



South Central College

# PHIL 150 Medical Ethics

## Common Course Outline

### Course Information

**Description** This course examines the moral problems confronting medical providers and surveys the broader field of bioethics. After providing a general introduction to ethical concepts and theories, it focuses on specific issues relating to the American health care system, including access to care, inequality, obesity, reproductive rights, end-of-life care, disability, organ transplantation, and alternative medicine. Emphasis is placed on practical application of moral principles and critical analysis of case studies. (Prerequisites: Must have a score of 78 or higher on the Reading portion of the Accuplacer test or completion of READ 0090 with a grade of C or higher) (MNTC Goal Areas 2, 9)

**Total Credits** 3

**Total Hours** 48

### Types of Instruction

Instruction Type	Credits/Hours
Lecture	3 / 48

### Pre/Corequisites

Must have a score of 78 or higher on the Reading portion of the Accuplacer test or completion of READ 0090 with a grade of C or higher

### Course Outcomes

#### 1. Explain meta-ethical theories.

##### Learning Objectives

Explain the concepts of Moral Realism, Moral Relativism and Ethical Intersubjectivism.  
Compare and contrast the major meta-ethical theories.  
Evaluate the meta-ethical theories for logical coherence and practical applicability.

#### 2. Identify key ethical concepts.

##### Learning Objectives

Recognize the nature of a moral dilemma.  
Explain the concept of reciprocity and its importance to ethical reasoning.  
Explain the concept of justice and its importance to moral reasoning.  
Recognize the degree to which individuals are morally culpable under different circumstances.

### **3. Recognize the central virtues in Medical Ethics.**

#### **Learning Objectives**

Explain the idea of autonomy and the importance of informed consent.  
Describe the duty of confidentiality and exceptions to this principle.  
Identify the difference between beneficence and non-maleficence.  
Apply the central virtues to case studies in Medical Ethics.

### **4. Apply the principal ethical theories.**

#### **Learning Objectives**

Explain the basic principles of Duty Ethics (Deontology) and its relevance to Medical Ethics.  
Explain the basic principles of Utilitarianism (Consequentialism) and its relevance to Medical Ethics.  
Compare and contrast Duty Ethics and Utilitarianism.  
Explain the basic principles of Virtue Ethics and its relevance to Medical Ethics.  
Apply the principal ethical theories to case studies in Medical Ethics.

### **5. Analyze the ethical dimensions of the U.S. health care system.**

#### **Learning Objectives**

Describe how the U.S. provides (or fails to provide) health care for its citizens.  
Contrast the U.S. system with systems in other developed countries.  
Evaluate the claim that all Americans have a right to basic health care.  
Identify the main reasons U.S. health care is so expensive.  
Evaluate different proposals for reforming the U.S. health care system.

### **6. Analyze the ethical dimensions of the obesity epidemic.**

#### **Learning Objectives**

Describe the main drivers behind the increase in the numbers of overweight and obese Americans.  
Evaluate the degree to which consumers and food corporations (respectively) are culpable for increasing obesity rates.  
Identify the problems with dieting and the weight-loss industry.  
Recognize ways in which individuals face discrimination because of their weight.  
Evaluate different proposals for addressing the obesity epidemic.

### **7. Analyze the ethical dimensions of the abortion debate.**

#### **Learning Objectives**

Describe the history of reproductive rights in the U.S.  
Identify the demographics of who has abortions in America and why they have them.  
Analyze the claim that the moral status of a fetus is equivalent to that of an adult.  
Evaluate the arguments for restricting or eliminating access to abortion.  
Evaluate the arguments for preserving or expanding access to abortion.  
Compare and contrast abstinence-only education with comprehensive sex ed.

### **8. Analyze the ethical dimensions of the controversy over assisted suicide.**

#### **Learning Objectives**

Explain the right of patients to establish advance directives and refuse care.  
Describe the purpose of palliative care and hospice services.  
Differentiate between withdrawal of care, assisted suicide, and euthanasia.  
Identify the problems with end-of-life care in the U.S. system.  
Evaluate the arguments for and against the legalization of assisted suicide.

### **9. Analyze the ethical dimensions of disability in America.**

#### **Learning Objectives**

Distinguish between the medical and social models of disability.  
Explain the significance and limitations of the Americans with Disabilities Act.  
Evaluate the ethics of how individuals with physical disabilities are treated in the U.S.  
Evaluate the ethics of how individuals with learning disabilities are treated in the U.S.  
Evaluate the ethics of how individuals with mental illnesses are treated in the U.S.  
Describe ways in which purported "disabilities" can be beneficial to individuals.

## 10. Analyze the ethical dimensions of organ transplantation in America.

### Learning Objectives

- Describe the criteria for receiving organ transplants and the reasons for denying them.
- Define QALYs (Quality-adjusted Life Years) and their relevance to organ transplantation.
- Evaluate Utilitarian arguments for determining who should receive transplants.
- Analyze the ethics of providing organs to individuals with self-destructive habits.
- Identify the reasons for the shortage of organs to transplant.
- Evaluate different proposals for increasing the supply of organs.

### SCC Accessibility Statement

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