying**
   4.1 **Historical perspectives**
   4.2 **Cultural perspectives**

**Research competency #2: Systematic examination of fundamental philosophical issues**

Books:


Other literature:

5. **Goals of medicine and health care**
6. Suffering

7. The notion of futility

8. Compassion

Research competency #3: Critical clarification of ethical debates and concerns

Books:

Other literature:

9. Artificial food and nutrition

10. Palliative care
    10.1 Development and concept

    10.2. Palliative care ethics

    10.3 Palliative sedation

11. Euthanasia and assisted suicide
    11.1. History

    11.2. Practice

11.3. Ethical debate


**COURSE SCHEDULE**

**Tuesday Jan.8. Seminar #1**

*Research competency #1: Historical analysis*

*Project #1*

Jan.12, 22, 29, Research Project #1

Submit Project # 1 by Fri. Feb.1

Submit Essay Thesis, 1-page outline, basic bibliography, by Fri.Feb.1

**Tuesday Feb.5. Seminar #2**

*Research competency #2: Systematic examination of fundamental philosophical issues*

*Project #2*

Feb 12, 19, 26, Research Project #2

Submit Project #2 by Fri. Mar.8

Optional: submit mid-term draft Research Essay, by Fri.Mar.8

**Tuesday Mar.12. Seminar #3**

*Research competency #3: Critical clarification of ethical debates and concerns*

*Project #3*

Mar.19, 26, Apr.2, Research Project #3

Submit Project 3# by Fri.Apr.5

**Tuesday Apr.9. Seminar #4**

*Research essay*

Submit Research Essay by Wednesday Apr.24