**Healthcare and Social Justice**

PHIL 344 / Fall 2018 / MW 4-5:15pm

Professor: Dr. Aaron Simmons

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Office: IMMAC 110A

Office Hours: MW 3-4pm & 5:30-6:30pm, F 3-5pm (or by appointment)

**Course Summary**

In this course we will investigate a range of social justice issues that arise in the practice of healthcare. In the first part of the course, we will focus on issues of **healthcare access**. Does justice require providing decent minimum of healthcare to everyone? Do people have a moral right to healthcare and, if so, what does this right encompass? To what extent does justice permit denying some people medical treatment they need?

In the second part of the course, we will focus on the **allocation and** **rationing of scarce medical resources**. What criteria should we use to decide how to allocate scarce medical resources? Is it ever ethical to decide who receives medical resources based on a person’s age or disability condition? To what extent are people responsible for their medical conditions and how should this be factored into decisions over how to ration medical resources?

In part three of the course, we will consider the **healthcare needs of disadvantaged groups**, including racial minorities, women, the global poor, prisoners, and people with disabilities and chronic illnesses. What racial and gender inequalities or biases exist in the delivery of healthcare and how should we overcome them? What special needs do the chronically ill and disabled have and how should we best address them? What are the obligations of justice as they pertain to providing the incarcerated with healthcare? What are the obligations of rich, developed nations to meet healthcare needs of destitute people in much poorer, developing countries?

**Course Goals**

1. To learn about important social justice issues in medicine and the perspectives that philosophers and policy-makers have had on those issues
2. To enhance your critical thinking skills, including the ability to evaluate arguments for holding certain beliefs, to construct good arguments for your beliefs, and to reach rational, well thought-out solutions to complex ethical problems
3. To enhance your ability to communicate complex ideas and arguments clearly, in both written and verbal form.

**Grading**

Papers

You will be expected to write two philosophy papers: a midterm paper and a final paper. Papers should be approximately 1200-2000 words long (roughly 4-6 pages double-spaced). In your papers you will be expected to *analyze and evaluate readings* from the course and to *construct an argument* for some view you hold on an issue we’ve studied. We will spend time in class discussing how to write a philosophy paper. Each paper counts for 30% of your final grade.

Group Project

During the second half of the semester, you will be given a group project assignment. Students will organize into groups of four students and choose an ethical case study from a list that I will provide. Each group will be responsible for (1) writing a 4-5 page paper analyzing its case study and (2) making a presentation to the rest of the class. The overall group project will be worth 20% of your final grade. I will provide further details on this assignment after the halfway point of the semester.

Attendance, Participation, Preparation, and Effort (APPE)

Your attendance, participation, preparation, and effort in this class count for 20% of your grade. To earn an A for this portion of your grade, you must have good attendance, *regularly volunteer to participate in class discussions* (on average, at least once per week), come to each class period having done the reading assignments, & demonstrate good effort in the class. The following behaviors will count against your APPE grade: texting in class, using your computer in class for non-class purposes, sleeping in class, and frequently coming to class late or leaving class early. If you are not comfortable participating in classroom discussions, you can also earn participation credit by typing up a short paragraph in which you comment on (or raise questions about) the readings and/or the classroom discussion. Written participation should be submitted to me on paper no more than one week after we have discussed a particular reading or topic in class.

Grade Breakdown

1. Midterm paper 30%
2. Final paper 30%
3. Group project 20%
4. APPE 20%

**Classroom Etiquette**

Philosophy, by its nature, involves debate and disagreement on questions that are controversial and sometimes personal. As we examine philosophical questions in this class, we will sometimes disagree with each other. Class time will include discussions in which students’ beliefs may be questioned, challenged, and debated by other students or the professor. That being said, everyone in the class is expected to follow basic rules of respect for one another. Criticism and disagreement with one another’s opinions should be expressed in a respectful manner. Personal attacks are not acceptable. Additionally, I ask that students raise their hands to speak and try to avoid interrupting one another.

**Accommodations for Students with Documented Disabilities**

Marywood University complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 as amended by the ADA Amendments Act of 2008. Students with disabilities who need special accommodations must submit documentation of the disability to the Office of Disability Services, Liberal Arts Center 223B, in order for reasonable accommodations to be granted. The Office of Disability Services will partner with students to determine the appropriate accommodations and, in cooperation with the instructor, will work to ensure that all students have a fair opportunity to perform in this class. Students are encouraged to notify instructors and the Office of Disability Services as soon as they determine accommodations are necessary; however, documentation will be reviewed at any point in the semester upon receipt. Specific details of the disability will remain confidential between the student and the Office of Disability services unless the student chooses to disclose or there is legitimate academic need for disclosure on a case-by-case basis. For assistance, please contact Diane Webber, Associate Director of Disability Services, at 570.348.6211 x2335 or dtwebber@marywood.edu.

**Texts**

1. All readings will be available electronically through Google Drive at the following link: <https://goo.gl/DXMbXG>

**Tentative Schedule of Readings and Assignments**

This schedule of readings and assignments is subject to change based on my discretion and how quickly we work our way through the readings. Any changes in the schedule will be announced in class.

Week One

8/27 – 8/29

*Introduction*

*The Healthcare Crisis*

Vaughn, “Dividing Up Health Care Resources”

In-class video: Frontline, “Sick around America”

Week Two

9/3 – 9/5

**Monday, September 3rd – Labor Day (No class)**

*Theoretical Foundations*

Beauchamp and Childress, “Justice”

Week Three

9/10 – 9/12

*The Right to Healthcare*

Daniels, “Is There a Right to Health Care and, if So, What Does It Encompass?”

*The Right to Healthcare*

Engelhardt, “Rights to Health Care, Social Justice, and Fairness in Health Care Allocations”

Week Four

9/17 – 9/19

*Rationing*

Persad, Wertheimer, and Emanuel, “Principles for Allocation of Scarce Medical Interventions”

*Rationing*Harris, “QALYfying the Value of Life”

Week Five

9/24 – 9/26

*Rationing*Francis, “Age Rationing Under Conditions of Injustice”

**Discuss Midterm Paper Assignment**

Week Six

10/1 – 10/3

*Responsibility for Health*

Wikler, “Personal and Social Responsibility for Health”

*Responsibility for Health*

Glannon, “Responsibility, Alcoholism, and Liver Transplantation”

Week Seven

10/8 – 10/10

*Race and Gender*

Powers and Faden, “Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Healthcare”

*Race and Gender*

Tong, “Gender Justice in the Health Care System: An Elusive Goal”

Week Eight

10/15 – 10/17

**Monday, October 15 – Fall Break (No class)**

*Global Health*

Lowry and Schuklenk, “Two Models in Global Health Ethics”

**Midterm Paper due** – Friday, October 19th

Week Nine

10/22 – 10/24

*Global Health*

Dwyer, “Illegal Immigrants, Health Care, and Social Responsibility”

*Healthcare and Disability*

Anita Silvers, “Health Care for Chronically Ill and Disabled Patients: A Deficiency in Bioethics and How to Cure It”

Week Ten

10/29 – 10/31

*Healthcare for the Incarcerated*Paris, “Why Prisoners Deserve Health Care”

McKinney, “Hard Time and Health Care”

*Healthcare for the Incarcerated*Metzner and Fellner, “Solitary Confinement and Mental Illness in U.S. Prisons”

Week Eleven

11/5 – 11/7

**Group Project Assignment**

**Group Work Day**

Week Twelve

11/12 – 11/14

*Disorders of Consciousness*

Nair-Collins and Hitt, “Justice, Profound Neurological Injury, and Brain Death”

*Alternative Medicine*

Morreim, “Limits of Science and Boundaries of Access: Alternative Health Care”

Week Thirteen

11/19 – 11/21

TBA

**Wednesday, November 21 – Thanksgiving Break (No class)**

Week Fourteen

11/26 – 11/28

TBA

**Group Presentations** – group presentations will begin on Wednesday, November 28th

Week Fifteen

12/3 – 12/5

**Group Presentations**

**Group Presentations**

**Final Paper due** – Sunday, December 9th

Week Sixteen

12/10

Last day of class – Monday, December 10th