**HCE 6010: Philosophical Methods in Health Care Ethics (3 cr.) – Fall 2021**

**Instructor:** Jason T. Eberl, Ph.D. [jason.eberl@slu.edu](mailto:jason.eberl@slu.edu) (314) 977-1032

**Office Hours:** W 5:30-6:30p or by appointment Salus 527

**Class Meeting:** W 3:00-5:30p Salus 521

**Course Description**

This course introduces students to foundational thinkers and theoretical approaches to health care ethics and bioethics more broadly, including Beauchamp and Childress’s *principlist* approach and Engelhardt’s critique, as well as Pellegrino and Thomasma’s *virtue-theoretic* approach. Students will also delve into fundamental philosophical debates that underwrite various bioethical views, such as the putative distinction between “killing” and “letting die,” competing definitions of ambiguous terms like “dignity” and “suffering,” as well as differing concepts of human nature, personhood, and personal identity.

**Learning Objectives**

At the conclusion of this course, the successful student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate understanding of foundational texts, theories, and methodological approaches that have structured bioethical discussions.
2. Identify various epistemological, metaphysical, and metaethical factors that shape various viewpoints in bioethical debates.
3. Critically engage with divergent philosophical theories that have bioethical implications.
4. Apply one or more philosophical theories to a contemporary issue in bioethics.

**Course Policies**

Discussion and activities will be central to the learning process in this course. Active participation in class is therefore necessary, both for your benefit and for your fellow students. At the same time, the issues we will be discussing can be both controversial and personal for many of us. As a result, I expect a lively debate will arise on various topics. Many of you will have personal expertise or experience that will enrich our discussions and I hope that you will share it with us when it is appropriate. This also means that all participation must be **respectful of other viewpoints and beliefs.** You need not accept or endorse other views, but you must give all points of view a charitable hearing and careful consideration.

Asking for Help or Clarification

You may contact the instructor at any time with questions regarding the course or course requirements. Please do not hesitate to ask for guidance. You may contact me by email, phone, or stop by my office.

Communication

Course materials such as the syllabus, term paper guidelines and some readings will be posted on Canvas.

Changes to Syllabus

The instructor expects to follow this syllabus throughout the semester, but it is possible that changes may have to be made as the semester progresses. These changes will be communicated during class OR by email. It is the responsibility of all students to keep up to date with changes. If a student misses class, it is the student’s responsibility to find out whether any announcements were made in class.

Class Attendance

Attendance at all class meetings and any individual meetings scheduled between the instructor and student is expected.

**Required Texts**

[PBE] Beauchamp, Tom L. and James F. Childress, *Principles of Biomedical Ethics*, 8th ed. Oxford, 2019.

[VMP] Pellegrino, Edmund D. and David C. Thomasma, *Virtues in Medical Practice*. Oxford, 1993.

[FB] Engelhardt, H. Tristram, Jr., *The Foundations of Bioethics*, 2nd ed. Oxford, 1996.

[KLD] Steinbock, Bonnie and Alastair Norcross, eds., *Killing and Letting Die*, 2nd ed. Fordham, 1994.

[DBEL] Lizza, John P., ed., *Defining the Beginning and End of Life*. Johns Hopkins, 2009.

**Grading**

Formal evaluation of student progress will involve a research term paper (min. 20pp). The term paper grade will involve two components:

* Term Paper 90%
* Peer Review 10%

Further details will be provided in the Term Paper Guidelines posted on Canvas.

**Academic Integrity**

*Academic integrity is honest, truthful and responsible conduct in all academic endeavors.* The mission of Saint Louis University is “the pursuit of truth for the greater glory of God and for the service of humanity.” Accordingly, all acts of falsehood demean and compromise the corporate endeavors of teaching, research, health care, and community service via which SLU embodies its mission. The University strives to prepare students for lives of personal and professional integrity, and therefore regards all breaches of academic integrity as matters of serious concern.

Please review the governing University-level [Academic Integrity Policy](https://www.slu.edu/academics/graduate/university-wide_academic_integrity_policy_final_6-26-15.pdf). The College of Arts & Sciences’ policy is found at: <https://www.slu.edu/arts-and-sciences/student-resources/academic-honesty.php>

A student who is judged guilty of an act of serious *academ­ic dishonesty* may be suspended for a specified time period or dismissed altogether from Graduate Education. Suspension or dismissal may also be warranted for other reasons not listed above, e.g., unauthorized solicitation or distribution of controlled substances, endangering one’s self or another person, or abusing alcohol or illicit drugs. Reports of such actions may come from nonacademic staff, faculty, adminis­trators, or other students. Such reports are to be directed to the Dean or Director of the particular school/college/center, who is responsible for decisions to suspend or dismiss.

In addition to following the Graduate Education policy of the University, CHCE stipulates that if a student com­mits an act of serious academic dishonesty in a class, they will fail the class and may be expelled from the program. If they commit an act of serious academic dishonesty during their comprehensive exam they will be expelled from the program. Students may appeal decisions of the Center using mechanisms described in the Graduate Education Catalog of the University.

**Disability Accommodations**

Students with a documented disability who wish to request academic accommodations must formally register their disability with the University. Once successfully registered, students also must notify their course instructor that they wish to use their approved accommodations in the course.

Please contact Disability Services to schedule an appointment to discuss accommodation requests and eligibility requirements. Most students on the St. Louis campus will contact Disability Services, located in the Student Success Center and available by email at [Disability\_services@slu.edu](mailto:Disability_services@slu.edu) or by phone at [314.977.3484](tel:314.977.3484). Once approved, information about a student’s eligibility for academic accommodations will be shared with course instructors by email from Disability Services and within the instructor’s official course roster. Students who do not have a documented disability but who think they may have one also are encouraged to contact to Disability Services. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries.

**Title IX**

Saint Louis University and its faculty are committed to supporting our students and seeking an environment that is free of bias, discrimination, and harassment. If you have encountered any form of sexual harassment, including sexual assault, stalking, domestic or dating violence, we encourage you to report this to the University. If you speak with a faculty member about an incident that involves a Title IX matter, **that faculty member must notify SLU’s Title IX Coordinator and share the basic facts of your experience**. This is true even if you ask the faculty member not to disclose the incident. The Title IX Coordinator will then be available to assist you in understanding all of your options and in connecting you with all possible resources on and off campus.

Anna Kratky is the Title IX Coordinator at Saint Louis University (DuBourg Hall, room 36; [anna.kratky@slu.edu](mailto:anna.kratky@slu.edu); 314-977-3886). If you wish to speak with a confidential source, you may contact the counselors at the University Counseling Center at 314-977-TALK or make an anonymous report through SLU’s Integrity Hotline by calling 1-877-525-5669 or online at <http://www.lighthouse-services.com/slu>. To view SLU’s policies, and for resources, please visit the following web addresses: <https://www.slu.edu/about/safety/sexual-assault-resources/index.php> and <https://www.slu.edu/general-counsel>.

**Calendar:** Presentation of material and reading assignments will be as follows:

Date Topic Readings

Aug. 25 Moral Norms, Theories, Methods, and Justification PBE: Chs. 1, 9-10

Sep. 1 The Intellectual Bases and Principles of Bioethics FB: Chs. 2-3

Sep. 8 Moral Principles: Respect for Autonomy and Nonmaleficence PBE: Chs. 4-5

Sep. 15 Killing vs. Letting Die: Philosophical Problems and Abortion KLD: Chs. 10-11,

16-17, 20-21

Sep. 22 Killing vs. Letting Die: Euthanasia/Termination of Treatment KLD: Ch. 4-9

Sep. 29 Moral Principles: Beneficence; The Many Faces of Freedom PBE: Ch. 6; FB: Ch. 7

Oct. 6 Moral Principles: Justice; Frustration in the Face of Finitude PBE: Ch. 7; FB: Ch. 8

Oct. 13 Moral Character and The Theory of Virtue PBE: Ch. 2;

**Term Paper Proposal Due** VMP: Chs. 1-4, 15

Oct. 20 The Virtues in Medicine VMP: Chs. 5-12

Oct. 27 Moral Status and The Endings and Beginnings of Persons PBE: Ch. 3; FB: Ch. 6

Nov. 3 Theories of Persons DBEL: Chs. 3, 6, 8, 11

Nov. 10 Persons at the Beginning of Life DBEL: Chs. 18, 20-23

**Draft Term Paper Due**

Nov. 17 Persons at the End of Life DBEL: Chs. 24, 26, 28,

**Peer Review Due** 30-31

Dec. 1 Dignity in Bioethical Discourse Canvas

Dec. 8 Conceptualizing and Addressing Suffering Canvas

Dec. 13 **Revised Term Paper Due**