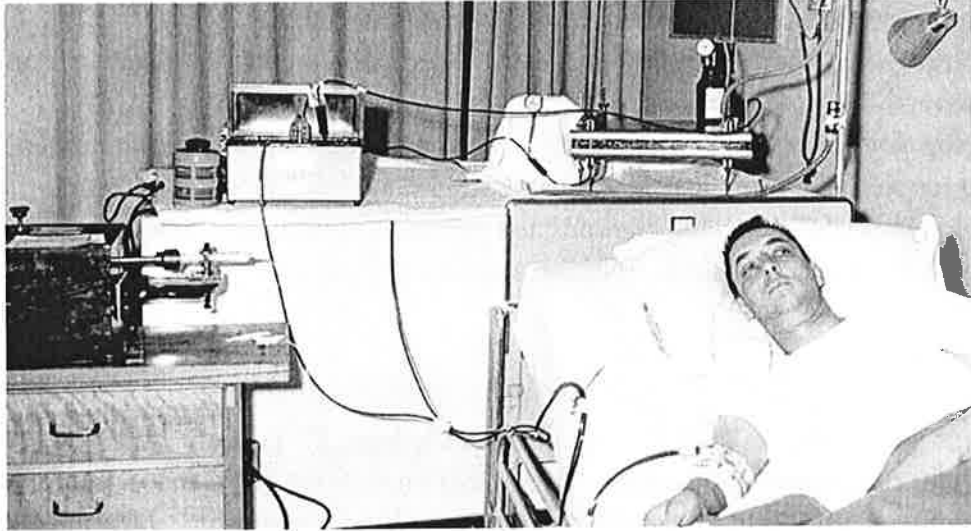


PHIL 220: Bioethics

Fall 2015, Macalester College



<http://www.washington.edu/alumni/columns/march10/shunt.html>

Contemporary academic bioethics began in 1960, when the invention of the Teflon-lined Scribner Shunt at the University of Washington made possible long-term dialysis treatment for chronic renal failure patients (as seen above). Initially, UW had only a small number of shunt-equipped dialysis machines, and a very large number of patients who would die without dialysis. They faced the question: which patients should get the scarce time on the machine?

We will consider that question, as well as a wide variety of other philosophical and ethical questions that arise concerning health care and the life sciences.

Professor

Dr. Samuel Asarnow (“Sam”)

Office: Old Main 100

Office Hours: Tuesday, 1:15-3:30pm, or by appointment.

E-mail: sasarnow@macalester.edu

Time and Location

Time: Tues/Thurs, 9:40-11:10am

Room: Old Main 002

SAVING THE LIFE
OF ONE TEENAGER
IS EQUIVALENT
TO SAVING THE
LIVES OF _____
85-YEAR-OLDS.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/19/magazine/19healthcare-t.html>

Course Objectives

In this course, you will:

- Learn about the difficult ethical problems that face health care providers, life scientists, and policymakers concerned with health care and medicine.
- Develop your ability to identify and assess arguments in favor of and against controversial ethical positions.
- Develop your ability to discuss controversial and emotion-laden ethical questions while being respectful, caring, honest, and rigorous.
- Develop your ability to craft rigorous and persuasive philosophical arguments.
- Develop the distinctive skill of writing a philosophy paper.

Required Readings

Many readings will be drawn from *Bioethics: An Anthology*, 2nd Edition, edited by Helga Kuhse and Peter Singer (Blackwell 2006). You can buy this book at the Highlander or via many online retailers. I recommend purchasing the book, but it will be possible to complete the readings without doing so. A copy of the book is available on reserve at the library. In addition, I have included full citations for all of the papers in the anthology on the syllabus below. If you trust your research skills, you should be able to find most of them online. Other readings will be found on Moodle, available at <https://moodle.macalester.edu>. If you have any problems accessing Moodle, please let me know.

All reading assignments will be posted to Moodle. **On any given day, if you want to know what to read for the next class, check the Moodle, which will be kept up to date.**

Assignments and Grading Basis

Participation and Reading Reactions – 10%

You are expected to attend every class, and to participate when appropriate. What counts as participation? Certainly, asking questions and responding to questions that the professor asks. But so does listening thoughtfully to the conversations that develop in class. Conversations in office hours with the instructor and course assistant also count as participation.

A Reading Reaction is an approximately 300 word reflection on one or two of the readings from the week. Your goal in a Reading Reaction is to demonstrate to me that you are thinking actively about the reading you choose. Here are some good things to do

in a reading reaction: raise a question about a difficult part of the reading; try to answer a question the author of an article asks; criticize an argument from the reading; summarize an especially difficult passage from the reading; explain why you don't understand something from the reading. **You will be expected to complete 8 Reading Reactions this semester.** Reading Reactions are due via e-mail on Thursday before class. Everyone is expected to turn in a Reading Reaction after the first full week of class (on September 10).

Submit your Reading Reactions via e-mail to sasarnow@macalester.edu. Please write "Reading Reaction" (sans quotes) in the subject line of the e-mail. Reading Reactions are graded on a 0/1/2 basis: a grade of 1 indicates an interesting and careful Reading Reaction; a grade of 2 indicates an exemplary reading reaction; a grade of 0 indicates an insufficiently thoughtful Reading Reaction.

Argument Reconstruction – 15% (Due Friday, October 2)

A short (approximately 1200 word) attempt to reconstruct a philosophical argument from one of our readings.

Short Paper – 25% (Due Friday, November 6)

A short-ish paper (1600 words) on any of the topics we have discussed so far.

Long Paper

First Draft: 20% (Due Friday, December 4)

Second Draft 30% (Due Friday, December 18)

A long-ish paper (3000 words) on any topic we have discussed so far.

Accommodations

I am committed to making this course work for everyone. If some element of this course won't work for you and you need an accommodation for a disability, please contact the Office of Student Affairs, ideally at the beginning of the semester. You can contact the Office of Student Affairs at (651) 696-2220. In addition, all students should feel free to contact me at any time (after class, via e-mail, in office hours, etc) to chat about how the course is going and to let me know if there is anything I can do to make the course more accessible for you.

Office Hours

My office is Old Main 100. My office hours are on Tuesday from 1:15-3:30pm, and by appointment. I encourage all of you to come to office hours, and to make appointments if that time doesn't work for you. Some good reasons to come to office hours include: you are confused about a reading; you are totally lost in class; you want additional readings because you aren't feeling challenged enough; you strongly disagree with a reading or with something someone said in class; you have nothing else to do on a Tuesday afternoon and you are bored; you just watched season 5, episode 4 of *Friends* and you want to talk about whether Phoebe has an adequate response to Joey's argument for psychological egoism.

Tentative List of Topics and Readings

This list is subject to change. **On any given day, if you want to know what to read for the next class, check the Moodle, which will be kept up to date.**

Week 1

Thursday, September 3: Introduction to Bioethics and Philosophical Ethics

Week 2

Tuesday, September 8: Microallocation I

- Nicholas Rescher, "The Allocation of Exotic Medical Lifesaving Therapy," *Ethics* 79 (1969). (KS 410-420)
- Alvin Moss and Mark Sielger, "Should Alcoholics Compete Equally for Liver Transplantation?" *Journal of the AMA* 265:10 (1991) (KS 421-426)
- Organ Procurement and Transportation Network, "How Organ Allocation Works" (Moodle)

Thursday, September 10: Microallocation II

- John Harris, "The Value of Life," excerpt from *The Value of Life*. London: Routledge (1985). (KS 428-436)
- Robert Veatch, "How Age Should Matter," in Winslow and Waters (eds.) *Facing Limits: Ethics and Health Care for the Elderly*, Boulder: Westview (1993). (KS 437-447)

Week 3

Tuesday, September 15: Macroallocation I

- Peter Singer, "Why We Must Ration Health Care," *The New York Times* (July 15, 2009) (Moodle)
- Michael Lockwood, "Quality of Life and Resource Allocation," in Bell and Mendus (eds.), *Philosophy and Medical Welfare*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP (1988). (KS 463)
- John Harris, "QALYfying the Value of Life," *Journal of Medical Ethics* 13:3 (1987) (Moodle)

Thursday, September 17: Macroallocation II

- Peter Singer, John McKie, Helga Kuhse, et al, "Double Jeopardy and the use of QALYs in Health Care Allocation," *Journal of Medical Ethics* 21 (1995) (Moodle)

Week 4

Tuesday, September 22: Macroallocation III

- Readings TBD (will be on Norman Daniels' "Prudential Lifespan Account")

Thursday, September 24: Markets in Donor Organs

- Janet Radcliffe-Richards, A.S. Daar, R.D. Guttman, et al, "The Case for Allowing Kidney Sales," *The Lancet* 351: 9120 (1998). (KS 487-489)
- Debra Satz, "Ethical Issues in Supply and Demand of Human Kidneys," from *Why Some Things Should Not Be for Sale*. Oxford: Oxford UP (2012). (Moodle)
- Richard Thaler, "Opting In vs. Opting Out," *The New York Times* (Sept. 26, 2009) (Moodle)

Week 5

Tuesday, September 29: Altruistic Organ Donation

- Larissa MacFarquhar, "The Kindest Cut," *The New Yorker* (July 27, 2009) (Moodle)
- Peter Singer, "Giving a Part of Yourself," in *The Most Good You Can Do*. New Haven: Yale UP (2015) (Moodle)
- Cheryl Jacobs et al, "Twenty-Two Nondirected Kidney Donors: An Update on a Single Center's Experience," *American Journal of Transplantation* 4:7 (2004) (Moodle)

Thursday, October 1: Surrogacy I

- Elizabeth Anderson, "Is Women's Labor a Commodity?" *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 19:1 (1990) (Moodle)

Week 6

Tuesday, October 6: Surrogacy II

- Debra Satz, "Markets in Women's Reproductive Labor," *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 21:2 (1992) (Moodle)

Thursday, October 8: Prenatal Sex Selection

- Julian Savulescu, "Sex Selection: The Case For," *Medical Journal of Australia* 171 (1999) (KS 145-149)
- Wendy Rogers, et al., "Is Sex-Selective Abortion Morally Justified and Should It Be Prohibited?" *Bioethics* 21, 9 (2007) (CW)
- John Robertson, "Preconception Gender Selection," *American Journal of Bioethics* 1, 1 (2001) (CW)
- Jenny Dai, "Preconception Sex Selection: The Perspective of a Person of the Undesired Gender," *American Journal of Bioethics* 1, 1 (2001) (CW)

Week 7

Tuesday, October 13: Prenatal Diagnosis of Disability I

- Adrienne Asche, "Prenatal Diagnosis and Selective Abortion," *American Journal of Public Health* 89:11 (1999) (KS 122-136)
- Harriet McBride Johnson, "Unspeakable Conversations," *The New York Times* (Feb. 16, 2003)

Thursday, October 15: Prenatal Diagnosis of Disability II

- Jeff McMahan, "Causing Disabled People to Exist and Causing People to Be Disabled," *Ethics* 116:1 (2005) (Moodle)

Week 8

Tuesday, October 20: Prenatal Diagnosis of Disability III

- Elizabeth Barnes, "Valuing Disability, Causing Disability," *Ethics* 125:1 (2014) (Moodle)

Thursday, October 22: No Class (Fall Break)

Week 9

Tuesday, October 27: Serie Center Mid-Course Interview

Thursday, October 29: Genetic Enhancement I

- Marc Lappé, "Ethical Issues in Manipulating the Human Germ Line," *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy* 16 (1991). (KS 198-207)
- David B. Resnik, "The Moral Significance of the Therapy-Enhancement Distinction in Human Genetics," *Cambridge Quarterly of Healthcare Ethics* 9:3 (2000). (KS 209-216)
- The Economist, "Editing Humanity" (Aug. 22, 2015) (Moodle)

Week 10

Tuesday, November 3: Genetic Enhancement II

- Julian Savulescu, "Procreative Benevolence: Why We Should Select the Best Children," *Bioethics* 15:5/6 (2001) (Moodle)

Thursday, November 5: Genetic Enhancement III

- Michael Sandel, "The Case Against Perfection," *The Atlantic Monthly* 294, 3 (2004) (Moodle)
- Paula Casal, "Sexual Dimorphism and Human Enhancement," *Journal of Medical Ethics* 39:12 (2013) (Moodle)

Week 11

Tuesday, November 10: Abortion I

- Judith Jarvis Thomson, "A Defense of Abortion," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 1, 1 (1971) (KS 40-50)

- Don Marquis, "Why Abortion is Immoral," *Journal of Philosophy* 86, 4 (1989) (KS 51-62)

Thursday, November 12: Abortion II

- Elizabeth Harman, "'Creation Ethics: The Moral Status of Early Fetuses and the Ethics of Abortion,'" *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 28:4 (1999) (Moodle)

Week 12

Tuesday, November 17: Abortion III

- Elizabeth Harman, "'How is the Ethics of Stem Cell Research Different from the Ethics of Abortion?'" *Metaphilosophy* 38:2-3 (2007) (Moodle)
- Robert P. George, "Embryo Ethics," *Daedalus* (Winter 2008) (Moodle)

Thursday, November 19: Euthanasia I

- James Rachels, "Active and Passive Euthanasia," *New England Journal of Medicine* 295 (1975) (KS 288-291)
- Winston Nesbitt, "Is Killing No Worse than Letting Die?" *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 12:1 (1995) (KS 292-295)
- Kuhse, "Why Killing Is Not Always Worse—and Sometimes Better—Than Letting Die," *Cambridge Quarterly of Healthcare Ethics* 7:4 (1998) (KS 297-299)

Week 13

Tuesday, November 24 – No Class

Thursday, November 26 – No Class (Thanksgiving)

Week 14

Tuesday, December 1: Euthanasia II

- Judith Jarvis Thomson, "Physician-Assisted Suicide: Two Moral Arguments," *Ethics* 109:3 (1999) (Moodle)
- M. John Rowe III, "Beliefs," *Journal of the AMA* 314:9 (Moodle)

Thursday, December 3: Euthanasia III

- David Velleman, "A Right of Self-Determination?" *Ethics* 109:3 (1999) (Moodle)

Week 15

Tuesday, December 8: Conscientious Refusal

- Dan Brock, "Conscientious refusal by physicians and pharmacists: who is obligated to do what, and why?" *Theoretical Medicine and Bioethics* 29 (2008) (CW)
- R. Alta Charo, "The Celestial Fire of Conscience—Refusing to Deliver Medical Care," *New England Journal of Medicine* 352, 24 (2005) (CW)

Thursday, December 10: Wrap-Up

