

Bioethics: Exam 2

Here are the guidelines for Exam 2.

1. The exam consists of SIX questions. However, you should only answer **THREE** of them.
2. Each essay should be between **500** and **1000 words**. I won't penalize you for going over, though please make an effort to be concise as is possible, given the material. Basically, make things "as simple as possible, but no simpler."
3. Direct quotes from the book or handouts can be **cited** simply as (page number or handout name). If you choose to use outside resources, please use a standard citation style (such as APA, MLA, or Chicago), and provide a full citation. As a rule, **no more than 15%** of your paper should be quotes.
4. Please don't use the words or ideas of others without proper attribution. Please see the syllabus for details on the policy regarding **plagiarism and academic integrity**. I regularly use www.turnitin.com to check for plagiarism or related issues.
5. Since the goal of the exam is to demonstrate how well *you* understand the class material, you should try to **use your own words and examples to explain what you've learned**. Essays that simply reproduce the handouts will not receive good grades. Nor will essays that simply "give your thoughts" on an issue (without demonstrating knowledge of the class material, and the ability to apply it to novel cases).
6. Please submit your exam as a **SINGLE MS WORD** file to the D2L assignment folder. Each essay should start on a new page. I will grade exams on a **first-submitted, first-graded** basis. Please don't submit your exam until you are ready for it to be graded.

The Questions

Answer **THREE** of the following questions. Please don't "reuse" material from one essay to answer another.

1. Write a response to **ONE** of the case studies from "Case Studies for Exam 2" that defends a particular course of action (or policy/law, etc.). Your response should demonstrate detailed knowledge of the principles of **autonomy, nonmaleficence, beneficence, and justice**. Your response to this question should follow the five-part format laid out in the case study document.
2. Choose an example of a paternalistic law or policy that interests you, and which involves health in some way. This could be one that is already "on the books," or it could be one that people have discussed. Now, offer an argument **FOR** or **AGAINST** the adoption of this law/policy showing your knowledge of course material. You should include a discussion of **soft paternalism** and **hard paternalism**, but you can also bring up other ethical considerations that you think are relevant. Make sure to consider arguments from the "other side" of the debate. Sample topics include:
 - a. "Sin taxes" on cigarettes or alcohol (or proposed sin taxes on sugary drinks). Choose only one issue.
 - b. Laws prohibiting the selling of one's organs (such as kidneys)
 - c. Laws prohibiting prostitution
 - d. Laws re: the use of hard drugs (choose only one drug other than marijuana).
 - e. Laws requiring seat belts or motorcycle helmets
 - f. Policies at high schools or colleges regarding student health/safety
 - g. Laws mandating vaccines for children and/or adults
3. Write a mock "letter to the editor" in which you offer an argument either **FOR** or **AGAINST** "The Right to a Decent Minimum of Health Care." In this editorial, you should make sure to (a) explain what is meant by a "**decent minimum**" and (b) defend your claim with reference to the principles of **justice** and **beneficence**.
4. Write an original short story about a medical professional and a patient in which the medical professional must decide whether or not to give a patient **aid-in-dying**. Your short story should demonstrate knowledge of relevant course material (such as the principle of non-maleficence).
5. Suppose you were given the ability to change the US Healthcare system in **ONE** way in order to make it "more just". What would you do? Why? Your argument must include a detailed explanation and application of at least **one theory of justice** we've learned in class.
6. Create a handout for "teaching" the **doctrine of double effect** to a group of new students. This handout must include (a) a clear explanation of doctrine, (b) multiple original examples of how the doctrine "works" and (c) an analysis of the doctrine's strengths and weaknesses.

Exam Grading Rubric

Each essay is worth **TEN** points, and the whole exam is worth 30 points. Your grade will depend on how well you do each of the following:

1. How well are you able to **explain** and **apply** the relevant course material? By the end of the essay, the reader should come away with a clear idea of what you've learned in the class, and how it applies to whatever problem/issue you are writing about.
2. To what extent does your essay offer a coherent and creative response to the problem/question? In an argumentative essay, for example, you should make an (evidence-based) **argument** for a **thesis**, and make sure to fully consider any potential **objections**.

Factors such as your paper's **structure** (e.g. intro/body paragraphs/conclusion) and **language** (e.g. grammar, style) are important to the extent they influence the above.

The grading criteria are as follows:

Grade	Description
0	No answer submitted, or evidence of plagiarism.
1-4	Significantly below minimal requirements, in terms of content (e.g., doesn't address the question at all), word count, or both.
5-6	Fails to meet minimal requirements in terms of content (e.g., addresses a related question) or word count. Essays that simply report what you "believe" or "feel," without providing an <i>argument</i> may receive this grade.
7	Meets minimal requirements in terms of both content (it offers an answer the assigned question, and attempts to defend this answer) and word count. However, there may be some significant errors or omissions when it comes to the explanation of relevant class material, or providing a detailed, complete response to the question.
8	Fully meets both content and word count requirements, and provides satisfactory explanations of relevant arguments and concepts from class. There are no major errors in argumentation or explanatory gaps. However, explanations/examples/arguments may suffer from lack of clarity or completeness in comparison to A essays.
9-10	Goes <i>significantly</i> above the minimal requirements. The essay's treatment of course material shows a full mastery of the relevant content, and provides a creative, well-thought out response to it.

I will grade essays in the order they are submitted (first-come, first-serve). Grades go up in whole-number increments (there is no .5).

Tips on Writing Philosophy

Philosophy essays can be a bit different from other sorts of writing. Here are some general tips:

1. You should have an **introduction** that concisely introduces the topic, and a **thesis sentence** that clearly states your position. Philosophy papers often begin with theses of the form "I will argue X because Y."
2. When discussing tough ethical or philosophical issues, **avoid phrases like "I feel," "I think," or "I believe."** Part of taking these issues seriously involves granting that one's actions and beliefs have consequences for other people, and that (for this reason) they need to be defended with the sorts of **arguments** and **reasons** that these other people could actually accept. For this reason, appeals to your *own* emotions, religious beliefs, etc. are generally (though not always) inappropriate.
3. Pretend you are writing to an **intelligent and interested (but relatively ignorant) 12-year-old** who doesn't know anything about the subject (rather than your philosophy professor). This means you'll need to write clearly, explain new concepts, and offer interesting, memorable examples. A significant portion of your grade will be based on your ability to explain the arguments/concepts we've been studying using your own words and examples.
4. Your essay should have multiple paragraphs, each of which has a clear **topic sentence** that clearly relates back to your thesis. When writing philosophy, it's easy to get "off topic." So, always ask yourself: is this paragraph helping me provide evidence for my thesis? If the answer is "no," it should be cut or revised.
5. You should always consider possible **objections** to your thesis. Ask yourself: "How would a smart, well-educated opponent respond to my argument?" In some cases, this might be a real author who you can cite; in other cases, you'll have to play your own "devil's advocate."
6. The conclusion should help the reader appreciate the way your argument fits into the "big picture." For example, what exactly do you take yourself to have shown? How does this relate to similar cases? What might be the "next step" of this argument be, if you had more time and space?