

Syllabus: Bioethics – 01:730:249:01

Christopher Frugé

Christopher.Fruga@rutgers.edu

Office hours: by appointment

Overview

In this course, we'll work through some of the basic issues in bioethics. We'll cover whether and how death can harm the one who dies. We'll also discuss the morality of suicide and physician-assisted suicide. Finally, we'll go over more general issues pertaining to the meaning of life and wellbeing.

Required Texts

All readings will be made available through Canvas.

Course Structure and Assignments

- Discussion posts
 - o By midnight the day before each class, you must post on the discussion forum on Canvas. You can either create a new post or respond to someone else's, but it should respond to the reading by either posing a question, objection, or attempted answer to someone else's question or objection. Posts should be roughly 5-7 sentences.
- Papers
 - o There will be three papers. Each will have a pre-write due several days before the paper, which we'll workshop in class. The papers will be 5-7 pages each.

Grade breakdown

- Participation – including discussion posts and in-class participation: 25%
- Papers
 - o Paper 1
 - Pre-write: 5%
 - Final: 15%
 - o Paper 2
 - Pre-write: 5%
 - Final: 20%
 - o Paper 3
 - Pre-write: 5%
 - Final: 25%

Schedule of Readings

(Tentative!)

Death

Existence condition, subject problem

1. Jan 21 – Intro to Course; Epicurus, “Letter to Menoeceus”; Lucretius selection from Book 3 *On the Nature of Things*
2. Jan 23 – Nagel, “Death”
3. Jan 28 – Kagan, Ch. 8-10
4. Jan 30 – Kagan, Ch. 13
5. Feb 4 – Feldman, “Some Puzzles about the Evil of Death”
6. Feb 6 – McMahan, “Death and the Value of Life”

Timing Problem

7. Feb 11 – Bradley, ch. 3
8. Feb 13 – Pitcher, “The Misfortunes of the Dead”; Luper “Mortal Harm”

Suicide, Immortality

9. Feb 18 – Williams, “The Makropulos Case: Reflections on the Tedium of Immortality”
10. Feb 20 – Kagan, ch. 15
11. Feb 25 – Paper 1 workshop; Paper 1 pre-write due.
12. Feb 27 – No Class!

DDE, Right to Suicide, and Physician Assisted Suicide

13. Mar 3 – FitzPatrick, “Intention, Permissibility, and Double Effect” and “Intention, Permissibility, and Double Effect” secs. 1-2
14. Mar 5 – Kamm, “Four-step argument for Physician-Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia”; Paper 2 due.
15. Mar 10 – Velleman, “A Right to Self-Termination?”
16. Mar 12 – Paper 2 workshop; Paper 2 pre-write due.

Spring Break

Meaning, Lifetime Wellbeing

Meaning

17. Mar 24 – Nagel, “The Absurd”; Paper 2 due
18. Mar 26 – Wolf, ch. 1
19. Mar 31 – Wolf, ch. 2, Paper 1 Due

Lifetime Wellbeing

20. Apr 2 – Bradley, ch. 1
21. Apr 7 – Velleman, “Wellbeing and Time”
22. Apr 9 – McMahan, *Ethics of Killing*, ch. 2 sec. 6
23. Apr 14 – Antti Kauppinen, “Meaningfulness and Time”
24. Apr 16 – Dale Dorsey, “The Significance of a Life's Shape”
25. Apr 21 – Temkin, ch. 5
26. Apr 23 – Paper 3 workshop; Paper 3 pre-write due.
27. Apr 28 – Slack
28. Apr 30 – Last day of class, Slack