

College: McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts

Syllabus: HCE-645, **COMPARATIVE RELIGIOUS BIOETHICS**, Fall 2018

Course: Monday 3:05-5:45 pm Fisher Hall 713

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Outline

Empirical studies have shown that attitudes to bioethical issues are often influenced by religion. Moreover, in the past few decades, religious authorities have expressed outspoken opinions on bioethical issues not only in Christianity, but in other religions too. However, there are substantial differences between religions in the ways in which bioethical arguments are constructed. Insight in this religious diversity is important to understand bioethical debates in non-western contexts as well as the bioethical attitudes of people belonging to religious minorities (e.g. Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs, Muslims) in western countries. In the first part of the course, students become aware of the existence of deep structural differences between religions in their development of bioethics. In the second part, the differences are further explored through the study of (non-Christian) religious answers to a concrete ethical issue at the end of life. In the third part, the observations from the previous parts are applied to assess whether and how these answers differ from Christian (Roman Catholic) answers.

Course Objectives

a) Course Description

This course follows a seminar format that after an introductory lecture in the first session devotes most of class time to presentations by students, group discussion and development of the research essay. Through their own research and the critical input of other students the students become aware of structural differences between religions in the field of bioethics. Moreover, the students become particularly familiar with bioethics in one religion (Hinduism, Buddhism or Islam).

b) Competencies

Upon completion of the course students should master the following competencies, as should be demonstrated throughout the research projects and presentations, class participation and in the research essay:

(a) systematic analysis of the nature of bioethics in Hinduism, Buddhism or Islam, (b) applied analysis, and (c) comparative analysis

- a. The ability to critically reflect upon the nature of bioethics in Hinduism, Buddhism, or Islam and question representations of these religions in bioethical discussions in general and in scientific bioethical literature in particular
- b. The capability to succinctly and convincingly formulate arguments about applied healthcare ethics in Hinduism, Buddhism or Islam
- c. The capacity to critically compare and explain bioethical attitudes in different religions

c) General HCE Program Learning Outcomes

The following HCE Program Learning Outcomes pertain to this course.

Fundamental Knowledge. Students can understand and analyze the ways in which various religions approach bioethical issues.

Multi-disciplinary Study. Students can critically relate religious healthcare ethics with multi-disciplinary fields in health care as a diverse and global enterprise (e.g., empirical research, medicine, philosophy, science).

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 in the field of comparative religious bioethics.

Ethical Leadership. Students can function with expertise and provide ethical leadership in complex bioethical cases that involve persons with different religious backgrounds.

Course Procedures

a) Research Projects and Required Readings

a.1) General Procedure

For this course, the students have to complete three written assignments: two research projects (7 pages plus end notes and bibliography), and one research essay (25 pages plus end notes and bibliography). Students will prepare and submit these assignments as per the schedule below.

- i. Research Project #1, due Wednesday, September 26
- ii. Research Project #2, due Wednesday, October 24
- iii. Research Essay, due Wednesday, December 12
 - Submit Essay thesis, a 500 words abstract, outline, and basic bibliography, by Monday, October 29.
 - 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 Wednesday, November 21.
 - Final version is due Wednesday, December 12.

After finishing each research project, students will prepare a summary of their paper. This need not be a summary in full sentences and the summaries do not have to be submitted either, but students need to be able to orally explain their argument to their colleagues in eight to ten minutes. During the classes, students will be asked to present their arguments. At the end of the course, the students

will also prepare an interactive 20-minute presentation of their research essay, which they will present in the two final class sessions.

Focus. Students choose one religious tradition (Hinduism, Buddhism or Islam) that they will study throughout the course, i.e. for the research papers, seminar presentation and research essay. Students are encouraged to choose a religious tradition in which they have not immersed themselves before either personally or academically.

Reading Requirements. Each Research Project will require students to critically engage the equivalent of two books to (a) master the relevant knowledge and (b) engage in critical reading and writing.

Literature integration. Students should include approximately 25 notes in each research project referring to the texts assigned for the project. The students should bear in mind that the literature builds up progressively, i.e. while developing research projects two and three students may find it helpful to refer to the literature of the preceding projects, too. Endnotes and bibliography as well as title page and table of content do not count towards the prescribed number of pages.

Research competencies. The research competencies in the course are identified by the three Research Projects: (a) systematic analysis of the nature of bioethics in Hinduism, Buddhism or Islam, (b) applied analysis, and (c) comparative analysis. Each Research Project will demonstrate that the student has mastered the specific competency.

Relation of Projects with Essay. The 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 has mastered a specific research competency. While the research papers are focused on one specific competency, the course essay must demonstrate all three competencies. The course essay furthermore is based on a self-selected thesis different for each student, while the topics of the research papers are given and similar for all students.

a.2) Research Project #1: Applied analysis

For this research project, the students apply their insights from the first course part to a concrete bioethical issue at the end of life. In the title of the research paper, students express the connection between the bioethical issue and a central aspect of normative bioethics in the religion that they are studying. The required readings for this paper are those of course part 1 and 2.

a.4) Research Project #2: Comparative analysis

For this Research Project, the students continue working on their focus religion and the bioethical issue that they studied for Research Project #1. They assess to what extent the approach of Hinduism, Buddhism or Islam to that issue differs from or agrees with the Roman Catholic approach. The title of the paper should somehow reflect the nature and magnitude of the observed interreligious differences. The required readings for this paper are those of course part 1, 2, and 3.

b) Course Schedule

Week 1: Mon Aug 27. Introduction to the course requirements, procedures and theme

Part 1 Systematic analysis of the nature of bioethics in Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam

Required readings. The journal articles will be available through the Gumberg Library e-reserves. The link to the readings is: http://guides.library.duq.edu/er.php?course_id=45450. The password is: compl.

1. Hinduism

- Schweiker, William, ed. *The Blackwell Companion to Religious Ethics*, Blackwell Companions to Religion. Oxford: Blackwell, 2004, pp. 323-367.
- Coward, H. G., J. J. Lipner, and K. K. Young, eds. *Hindu Ethics: Purity, Abortion and Euthanasia*. edited by K. K. Young, McGill Studies in the History of Religions. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997, 139 pages. (\$23)
- Clooney, F. X. "Back to the Basics: Reflections on Moral Discourse in a Contemporary Hindu Community." *The Journal of Medicine and Philosophy* 20, no. 4 (1995): 439-57.
- Desai, P. N. "Medical Ethics in India." *J Med Philos* 13, no. 3 (1988): 231-55.
- Pandya, S. K. "Medical Ethics in India: Then and Now." *Acta Neurochir Suppl* 74 (1999): 35-46.
- Sarma, D. " "Hindu" Bioethics?". *Journal of Law, Medicine & Ethics* 36, no. 1 (2008): 51-58.

2. Buddhism

- Schweiker, William, ed. *The Blackwell Companion to Religious Ethics*, Blackwell Companions to Religion. Oxford: Blackwell, 2004, pp. 278-322.
- Harvey, Peter. *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics: Foundations, Values and Issues*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, 478 pages. (\$34)

3. Islam

- Schweiker, William, ed. *The Blackwell Companion to Religious Ethics*, Blackwell Companions to Religion. Oxford: Blackwell, 2004, pp. 237-277.
- Brockopp, Jonathan E., ed. *Islamic Ethics of Life: Abortion, War, and Euthanasia*. edited by Frederick M. Denny, Studies in Comparative Religion. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2002, 264 pages. (\$23)

Week 2: Mon Sept 3. Labor Day, no class

Week 3: Mon Sept 10. Normative bioethics in Islam

Week 4: Mon Sept 17. Normative bioethics in Hinduism and Buddhism

Part 2 Applied Analysis

Required readings.

For all students: Broeckaert, Bert and Flemish Palliative Care Federation. "Treatment Decisions in Advanced Disease – A Conceptual Framework." 2009. Retrieve from http://palliatief.be/accounts/143/attachments/Research/conceptual_framework_bb.pdf.

Specific readings:

1. Hinduism

- Crawford, S. Cromwell. *Dilemmas of Life and Death: Hindu Ethics in a North American Context*. New York: State University of New York Press, 1995, 233 pages. (\$35)
 - Crawford, S. Cromwell. *Hindu Bioethics for the Twenty-First Century*. Suny Series in Religious Studies. edited by H. Coward Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003, 226 pages. (\$24)
2. Buddhism
- Keown, Damien. *The Nature of Buddhist Ethics*. New York: Palgrave, 2001, 269 pages. (\$45)
 - Keown, Damien. *Buddhism and Bioethics*. New York: Palgrave, 2001, 208 pages. (\$53)
3. Islam
- Sachedina, Abdulaziz Abdulhussein. *Islamic Biomedical Ethics : Principles and Application*. Oxford: Oxford university press, 2009, 296 pages. (\$ 26)
 - Brockopp, Jonathan E., and Thomas Eich, eds. *Muslim Medical Ethics: From Theory to Practice*. edited by Frederick M. Denny, Studies in Comparative Religion. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2008, 314 pages. (\$25)

Week 5: Mon Sept 24. Quality of life, spirituality and pain management in palliative care in India

Week 6: Mon Oct 1. EOL ethics in Hinduism

Week 7: Mon Oct 8. EOL ethics in Hinduism and Buddhism

Week 8: Mon Oct 15. EOL ethics in Buddhism and Islam

Week 9: Mon Oct 22. EOL ethics in Islam

Part 3 Comparative Analysis

Required reading for all students: Kelly, David F. *Medical Care at the End of Life: A Catholic Perspective*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2007. (\$23)

Week 10: Mon Oct 29. Roman Catholic EOL ethics

Week 11: Mon Nov 5. Roman Catholic EOL ethics and Hinduism

Week 12: Mon Nov 12. Roman Catholic EOL ethics and Buddhism

Mon Nov 19. Thanksgiving break, no class

Week 13: Mon Nov 26. Roman Catholic EOL ethics and Islam

Week 14: Mon Dec 3. Presentations course essay

Week 15: Mon Dec 10. Presentations course essay

c) Research Essay

The research essay will require students to substantively apply the Research Competencies of this course to a particular bioethical issue. For the essay, students choose a bioethical issue (either the same or different from Research Paper #1 and #2). Taking into consideration the approaches of two different religions (one of them is the religion on which they have focused in the Research Projects), as well as observations from philosophy and empirical and medical research they attempt to

formulate a balanced answer or advice to that problem. In a critical and honest way, students pay attention not only to commonalities between religions, but they also try to find a way to deal with differences.

Requirements:

1. Start to reflect on the thesis of your course essay from the beginning of the course.
2. Thesis, a 500 words abstract, outline, and basic bibliography to be submitted by Monday, October 29.
3. Students will receive general feedback in class and individual feedback through Blackboard.
4. Submit a copy of the essay by date assigned.
5. The course essay length should be at least 25 pages, double-spacing; the main body of text; title page, table of content, endnotes and bibliography do not count towards the 25 pages.
6. Students must adopt the format of the *Chicago Manual of Style*, as required by the College for dissertation submissions.
7. Students can quote from publications in any language, but need to provide an English translation.
8. Select an Essay Title that reflects a research thesis.
9. Make a Title page and a separate Table of Content.
10. Present a brief Introduction and Conclusion.
11. Notes to the references made in the essay.
 - a. Use end notes (as opposed to foot notes at the bottom of the page).
 - b. Do not use notes for narrative explanations – they belong in the main text.
 - c. 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 (headings) and subdivisions (subheadings), evenly distributed throughout the essay, to lay out the sequence of concepts and arguments.
14. Use of online references. Online references must be accurately identified with complete web address etc., including the date of access. Students are requested to critically deal with content from the internet.

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 two research projects, 10% for class presentations, and 70% for the final essay.

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

A	4.0	distinguished scholarly work
A-	3.7	
B+	3.3	
B	3.0	normal progress towards degree
B-	2.7	

C+	2.3	
C	2.0	warning; student subject to departmental action
F	0.0	

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.