INSTRUCTOR CONTACT INFORMATION

INSTRUCTOR: Matthew Cashen
EMAIL ADDRESS: mccashen@wustl.edu
OFFICE HOURS: Mondays, 12-1pm, and Thursdays, 2-3pm.
OFFICE ADDRESS & PHONE Wilson 107, 314-935-8036.

TEACHING ASSISTANT: Jill Delston
EMAIL ADDRESS: jbdelsto@artsci.wustl.edu
OFFICE HOURS: Wednesdays and Fridays, 10-11am

TEACHING ASSISTANT: Carmen Price
EMAIL ADDRESS: ceprice@artsci.wustl.edu
OFFICE HOURS: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11am-12pm.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this class we examine a number of questions and controversies related to the practice of medicine, medical research, and health-care policy. In the first half of the semester we explore the normative dimensions of disease, models of the doctor-patient relationship, and physician responsibilities. In the second half of the semester we turn to controversies in beginning- and end-of-life care, research ethics, and access to care.

Your goal for this class should be twofold: first, to think critically about these questions and articulate your own responses to them, and second, to develop your philosophical skills through written assignments and in-class dialogue.

REQUIREMENTS


Essays on electronic reserve. Go to http://eres.wustl.edu/eres/ and search our class. The password for our class is: patient.
Grades are based on the following factors: two papers, two exams, and participation. The grading breakdown, schedule, and a description of each assignment, follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>% of final grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Two papers</td>
<td>(25% each)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Two exams</td>
<td>(20% each)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. In-class participation</td>
<td>(10% total)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two papers are due over the course of the semester. Each paper should be four to five pages in length, double-spaced, with one-inch margins and a standard 12-point font. You have three opportunities to turn in your two papers:

1. Paper on topics from the first third of the term. Due Friday, 10-05, in class.
2. Paper on topics from the second third of the term. Due Monday, 11-12, in class.
3. Paper on topics from the last third of the term. Due Friday, 12-14 by 5pm, Philosophy Dept., Wilson.

Thus, you choose the topics on which you write, but the topics you choose determine the due dates for your papers. So, if you write on a topic discussed between 08-29 and 10-03, your paper is due on 10-05. If you write on a topic discussed between 10-08 and 11-09, your paper is due on 11-12. And if you write on a topic discussed between 11-14 and 12-07, your paper is due on 12-14. Advice on writing a philosophy paper is included in an appendix near the end of this packet.

Two exams. The first exam is on Wed., 10-17, and covers material from the first half of the term. The second exam is on Mon., 12-10, and covers material from the second half of the term. Information on the exam format and expectations is included in an appendix at the end of this packet.

Participation. You can’t do philosophy without engaging in live dialogue, and in this class, participation is formally factored into your grade. You will begin with an 85% in participation. Those who regularly attend, are attentive, and contribute to class dialogue can expect higher grades. Those who do not contribute, arrive late, skip, etc., can expect lower grades. This is a large class, so attendance will be taken. Up to four absences is acceptable and will not affect your grade.

To facilitate dialogue, we will break into small discussion groups six times over the course of the term. The three instructors will rotate through the small groups, so that each instructor has the opportunity to meet with each small group twice. Look for details on the small-group sessions one week before the first session is scheduled. Two final notes:
Plagiarism will not be tolerated. All cases of plagiarism will be reported to the university committee on academic integrity and will result, at a minimum, in failure of the course. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, ask us. If you find yourself in a bind, there is always a better solution than cheating.

Course evaluations. While completing an evaluation is not required, we ask that you take the time to do so. All evaluations are confidential, and we will not see the results until after grades are submitted. Look for more information about course evaluations in the second half of the term.

SYLLABUS

Note: an asterisk (*) designates readings available on electronic reserve (Eres).

**Ethical theories and principles.**

**WED 08-29** Introduction to class.
**MON 09-03** LABOR DAY—NO CLASS.
**MON 09-10** SMALL GROUPS.

**The nature of health, disease, and Illness.**

**WED 09-12** Mordacci & Sobel, “Health: a Comprehensive Concept.”*
**FRI 09-14** Boorse, “On the Distinction between Disease and Illness.”*
**MON 09-17** Caplan, “The ‘Unnaturalness’ of Aging.”*
**WED 09-19** Conrad, “Notes on the Medicalization of Deviant Behavior.”*
**FRI 09-21** Caplan, “What’s Morally Wrong with Eugenics?”*
**MON 09-24** SMALL GROUPS.

**The physician-patient relationship.**

**FRI 09-28** Childress & Siegler, “Metaphors and Models of the Doctor-Patient Relationship.”*
Informed consent and the refusal of treatment.

MON 10-08  
WED 10-10  
FRI 10-12  
MON 10-15  
WED 10-17  
FRI 10-19  

Controversies in end-of-life care.

MON 10-22  
WED 10-24  
FRI 10-26  
MON 10-29  
WED 10-31  
FRI 11-02  
MON 11-05  

Abortion and stem-cell research.

WED 11-07  
FRI 11-09  
MON 11-12  
WED 11-14  
FRI 11-16  

* indicates additional readings.
Controversies in research ethics.


**WED 11-21** THANKSGIVING BREAK—NO CLASS.

**FRI 11-23** THANKSGIVING BREAK—NO CLASS.

**MON 11-26** Angell, "Ethical Imperialism"* and Christakis, "Ethics are Local”*.

**WED 11-28** Hellman and Hellman, "Of Mice But Not Men.”*.

**FRI 11-30** SMALL GROUPS.

Access to health care.

**MON 12-03** Daniels, “Is There a Right to Health Care…?” pp. 46-52.

**WED 12-05** Gostin, “Securing Health or Just Health Care?” pp. 72-78.

**FRI 12-07** Buchanan, “Managed Care: Rationing…,” pp. 83-89

**MON 12-10** IN-CLASS EXAM TWO.

**FRI 12-14** PAPER THREE DUE.

APPENDIX ONE: HOW TO WRITE A PHILOSOPHY PAPER.

To write an excellent philosophy paper, you need to do two things: first, come up with a good idea, and next, defend your idea clearly and coherently.

**Step one: come up with a good idea.**

By a ‘good idea’, I mean an original and credible response to an ongoing controversy or debate. Good ideas are hard to come by, but there are a few things you can do to get yourself on the right track.

First, pick a topic that interests you. If a topic doesn’t interest you, it won’t interest your reader, either. Next, look for an argument from a reading on the topic you have chosen that seems to you to be either mistaken or correct but in need of elaboration, and then try to improve that argument. Thinking about how to improve an interesting but incorrect or incomplete argument is an excellent way to generate good ideas. Finally, talk to someone about your idea before committing it to paper. Bouncing an idea off others will help you see things you didn’t see on your own, and we welcome and encourage you to bounce ideas off of us.

Remember, too, that a good idea doesn’t have to be a grand idea. Don’t try to settle the abortion debate, prove the existence of god, or discover the meaning of life. A good idea
only needs to make readers think about a familiar topic in a new and productive way by introducing novel considerations, or by showing that an established argument needs to be rejected or revised.

**Step two: outline and compose your paper.**

To defend your idea, you will construct an argument. The key to constructing a good argument is clarity, and so you want to be as clear and as explicit as possible. For that, you need to know in advance of writing exactly how your argument will proceed, and for that, you need an outline.

Most good philosophy papers follow an established outline, and we encourage you to follow this same outline when writing your paper. Briefly: first, identify a problem; next, explain the problem; third, resolve the problem. Finally, a really good paper will close by anticipating and responding to an objection. A detailed outline of your paper should look something like this:

a. **Introduction.** Begin with a brief paragraph introducing your topic and the idea you will defend: what issue will you address, why is it interesting, and what do you plan to say about it? Some advice:
   1. Explicitly state your thesis (e.g., “In this paper, I argue...”). This way, the reader will know exactly what you intend to say, and as a result, it will be easier to follow your argument.
   2. Don’t be afraid to use the first-person voice (“I argue that...”). You are making an argument, so take responsibility for it.

b. **Explain the problem.** Your idea will be your response to an ongoing controversy or debate. Here, you explain that controversy or debate. If you are critiquing someone else’s argument, this is where you explain that argument. Some advice:
   1. Explain the argument you plan to critique accurately and charitably. If you misrepresent it, or if you represent it as an obviously bad argument, your critique will be either irrelevant or uninteresting.
   2. You don’t need to explain every aspect of the debate you’re addressing, or everything an author says in a paper you critique. Focus on what your reader needs to know to understand and assess the argument you are making.
   3. Define any controversial or technical terms. Don’t assume the reader understands them, or understands them in just the way you do. A good test: see if your roommate understands your paper. If not, revise.
4. Provide citations whenever you quote or paraphrase an author. For this class, it is sufficient to provide the author's name and page number (e.g., Thomson, pp. 25-6.).

c. **Make your argument.** This is where you defend your thesis and try to convince your reader that your idea really is a good one. This part of the paper should be uniquely your own: it represents what you have to say. Advice:

1. When making your argument, always make your reasoning explicit. Don’t assume that something is self-explanatory and don’t ask rhetorical questions: asking a rhetorical question is the same thing as assuming that something is self-explanatory.

2. A good argument doesn’t skim over all of the possible responses to a given position. Make one argument and make it well by presenting that argument with clarity and attention to detail. The more detailed and focused your argument, the better.

3. Use gender-neutral language (e.g., “he or she,” “him or her”). Some of the authors we read this term do not, but that is no excuse. If you do not intend your argument to exclude women, make that clear with non-exclusionary language.

d. **Anticipate and respond to an objection.** This is optional, but it is helpful for you in thinking through your argument, and it is helpful when it comes to convincing your reader of your view. Advice:

1. Try to anticipate the strongest objection that an opponent might raise. If you can do that, and meet that objection, you’re in good shape.

2. Coming up with a strong objection to a view you believe to be correct is tough. Talk to a classmate or friend about your argument and see if she or he has any objections you can use.

**Some common informal fallacies to avoid.**

To write an excellent paper, you need to make a good argument. Here are a few common "informal fallacies," or errors in reasoning, to avoid. Fallacies can be hard to spot, and fallacious arguments often seem persuasive, but a fallacious argument can never establish its conclusion.

a. **Petitio Principii:** to beg the question, e.g., to assume the truth of the claim you are attempting to prove in your attempt to prove it. Begging the question is the most common of these fallacies.
Example: we cannot allow physician-assisted suicide, for the results of doing so would be deadly.

Analysis: of course the results of allowing physician-assisted suicide would be deadly. That is the point. The question is whether those results would, for that reason, be objectionable.

Example: we must never tolerate censorship of any kind, for unbounded freedom of speech is the mark of a great society.

Analysis: to favor some forms of censorship is to reject the claim that unbounded freedom of speech is the mark of a great society. That is the claim in need of justification.

b. Argument *ad verecundiam*: an appeal to inappropriate authority. The authority often is someone or something with no particular expertise in the issue at hand, but in moral disputes, virtually all appeals to authority are inappropriate because the disputants disagree as to just who or what counts as an authority.

Example: the use of nuclear weapons is never morally excusable; even the scientists responsible for their creation opposed their use.

Analysis: expertise in one field does not guarantee expertise in some other field. The appeal is to an irrelevant authority.

Example: no religion has ever recognized a marriage between two people of the same sex, so why should our government do so now?

Analysis: (arguably) religious authority is not authoritative in civic matters, on the grounds that members of a state will disagree about which, if any, religions are truly authoritative.

c. Argument *ad hominem*: to contend that a claim is false not by attacking the argument that supports it, but rather, by attacking the person advancing the argument.

Example: the senator’s call to universalize health care is nothing less than a call to socialize medicine, and no one wants socialism in this country.

Analysis: to accuse a position of being ‘socialist’ (or ‘conservative’ or ‘liberal’, etc.,) is not an argument because it does not address the content of that position. It is mere name-calling.

Example: don’t listen to what Professor Cashen says about your paper; he’s mean-spirited and dull, and his jokes are stupid.
Analysis: I am not mean-spirited. (And even if I am, I may still have something useful to say about your papers.)

d. **Tu quoque**: sometimes called a circumstantial ad hominem, this is to draw an irrelevant connection between some claim and the circumstances of the person defending that claim.

Example: Singer's claim that we are morally obligated to donate money to famine relief up to the point of marginal utility cannot be right; why, he himself admits to donating only 25% of his annual income.

Analysis: to accuse someone of hypocrisy is not to refute that person's position.

Example: vegetarianism is an absurd moral position; the logic that forbids eating meat also should forbid wearing leather, but I see vegetarians wear leather shoes and belts all the time.

Analysis: same as above.

e. **Equivocation**: to equivocate is to confuse, or deliberately to switch between, two or more different meanings of the same word.

Example: Socrates was wrong to claim that Archelaus led a poor life, for he was the richest man in all of Macedon.

Analysis: Socrates didn't mean Archelaus had little material wealth; he meant that material wealth is of little value.

Example: warm beer is better than nothing; nothing is better than an ice cold beer; therefore, warm beer is better than an ice cold beer.

Analysis: equivocates on the meaning of 'nothing'. In the first instance, 'nothing' means something like 'nothing at all', while in the second instance 'nothing' means something like 'no other beverage choice'.

f. **Argument ad ignorantiam**: to argue that a claim is true on the grounds that it never has been proved false, or that a claim is false on the grounds that it never has been proved true. This sounds like an obvious mistake, but it is very common.

Example: capital punishment doesn't deter crime: studies consistently have failed to show a decrease in violent crimes in states with the death penalty.

Analysis: the studies give evidence for the claim that capital punishment does not deter, but they do not prove it. Outside variables, for example, may affect the studies' relevance.
Example: for us to allow voluntary euthanasia today is the first step to allowing non-voluntary euthanasia in the future, and eventually, involuntary euthanasia.

Analysis: All so-called slippery slope arguments like this one—arguments which claim that, if we allow x, then y and z are bound to follow—are fallacies ad ignorantiam. They are predictions, some more plausible than others, but they are not legitimate arguments.

Special note: arguments very rarely, if ever, prove their conclusions. Instead, the best arguments usually are the ones that make the most convincing cases. Thus, ad ignorantiam is not de facto inappropriate. Just be modest about how much your arguments establish, and take special care not to draw a conclusion to which you are not entitled.

Some advice on how to take this advice.

Keep in mind that any one person’s advice on writing papers is bound to contain some idiosyncrasies. Similarly, any one reader is bound to have some idiosyncrasies of her or his own. My suggestions here are very general and should serve you well when writing standard-purpose philosophy papers, but don’t over-generalize them. Papers written in different disciplines may have different purposes (say, in English or Sociology). Nor can you discount the possibility of coming across a reader in another philosophy class who disagrees with one or more of these suggestions. Finally, you don’t let strict adherence to these suggestions stifle your own style so much that you loose your voice. Your aim in writing a philosophy paper is to defend your ideas clearly and convincingly, and that aim should guide your writing style.

A note on the grading of papers.

Your paper grades will be based on (a) the strength of your ideas and (b) how well you defend those ideas. A well-written, well-structured paper built around a bad, confused, or misconstrued idea can do reasonably well, and a badly written paper built around an excellent idea can do reasonably well, too. Outstanding papers (‘A’ papers) will have both strong ideas and clear and convincing arguments. Any and all cases of plagiarism will result in an automatic ‘F’ for the semester, no exceptions. All late papers will be downgraded 2 points out of 100 for each day they are tardy. We cannot read drafts of papers, but we welcome and encourage you to meet with us to discuss your papers as you write them.

APPENDIX TWO: INFORMATION ON THE EXAMS.

The exams are designed to gauge your comprehension of the readings and issues studied in this class. Your goal when taking the exams is to demonstrate your comprehension by explaining the readings and issues in your own words. That means not only recounting a particular author’s conclusions, but also explaining the reasons she or he gives in support of those conclusions, and explaining all controversial or technical terms.
Exam format.

One week before each exam you will be given a list of passages from the assigned readings. On the day of the exam, we will give you four passages from that list. You will choose three passages, identify the author, and then explain what the passage means in the context of the issue it addresses.

You may bring your books and the assigned articles from electronic reserve to consult during the exam. You will not be allowed to consult your notes, excepting marginalia in your texts.

Grading of the exams.

Answers can vary from dead wrong to approximately right to precisely right. Precisely right answers (a) correctly identify the author, (b) precisely explain the view advocated, and (c) contrast that view with a competing view discussed in this class. Such answers will receive 10 out of 10 points. Approximately right answers might be incomplete, but they successfully explain the view advocated and the reasons given. They will receive 9 points. Answers in the general ballpark will receive 8 points. Answers that produce some reluctant acceptance, 7 points. Answers that are dead wrong, but that nonetheless show some appreciation for the topic discussed, will receive 6 points. Blanks will receive 0 points.

On the exams, we are concerned principally with your ability to clearly and accurately explain the views represented in the chosen passages. The more detail you provide in explaining the view, the better you will do. But be careful: don’t regurgitate everything you can think of that relates in some way or another to the view represented in the chosen passage. Focus your responses on the argument at hand.