Organ transplants have proven to be a successful way of saving people's lives and improving their well-being. But these procedures also raise serious questions that shape and challenge our thinking.
across a range of ethical issues: When and by what means can we harvest organs from others? Given the scarcity of organs available for transplant, how should we decide who should get them? Given how risky and expensive transplant surgeries can be, should we even be doing them in the first place? Are there ethical limits on what can be transplanted—for instance, is it permissible to perform face transplants? In this course, we will take a close look at these and other issues as we examine the work of philosophers, doctors, and policy makers. Our aim will be to get a better understanding of the ethics of organ transplantation. But, as we will see, the issues that we will investigate are also relevant to other areas of bioethics, and to moral and political philosophy more generally.

**Texts**
Selected readings available from the course web site

**Assignments**
This course will have three graded components:

- **Short writing assignments & participation (25%).**
  You will be asked to complete four short writing assignments (1-2 double spaced pages each) throughout the semester. These assignments are designed to allow you critically engage with the readings and help prepare you for our class discussions. They will be evaluated for accuracy and effort. These short papers will be combined with your class participation to determine your performance for this portion of the course.
  
  You need to turn in your short paper (by email, details below) before the start of class on the day that it is due. You should also bring a hard copy of your paper with you to class. Please type "Phil 233 Assignment #" in the subject line of your email.

- For assignments 1 and 3, email your
paper to Nate.
- For assignments 2 and 4, email your paper to David.

- **Mid-term exam (30%).**
  The mid-term will be take-home exam covering material on sections 2 and 3 of the course. I will provide you with the questions approximately one week before they are due. The exam will be due at 3:30pm on Friday, March 2.

- **Final exam (45%).**
  The final exam will also be a take-home exam. It will cover material from sections 4-6 of the course and will be due on Wednesday, May 9 (details to come). I will provide you with the questions during the final week of class.

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**Advice and Resources**

Many of the reading assignments for this course are short. But don't let that fool you—philosophy is hard. How do you deal with this? Well, here are some suggestions: (i) Read the material more than once. (ii) After reading an essay, try and summarize the main claims and arguments in your own words—the will help you come up with questions and objections. (iii) Start the written assignments—especially the mid-term and final—early (doing this will help you review your answers with a clear head). (iv) Most importantly, if you're puzzled or confused about something, ask questions!

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**Policies**

In order to help ensure a successful class, please heed the following rules and policies:

- **Due Dates.**
  Baring unusual circumstances, the due dates (especially for the mid-term and final) on the syllabus are non-negotiable. If you think you
have reason to miss an assignment, it is best to inform me well in advance.

- **Classroom Environment.**
  Please arrive to class on time. All cell phones must be turned off during class. Texting is not permitted. Abuse of these courtesies may lead to penalties.

- **Statement of Academic Integrity.** Upon arrival at Washington University, you signed a statement indicating that you have read and that you understand that you will abide by the University's Academic Integrity Policy (available [here](https://sites.google.com/site/phil233bioethicsspU)). In this class, you will be expected to honor that commitment. This means that all work presented as original must, in fact, be original; the ideas and contributions of others (be they quotes, summaries, or paraphrases) must be appropriately acknowledged. You are responsible for (re)familiarizing yourself with these policies; ignorance will not be an excuse. If you have any questions, feel free to talk to me.

**Tentative Schedule of Readings and Assignments**

**Section 1. Introduction**

Wed, Jan 18:

- Course introduction and overview

**Section 2. Who is Dead?**

It seems like a simple question—who is dead? But, as we will see, this question proves to be very difficult to answer. Moreover, how we answer it has significant implications for the supply of organs available for transplant surgeries. So understanding the nature and ethics of death is central to debates about the
permissibility of organ transplantation.

Mon, Jan 23:

- Read: syllabus, University's Academic Integrity Policy, Jim Pryor, "How to read a philosophy article"
- Harris, "New for Aspiring Doctors, the People Skills Test"
- Harvard Medical School Definition of Brain Death
- Presidential Commission Report [read pp. 3-12, 31-38 only]

Wed, Jan 25:

- Veatch, "The Whole-Brain-Oriented Concept of Death: An Outmoded Philosophical Formulation"

Mon, Jan 30:

- Singer, "Is the Sanctity of Life Ethic Terminally Ill?"
- Short writing assignment 1

Wed, Feb 1:

- McMahan, "The Metaphysics of Brain Death"

Mon, Feb 6:

- McMahan, con't

Wed, Feb 8:

- Stein, "Technique Spots Patients Misdiagnised as Being in 'Vegetative State'"
- Veatch, "The Definition of Death: Problems for Public Policy"

Section 3. Ethical Issues in Organ Procurement
The number of people in need of organ transplants greatly exceeds the number of organs that is available. In light of this fact, doctors, philosophers,
and policy makers have considered various—and morally contentious—ways of increasing the supply. For instance, is it permissible for people to ask others to donate their organs? Should we make organ donation compulsory? Should we allow the buying and selling of organs? What other options might there be?

If you're interested in registering as an organ donor, click here.

Mon, Feb 13:
- Veatch, "Gift or Salvage: Two Models of Organ Procurement"

Wed, Feb 15:
- Veatch, "The Myth of Presumed Consent"

Mon, Feb 20:
- Spital & Erin, "Conscription of Cadaveric Organs for Transplantation"
- Short writing assignment 2

Wed, Feb 22:
- Kluge, "Organ Donation and Retrieval: Whose Body is it Anyway?"

Mon, Feb 27:
- Matas, "The Case for Living Kidney Sales"

Wed, Feb 29:
- Caplan, "Transplantation at Any Price?"
- Kahn & Delmonico, "The Consequences of Public Policy to Buy and Sell Organs for Transplantation"
- YouTube clip: trailer for the movie *Indecent Proposal*

Friday, March 2: Mid-term Exam DUE by 3:30pm (details to come).
Section 4. Resource Allocation: Who Gets the Organs?
Given the undersupply of organs available for transplant, we need to make decisions about who should get them. But we want to be able to do this in a way that is morally justifiable. In this part of the course, we investigate questions like the following: Should we give priority to the neediest patients? Or should the probability of success be given greater weight? Should one’s race or ability to contribute to society matter? Should those who led unhealthy lives (e.g., alcoholics) be given less priority? Is it appropriate to allow people to donate their organs only to a specific individual (like their spouse)?

Mon, March 5:

Wed, March 7
- Childress, “Putting Patients First”

Mon, March 12
- No class--spring break

Wed, March 14
- No class--spring break

Mon, March 19
- Moss & Siegler, “Should Alcoholics Compete Equally for Liver Transplantation?”

Wed, March 21
- Atterbury, “The Alcoholic in the Lifeboat”

Mon, March 26
- Murphy, “Would my Story Get Me a Kidney?”

Wed, March 28
- Kluge, “Designated Organ Donation”
Short writing assignment 3

Section 5. Resource Allocation: Transplants, Scarce Resources, and Health Care
While transplant surgeries save lives, they are also risky and tremendously expensive. Moreover, there are other life-saving technologies that prove to be better with regard to both success and cost. In light of this, should we be allocating our scarce health care resources to risky and expensive treatments like transplants, or are there better ways to use these resources to provide medical services? In this part of the course, we look at both the theory and the practice of allocating scarce resources and providing risky treatments. We will also explore how thinking about resource allocation might inform our thinking about how to improve the US health care system.

Mon, April 2
- Munson, Summary of Affordable Care Act (Obama Healthcare Law)
- Munson, Summary of Republican Health Care proposal

Wed, April 4
- Harris, "QALYfying the Value of Life"

Mon, April 9
- Daniels, "Justice, Health, and Healthcare"
- Bradley & Taylor, "To Fix Health, Help the Poor"

Wed, April 11
- Engelhardt, "Rights to Heath Care"
- Short writing assignment 4

Mon, April 16
- Munson, Summary of Affordable Care Act (Obama Healthcare Law)
- Summary of Republican Health Care proposal

Section 6. Face Transplants: New Medical
Technology, Well-being, and Identity
Doctors in France recently performed the first complete face transplant on a 38 year-old woman suffering from a severe deformity that resulted from a genetic disorder. This surgery raised a series of ethical questions that have led some to conclude that such procedures are not morally justified. Consider: Since the procedure is life improving (rather than life saving), why should we accept the costs and the risks that it brings? Who should be eligible for such surgeries? Given that faces are so central to how we recognize one another, are these transplants fair to the deceased donors (and their family and friends)?

Wed, April 18
- Freedman, "Equipoise and the Ethics of Clinical Research"

Mon, April 23
- Wiggins, et. al., "On the Ethics of Face Transplantation Research"
- Photos of face transplant patients HERE (note: graphic images)

Wed, April 25
- Butler et. al., "Face Transplantation: When and for Whom?"
- Freeman et. al., "Justifying Surgery's Last Taboo: The Ethics of Face Transplants"
- INTERVIEW with Charla Nash, face transplant recipient.

Wed, May 9: Final Exam DUE at 1:00pm (details to come)

Attachments (29)