

College: McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts

Syllabus: HCE-656/756, **END OF LIFE ETHICS**, Spring 2021

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

Office hours: Wednesday 10am-noon, Friday 1pm-3pm: email for Zoom meeting. Appointments possible outside these hours.
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Course instructor: Joris Gielen, Ph.D.
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Outline

This course introduces the students to palliative care and the various ethical issues that arise in healthcare when people reach the end of life. The first part of the course focuses on the experience of death, dying, and suffering, and the palliative care approach to pain. The second part of the course deals with euthanasia and how this practice differs from other treatment decisions at the end of life. The third part of the course focuses on topical issues at the end of life.

Course Objectives

a) Course Description

This course follows a hybrid format that after an introductory lecture in the first session devotes most of class time to group discussion (in class or on Blackboard), presentations by students, and development of the research essay. Through the course lectures, their own research and the critical input of other students the students learn to analyze and report on important ethical issues that arise in healthcare at the end of life. Most of the instruction will take place through weekly online modules on Blackboard. The class group will meet five times throughout the semester through the HyFlex model. The focus of these meetings will be on the development of the argument that students will present in the course essay. The students will present their course essay in the final two meetings of the course.

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. historical and sociological analysis of palliative care as a global movement
- b. evaluation of arguments on euthanasia and related treatment decision
- c. assessment of topical issues at the end of life in healthcare

c) General HCE Program Learning Outcomes

The following HCE Program Learning Outcomes pertain to this course.

1. Fundamental knowledge. Students can understand HCE theory and methods; analyze HCE theory and methods; apply HCE theory and methods to major ethical topics and issues that emerge at the end of life in contemporary healthcare ethics.
2. Multidisciplinary Study. Students can analyze critically the relationship of HCE with multidisciplinary fields in healthcare (empirical research, law, medicine, philosophy, religion, science and technology); analyze critically the relationship of HCE with healthcare as a global enterprise (using research from anthropology, sociology, political sciences and international human rights law).
3. Scholarship. Students can perform independent scholarly research; write scholarly essays; present academic papers that meet the standards of scholarly research on end-of-life ethics.
4. Ethical leadership. Students can function as expert on the ethical aspects of end-of-life issues in diverse setting such as ethics committees, institutional review boards and ethics consultations; provide ethical leadership in diverse settings, with the knowledge, skills, and competencies to provide ethics services.
- 5 Co-curricular practices. Students can foster co-curricular practices for life-long learning to personally value and engage the clinical, organization, and professional components of end-of-life ethics in a global context.

Course Procedures

a) Research Projects and Required Readings

a.1) General Procedure

For this course, the students must 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 Thursday, February 25
- ii. Research Project #2, due Thursday, April 1
- iii. Research Essay, due Thursday April 29
 - Submit Essay thesis, a 500 words abstract, outline, and basic bibliography, by Monday, March 22.
 - 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, April 14.
 - Final version is due Thursday April 29.

For the HyFlex sessions, students will prepare a brief presentation (10-15 min) of their research papers. They summarize their argument on three slides which they will use to present their research in class. At the end of the course, the students will also prepare an interactive 15-minute presentation of their research essay, which they will present in the two final class sessions.

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. 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) historical and sociological analysis of palliative care as a global movement (b) evaluation of arguments on euthanasia and related treatment decision, and (c) assessment of topical issues at the end of life in healthcare. 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 papers typically demonstrate 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: Palliative care: a timely answer to an age-old problem

The students write an essay entitled, 'Palliative care: a timely answer to an age-old problem.' In the essay, they dissect and analyze the title by critically engaging the readings of course part 1. (Publications marked with * are recommended but not required.)

a.3) Research Project #2: Euthanasia: definitions and controversy

For this research project, students focus on intensive pain management and show how these treatment decisions differ from euthanasia. The students choose a title reflecting their research thesis. The required readings for this paper are those of course part 2.

b) Online Modules

The weekly online modules will consist of prerecorded lectures and videos, and discussion forums on Blackboard. Modules will open to students on Tuesdays 3.05pm. It is very important that all students actively engage in the online weekly discussion forums. In order to facilitate discussion, the forum topics will be available to students when that week's module is made available to the students. For every discussion topic posted by the course instructor, students are required to write one response to the instructor by Thursday 11.59pm, and a minimum of one response to posts by peers by the next Monday. Forum participation accounts for 10% of the total grade. The scoring rubric for the forum will be available on Blackboard under the Course Syllabus tab.

c) HyFlex Meetings

Throughout the semester, there will be five synchronous meetings:

- Tue Jan 26 3.05-5.45pm: introduction
- Tue Feb 23 3.05-5.45pm: 3-slide presentations RP#1
- Tue Mar 30 3.05-5.45pm: 3-slide presentations RP#2
- Tue Apr 13 3.05-5.45pm: Presentations course essay
- Tue Apr 20 3.05-5.45pm: Presentations course essay

In Starfish, students indicate whether they will attend these meetings in person in Fisher Hall 715 or through Zoom. If professional commitments prevent students from attending these meetings, they may watch the recording of the meeting afterwards. The focus of the meetings will be on student presentations (cf. below). Students who cannot attend a meeting for professional reasons should submit a video recording of their presentation to the instructor on the day of the meeting by 10am. The three presentations account for 10% of the total grade. For the grade, the instructor will assess clarity of the presentation, slide design, and responses to questions from the audience.

d) Course Schedule

Week 1: Tue Jan 26 3.05-5.45pm. HyFlex class: Introduction to the course requirements, procedures and theme, death, dying and suffering (Gawande, Dugdale, Kubler-Ross, cassell

Part 1 Death, Dying, Suffering, and Palliative Care

Required readings. The journal articles will be available through Blackboard.

- Bradshaw, A. "The Spiritual Dimension of Hospice. The Secularization of an Ideal.". *Social Science & Medicine* 43, no. 3 (Aug 1996): 409-19.
- Cassell, Eric J. *The Nature of Suffering and the Goals of Medicine*. [online access through Gumberg Library]. 2nd ed. ed.: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Clark, D. "Religion, Medicine, and Community in the Early Origins of St. Christopher's Hospice." *Journal of Palliative Medicine* 4, no. 3 (09 2001): 353-60.
- Clark, D. "'Total Pain', Disciplinary Power and the Body in the Work of Cicely Saunders, 1958-1967." *Soc Sci Med* 49, no. 6 (Sep 1999): 727-36.
- Clark, D., N. Baur, D. Clelland, E. Garralda, J. López-Fidalgo, S. Connor, and C. Centeno. "Mapping Levels of Palliative Care Development in 198 Countries: The Situation in 2017." *J Pain Symptom Manage* 59, no. 4 (Apr 2020): 794-807.
- Dugdale, Lydia S. *Dying in the Twenty-First Century: Towards a New Ethical Framework for the Art of Dying Well*. Basic Bioethics. [online access through Gumberg Library]. The MIT Press, 2015.
- Gawande, Atul. *Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End*. New York NY: Metropolitan Books, 2014.*
- Kubler-Ross, Elisabeth. *On Death and Dying: What the Dying Have to Teach Doctors, Nurses, Clergy & Their Own Families*. New York NY: Scribner, 2014.*
- Saunders, C. "The Evolution of Palliative Care." *J R Soc Med* 94, no. 9 (Sep 2001): 430-2.

Week 2: Tue Feb 2. Death, dying and suffering

Week 3: Tue Feb 9. Palliative care origins and philosophy

Week 4: Tue Feb 16. Palliative care as a global movement

Week 5: Tue Feb 23 3.05-5.45pm. HyFlex seminar, 3-slide presentations RP#1

Part 2 Euthanasia: definitions and controversy

Required readings.

- Broeckaert, B. "Treatment Decisions in Advanced Disease: A Conceptual Framework.". *Indian J Palliat Care* 15, no. 1 (Jan 2009): 30-6.

- Claessens, P., J. Menten, P. Schotsmans, and B. Broeckaert. "Palliative Sedation. A Review of the Research Literature." *Journal of Pain and Symptom Management* 36, no. 3 (Jul 24 2008): 310-33.
- Macauley, Robert C. *Ethics in Palliative Care: A Complete Guide*. New York NY: Oxford University Press, 2018.
- Maltoni, M., C. Pittureri, E. Scarpi, L. Piccinini, F. Martini, P. Turci, L. Montanari, O. Nanni, and D. Amadori. "Palliative Sedation Therapy Does Not Hasten Death: Results from a Prospective Multicenter Study." *Annals of Oncology* 20, no. 7 (Jul 2009): 1163-9.
- ten Have, H., and J. V. Welie. "Palliative Sedation Versus Euthanasia: An Ethical Assessment." *J Pain Symptom Manage* 47, no. 1 (Jan 2014): 123-36.

Week 6: Tue Mar 2. Treatment decisions at the end of life

Week 7: Tue Mar 9. Forgoing Treatment

Week 8: Tue Mar 16. Pain management

Week 9: Tue Mar 23. Euthanasia and assisted suicide

Week 10: Tue Mar 30 3.05-5.45pm. HyFlex seminar, 3-slide presentations RP#2

Part 3 Topical issues at the end of life

Week 11: Tue Apr 6. It is not only the elderly who die...

Week 12: Tue Apr 13 3.05-5.45pm. HyFlex seminar, Presentations course essay

Week 13: Tue Apr 20 3.05-5.45pm. HyFlex seminar, Presentations course essay

e) Research Essay

The research essay will require students to substantively apply the Research Competencies of this course to a particular ethical issue that arises when reach the end of their life in healthcare. Students who have registered for HCE-745 integrate Roman Catholic approaches into their analysis.

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, March 22.
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, 10% for participation in online forums, and 60% 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
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.