COURSE HCE-656: END OF LIFE ETHICS

Spring 2017 (version January 2017)
College: McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts

Syllabus: HCE-656, **END OF LIFE ETHICS**, Spring 2017

**Course:** Tuesday 3:05-5:45 pm., Fisher Hall DEPT

**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 and cultural analysis**
   - Death and dying in history
   - Changes in attitudes towards death over time
   - Changes in attitudes towards death in religion and culture

2. **Systematic examination of relevant fundamental philosophical issues**
   - goals of medicine and healthcare
   - compassion

3. **Critical clarification of ethical debates and concerns**
   - 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 will focus on the historical, philosophical and ethical analysis of these issues. The course will consist of four research projects. The first will examine the historical, religious and cultural attitudes towards death and dying. It will ask the question why death and dying have become a moral challenge today. The second research project will pay critical attention the philosophical debate on the goals of health care. Compassion is an important virtue for health professionals what does it imply when faced with suffering, death and dying? Physicians should save human life but at what price? Is assisting in suicide or providing euthanasia compatible with the goals of medicine. The third research project focuses on specific ethical problems that arise in healthcare practice: palliative care, euthanasia, and assisted suicide. These
problems all include the basis question how human beings should deal with pain, suffering and desperation. The fourth research project is longitudinal. Students have to write a substantial course essay. They have to choose a research thesis concerning an ethical problem in end-of-life care and develop a robust argument. This course essay should address all research competencies of the course.

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 course essay:

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

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

c. Critical clarification of ethical debates and concerns regarding practical issues in healthcare ethics, viz. 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 argument(s),
   - engage scholarly literature, and
   - demonstrate critical thinking and analysis.

**COURSE PROCEDURES.**

a) **Course components**
   The Spring semester will be divided into four research projects:
   i. Research Project #1 (10 pages), 4 weeks; due Friday Feb.10 for Seminar #2, Feb.14.
   ii. Research Project #2 (10 pages), 4 weeks; due Friday Mar.10 for
Seminar #3, Mar.14

iii. Research Project #3 (Research paper of 10 pages), 4 weeks; due Friday Apr.7 for Seminar #4, Apr.11. Oral presentations during Seminar #3 and Seminar #4 (if two seminars are needed to give each student sufficient time).

   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. 10
   3. Submit Research Essay by Tuesday Apr.25 before 5:00 pm.

b) Reading Requirements. Each 10-page Research Project will require students to critically engage the equivalent of 2-3 books to (a) master the relevant knowledge and (b) engage in critical reading and writing. See: time schedule.

c) Research competencies. The research competencies in the course are identified by the first three Research Projects: (a) historical and cultural 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. The fourth Research Project is the course essay that covers all research competencies.

d) 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 fourth 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. Furthermore, the thesis for the fourth Research Project has been selected by the student, while the other Research Projects have a specific assignment for the thesis of the essay. Usually, and dependent on the thesis, writing the Course Essay will also require additional research so that homework will be demanded.

RESEARCH PROJECT 1

Research competency of historical and cultural analysis

10 Page Project

Thesis: Why is death and dying an ethical concern today?

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;
3. Lydia Dugdale (ed.): *Dying in the twenty-first century. Toward a new ethical framework for the art of dying well.*

4. Chapters of Yting et al; and Merrick.

**RESEARCH PROJECT 2**

Research competency of systematic examination of fundamental philosophical issues:

**10 Page Project:**

**Thesis:** Can ending the life of a patient be a goal of medicine and healthcare using the notion of compassion?

**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;*
3. Articles on goals and compassion (Comte-Sponville; Thomasma and Kushner; Dougherty and Purtilo; Welie; Gelhaus)

**RESEARCH PROJECT 3**

Research competency of critical clarification of ethical debates and concerns.

This research project has two parts:

1. **Research Paper of 10 pages**
   
   **Thesis:** 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.*
   3. Articles on Palliative care and Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide (see below)

2. **Oral presentation**

Prepare a presentation about the situation regarding palliative care, euthanasia and assisted suicide in your country or state. Briefly discuss:

a. how are these terms used or defined,

b. what is the legal situation

c. how is the practice

Conditions for the presentation:

- you may use power point but it is not required
- duration is maximum 15 minutes

Homework: preparing the presentation will require homework to identify the relevant
Presentations will take place during Seminars #3 and #4. If the number of students in class does not exceed 6 or 7, only one Seminar will take place. If the number of students is higher, a second Seminar will take place the following week to provide sufficient time for all presentations.

**RESEARCH PROJECT 4**

This is the writing of a substantial 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 4 (Feb.10) (email to tenhaveh@duq.edu).
3. You will receive feedback before and in Seminar #2.
4. Depending on your thesis, you can use the assigned literature but you will also need to do homework to integrate the relevant literature.
5. Progress will be reported in the Seminars.
6. 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.
7. The essay length should be **25 pages**, font 12, double-spacing (not including the notes and bibliography).
8. Students must adopt the format of the *Chicago Manual of Style*, as required by the College for dissertation submissions.
9. 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. Present a brief Introduction and Conclusion.
11. 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.
12. Bibliography. List all the references in alphabetical order. Only list items actually referred to in the essay.
13. Divisions and subdivisions. Use major divisions and subdivisions, evenly distributed throughout the essay, to lay out the sequence of concepts.
14. Use of online references. Online references must be accurately identified with complete web address etc, including the date of access.
COURSE READINGS

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);


Other literature available through Gumberg Library and also on Blackboard. ERES Course Readings: The ERES link to the readings is: http://guides.library.duq.edu/er.php?course_id=28058
The password is: HCE6562017

Research competency #1: Historical and cultural analysis

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


Other literature:

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


Other literature:

1. **Goals of medicine and health care**

2. **Compassion**

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


Other literature:

1. **Palliative care**
   **Development and concept**

   **Palliative care ethics**

2. **Euthanasia and assisted suicide**
   **History**

**Practice**


**Ethical debate**


**COURSE SCHEDULE**

**Tuesday Jan. 17. Seminar #1**

**Introduction Course**

**Research competency #1: Historical and cultural analysis**

**Research Project #1**

Submit Project #1 by Fri. Feb. 10
Submit Essay Thesis, 1-page outline, basic bibliography, by Fri. Feb. 10

**Tuesday Feb. 14. Seminar #2**

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

Discussion of completed Research Project #1
Discussion of progress on Course Essay

**Research Project #2**

Submit Project #2 by Fri. Mar. 10

**Tuesday Mar. 14. Seminar #3**

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

Discussion of Research Project #2
Discussion of progress on Course Essay

**Research Project #3**

Submit Project 3# by Fri. Apr. 7.
Tuesday Apr. 4. Seminar #4
- Discussion of Research Project #3
- Discussion on progress on Course Essay
- Oral presentations

Tuesday Apr. 11. Seminar #5 (if necessary)
- Oral presentations
- Research essay
Submit Research Essay by Tuesday Apr. 25.

TIME SCHEDULE
This course is built like an Independent Research Course with 3 practice credit hours. It totals 150 hours of academic work per semester. Each of the four Research Projects requires the following time allocation: 3 hours per seminar, 34 and resp. 37 hours for research reading of assigned materials and writing research project 1 resp. 2; 20 hours for research and writing of research project 3; 14 hours for researching and preparing the oral presentation; and 30 hours research including homework, and writing the course essay.

There is also homework in addition to course hours. Homework will be needed for the course essay. This requires research to identity relevant literature. For the Research Papers 1-3 homework is usually not required since the thesis of the papers is predetermined. The papers could be written on the basis of the assigned literature. For the course essay this is different. The student has to develop his or her own thesis for the essay. If the thesis is approved by the instructor, there will most probably a need to identify additional literature. This is the homework that each student has to do. Homework is therefore not assigned but the activity of the student him or herself. The results are included in the final course essay.

Supervised practice
Student can make appointments during Office hours on Tuesday and Thursdays. Meetings can take place in person, by telephone or online. Meetings can be scheduled are the initiative of student. They are also initiated by the Instructor. In the beginning of the course it is useful to discuss the ideas concerning the thesis of the course essay and the instructor is contacting students. They have to submit the draft thesis of the course before the second Seminar. If the draft texts are not adequate students are contacted for an appointment (usually online). They also have the opportunity to submit a mid-term draft of the course essay.

Total number of credit hours: 150
30 for the course essay; 15 for the seminars; 91 for the 3 research papers, and 14 for the presentations
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<td>Seminars</td>
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<td>February 14: 3 hrs</td>
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<td><strong>RP#4: course essay</strong></td>
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**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:  
A 4.0 distinguished scholarly work
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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.