

# MLS 578: BIOETHICS



DR. MARVIN NEWMAN  
FALL TERM, 2007

# MLS 578: BIOETHICS

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WELCOME TO MLS 578: BIOETHICS

MY TEACHING PHILOSOPHY: TEACHING IS A **PRIVILEGE.**

FALL TERM, 2007  
Dr. MARVIN NEWMAN  
PROFESSOR OF LEGAL  
STUDIES AND  
COMMUNICATION

Rollins College  
The Master of Liberal Studies Program

Hamilton Holt School  
Fall Term, 2007  
Dr. Marvin Newman

MLS 578:           BIOETHICS

Course Objectives:

The study of the complex ethical and legal concerns engendered by modern technology in the entire field of bioethics are concerned with questions that are rooted at the center of human experience, the most important of which are not fully answerable in terms of a standard textbook. Thus, the person who sets out – as we do in this course – to increase her or his knowledge of medical ethics is embarking on an exploration that is partly a journey of personal and experiential discovery. In this course we will highlight the major ethical issues in health care technology. The study is necessarily interdisciplinary. Accordingly, contributions from medicine, the sciences, the humanities, history, religion and the other social sciences can all be found in this course in their relevant contexts.

Instructor: Dr. Marvin Newman, Professor of Legal Studies  
                  And Communication, Rollins College

Texts;

Chen: Final Exam

Newman: Classic Readings and Cases In Bioethics

Lifton: The Nazi Doctors

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

1. Regular Class Attendance.
2. Informed and Regular Class Participation with special emphasis on assigned case preparation (15%)
3. One focus paper. (20%)
4. Research paper (40%)
5. End of course, open book, open notes exam: (25%)

### **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Everyone enrolled in the class is expected to be present for the entire class meeting and to participate in discussions. Three (3) is the maximum number of absences for the semester. One cannot pass the course if one misses more than three class session.

### **PREPARATION**

Students are expected to arrive in class prepared to participate by having completed the assigned readings.

### **ACADEMIC HONOR CODE**

A copy of the code appears in this syllabus. All written work must include the abbreviated version of the pledge.

### **THE ACADEMIC HONOR CODE**

Membership in the student body of Rollins College carries with it an obligation, and requires a commitment, to act with honor in all things. Because academic integrity is fundamental to the pursuit of knowledge and truth and is the heart of the academic life of Rollins College, it is the responsibility of all members of the College community to practice it and to report apparent violations of all members of the College community to practice it and to report apparent violations.

The following pledge is a binding commitment by the students of Rollins College: "The development of the virtues of Honor and Integrity are integral to a Rollins College education and to membership in the Rollins College community. Therefore, I, a student of Rollins College, pledge to show my commitment to these virtues by abstaining, from any lying, cheating, or plagiarism in my academic endeavors and by behaving responsibly, respectfully, and honorably in my social life and in my relationship with others."

This pledge is reinforced every time you submit work for academic credit as your own. In this class, you must add to all papers the following handwritten abbreviated pledge:

**On my honor, I have not given, nor received, nor witnessed any unauthorized assistance on this work.**

The pledge must be followed by your signature. Material submitted electronically must also include the pledge, submission implies signing the pledge.

## **BIOETHICS: COURSE TOPICS**

**TUESDAY, AUGUST 28:**

INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE  
THE MEANING AND PLACE OF DEATH IN LIFE  
THE DEATH OF SOCRATES  
MORAL REASONING AND ETHICAL THEORIES IN MEDICAL ETHICS  
CHANGING ATTITUDES TOWARD DEATH  
THE PORNOGRAPHY OF DEATH  
SOCIETAL PERSPECTIVES ON DEATH: DAX COWART  
PHYSICIAN ASSISTED SUICIDE  
ASSISTED SUICIDE AND EUTHANASIA: INTENTIONALLY ENDING A HUMAN LIFE: COMPARATIVE CULTURAL CASE STUDIES.  
RELIGIOUS PERSPECTIVES ON DECIDING TO END A HUMAN LIFE: CHRISTIANITY, JUDAISM, HINDUISM, BUDDHISM

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 4:**

PERSONAL PERSPECTIVES OF DEATH: CASE STUDIES  
THE DETERMINATION OF DEATH: BRAIN DEATH  
DECIDING TO END A HUMAN LIFE: MORAL ARGUMENTS  
TERRI SCHIAVO: WHEN DOES PERSONHOOD END?  
VIRTUE ETHICS: THE MANY FACES OF COMPASSION  
IS THERE A DUTY TO DIE?  
CASE STUDIES.  
LIVING WILLS AND ADVANCE DIRECTIVES

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11:**

LETTING IMPAIRED NEWBORNS DIE  
ETHICAL DILEMMAS IN MODERN MEDICINE: THE CLASS MEETS AS AN ETHICS COMMITTEE.  
QUALITY OF LIFE ISSUES.

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 18 AND TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25:**

ORGAN TRANSPLANTATION  
KANT'S CRITIQUE OF ADULT ORGAN DONATION  
THE UTILITARIAN DEFENSE OF LIVE ORGAN DONATION  
ACT VS. RULE UTILITARIANISM  
UTILITARIANS AND PAYMENT FOR ORGANS  
VIRTUE ETHICS AND LIVE ORGAN DONORS  
ORGAN TRANSPLANTATION AND RACE, AGE, ECONOMIC AND  
SOCIAL STATUS  
ALLOCATION OF ARTIFICIAL AND TRANSPLANTABLE ORGANS  
INFANTS AND MEDICAL RESEARCH: BABY THERESA

**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 2, TUESDAY, OCTOBER 9, TUESDAY,  
OCTOBER 23:** (NOTE: TUESDAY, OCTOBER 16 IS ROLLINS  
COLLEGE FALL BREAK. CLASSES DO NOT MEET ON THIS DATE.)

SUICIDE: LECTURE, DISCUSSION, CLASS PROJECT  
PRESENTATIONS  
THE ETHICS OF SUICIDE: TRACING NOTIONS ABOUT THE  
ETHICS OF SUICIDE FROM BIBLICAL TIMES TO CURRENT  
THOUGHT. BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES; EARLY GREEK CONCEPTS.  
PHILOSOPHICAL VIEWS THROUGH THE  
CENTURIES.  
PLATO: PHAEDO AND LAWS  
ARISTOTLE; NICOMACHEAN ETHICS  
THE STOICS  
THOMAS AQUINAS: SUMMA THEOLOGIA, QUESTION 64,  
ARTICLE 5  
ST. AUGUSTINE: CITY OF GOD, BOOK ONE, CHAPTERS 17-27  
DAVID HUME: "OF SUICIDE"  
MONTESQUIEU: "THE PERSIAN LETTERS; "THE GRANDEUR"  
"DECLENSION OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE"  
MONTAIGNE: "WORKS"  
SCHOPENHAUER  
JOHN DONNE: "BIATHANATOS"  
JOHN STUART MILL: "UTILITARIANISM" "ON LIBERTY"  
ALBERT CAMUS: THE MYTH OF SISYPUS

**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 30 AND TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 6:**

EUGENICS AND GENOCIDE

NAZI MEDICINE  
THE NUREMBERG CODE  
ETHICAL ISSUES: RACISM, INFORMED CONSENT, AND HARM  
TO SUBJECTS  
THE TUSKEGEE STUDY

**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 13:**

GENETIC TESTING: ETHICAL ISSUES  
GENETIC SCREENING: ETHICAL ISSUES  
BATTLES OVER EMBRYOS AND STEM CELLS

**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 20:**

MEDICAL ETHICS AND ASSISTED REPRODUCTION  
BACKGROUND:; IN VITRO FERTILIZATION  
LOUISE BROWN'S DEATH  
ETHICAL ISSUES: FROM MEDIA SENSATIONLISM TO HARM TO  
EMBRYOS  
IVF AS A RELIGIOUS ISSUE  
DEVELOPMENTS IN ASSISTED REPRODUCTION  
ETHICAL ISSUES INVOLVING PAYMENT FOR ASSISTED  
REPRODUCTION  
SURROGACY  
THE ETHICS OF GENDER SELECTION

**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 27:**

BIOETHICS: A LOOK BACK AND REACHING INTO THE FUTURE:  
WHAT NEXT?

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 4:**

EXAMINATION. (NOTE: A STUDY GUIDE WILL BE PROVIDED  
TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO THE EXAMINATION DATE).  
THE EXAMINATION IS OPEN BOOK. OPEN NOTES.

**Guidelines for the Focus Paper**

The primary purpose of this short paper is to give you an opportunity to think in advance about the literary texts that we will be discussing in class. Although you are welcome to consult scholarly sources, I encourage you to develop your responses on your own. In addition to enhancing your skills in critical thinking, this paper is designed to hone your writing skills, particularly by asking you to focus on a specific thesis, to support your thesis effectively with evidence from the text, and to explain your ideas clearly and effectively. In some ways, writing a short paper may be more difficult than writing a longer essay. No words can be wasted here. Your research paper will allow for more leisurely development of a thesis, but in writing your focus papers you will want to adhere to the following guidelines:

1. **Write no more than two or three pages.** This limitation will require thoughtful editing as you strive to make your studies dense with ideas.
2. **Prepare** each paper, double-spaced, on a word processor. Leave margins of one inch at the top, bottom, and sides. On the first page, type your name in the upper left corner. Give your paper a short title that suggests its focus.
3. As you begin the paper, **focus immediately** on the thesis you wish to develop. Ideally, you should establish this focus in the first second sentence of your introductory paragraph.
4. Throughout your paper, **keep a tight focus** on the precise topic that you have decided to develop.
5. **Support your argument with specific, pertinent references to details** in the text. Supporting evidence does not have to include a quotation; in fact, be careful not to make your paper too dependent on quotations. Avoid long quotations in this short paper, instead, try quoting just the words or phrases that you need as evidence to support the points you make.

In choosing the details that you will discuss and in deciding how explanation you need to provide, **keep your audience in mind.** Your paper is being addressed to the members of your class. All of you have recently read the texts and have a good command of them. So

you can proceed directly to your analysis without paraphrasing or explaining.

6. **Explain your ideas clearly; write in well-developed paragraphs; organize your ideas logically.** As a writer, you are responsible for making your ideas absolutely clear. You should not leave it up to the reader to determine the significance of a point you are making or a quotation you are citing or an example you are using. Make certain that every point you make contributes to the central argument. Be sure that a reasonably intelligent reader could see the logical flow of your paper from premise to substantiation to conclusion.
7. **Edit carefully** to make sure that you have used conventional mechanics of spelling, punctuation, and grammar. Take special care that you submit papers with no comma splices, sentence fragment, or run-on sentences. If you are uncertain of your mastery of mechanics, consult a reputable handbook of English grammar or make an appointment with the Academic Resource Center.

## **THE MAJOR RESEARCH PAPER**

This paper examines the topic of suicide. That study is significant to the issue of physician assisted suicide, the relevance of which increases with increasing life expectancy. The topic touches every issue in modern day bioethics, including, cloning, stem cell research, the right to die, organ transplantation, eugenics, infanticide, quality of life issues, the duty to die question, assisted reproduction and a host of other topics which we will study in this course.

You will be given the name of a philosopher, historian, writer, religious figure, ethicist, physician. Study the works of that person so that you can write a paper which is a formal study (12-15 pages) of that person's position on the ethics of suicide and her/his rationale and support for that position. You are expected to then critique that position/reasoning. The paper will be graded on the quality of the research, the analysis, and written expression.

This paper and the focus paper must be prepared on a word processor, double spaced, and with appropriate margins. When you consult published sources they must be documented according to the format prescribed in the MLA or Turabian styles.

### **WRITTEN WORK DUE DATES**

Focus Paper: September 18.

Research Paper: November 6.