PHIL343 Biomedical Ethics  
Fall 2021, M-W-F 8:35-9:25  
MAASS 217

Instructor: Prof Iwao Hirose  
Office: Leacock 924  
In-person office hours: Monday 9:35-10:30  
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Course Description
This course will investigate philosophical issues arising from the practice of health care and health care system. The course is divided into three parts. The first part is focused on the central issues in conventional bioethics. Topics include non-therapeutic abortion, infanticide (after-birth abortion), physician-assisted suicide, prenatal screening, genetic enhancement, etc. The purpose of the first part is to understand the philosophical way of thinking, as distinguished from legal or political thinking, in medical contexts. The second part is focused on the ethics of allocating scarce health care resources. We will focus on three fundamental questions concerning justice in health and health care: (1) What is health and how do we measure health benefit?; (2) When are health inequalities unjust?; (3) How can we meet health needs fairly under resource constraints? The purpose of the second section is to understand how a population’s health and health care system should be evaluated. The third part is concerned with the ethical issues arising from collective responses to the outbreak of novel coronavirus and influenza.

Trigger alert
• This course is a 300-level course in philosophy. It is not a professional training course in medicine (hence, taking this course is not likely to increase the chance that you get admitted to a medical school in future). We do NOT assume prior knowledge in philosophy. However, we DO assume the basic level of analytical and writing skills in humanities. Therefore, the instructor and teaching assistant will not coach you how to write academic essay in humanities. It is advisable that you take one or two 200 level courses in humanities before taking this course. In any case, we strongly recommend reading
  o Jim Pryor’s Guidelines on Writing a Philosophy Paper (http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html), and/or
  o Vaughn and McIntosh, Writing Philosophy: A Guide for Canadian Students (OUP Canada, 2013), and/or
  o consulting with McGill Writing Centre Tutorial Service (https://www.mcgill.ca/mwc/tutorial-service)
• In this course, we will discuss sensitive topics (e.g. abortion, miscarriage, infanticide, euthanasia, killing, and so on). Please be prepared to discuss sensitive topics in a serious and respectful manner.

Format
There will be two lectures and one conference per week. Lectures meet Monday and Wednesday at MAASS 217. The first lecture will be on September 1. Conferences meet Friday and start on September 17.

Textbook:
• Articles on MyCourses, including a draft of Iwao Hirose, The Ethics of Pandemics (Routledge, 2022).
Supplementary books (recommended):


Reading schedule
Please see the separate file for tentative schedule of required readings. The course instructor reserves the right to alter the schedule if the ongoing pandemic affects the instructor or students.

Requirements and assessments
In order to pass this course, you must complete both (1) midterm take-home exam and (2) final exam.
- 2 assignments (10pt x 2): max 20pt
- Midterm take-home exam: max 20pt
- Conference attendance and participation: max 10pt (attendance max 7pt, participation max 3pt; See the absence penalty policy below)
- Final take-home exam: max 50pt

Assignments
Each response must be maximum 1,000 words (excluding references and end/footnotes) and submitted through the MyCourses assignment function.

Midterm take-home exam
Midterm exam should be maximum 2,000 words (excluding references and end/footnotes) and submitted through the MyCourses assignment function.

Late submissions
Late submission of midterm take-home exam and assignments will be downgraded at a rate of 2pt per day on their grade for the course (not 2% on the essay grade), including weekend/holiday days. Requests for extensions will be considered (but not automatically granted) only when requested before the exam is due and substantiated at the time of request by a doctor’s note documenting illness. Requests must be submitted to TA, cc-ing Professor Hirose. To avoid a late submission penalty, submit well before the due time.

Conference attendance and participation
Weekly conference attendance is mandatory. There will be two conference groups. Please sign up for one of them via Minerva before the first meeting on September 17. Conference is important part of this course because discussion plays fundamental role in philosophy. In conference, you put forward your own arguments, and your arguments will be cross-examined by your classmates under supervision of TA. The success of conference discussion depends on attendance, preparation and participation of students. Therefore, we take attendance and participation very seriously. There will be disproportional penalty on conference absences. [1 absence, 1pt reduction; 2 absences, 3pt reduction; 3 absences, 6pt reduction; and 4 absences, 10pt reduction] This means 4 or more conference absences will result in nil point for attendance and participation, regardless of the level of your participation in conference. The attendance grade (max 3pt) must be earned during
conferences. This means that if you attend all conferences but remain passive in conference discussion, you will receive at most 7pt.

Final exam
Examination will take place on the date that the University sets. In Fall 2021, the exam will be timed, take-home exam, where you will write two essays.

The University requires that the following notices appear on every syllabus:

- McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information).
- In accord with McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.
- In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University’s control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.

This course includes in-person teaching, and learning activities have been planned in accordance with public health directives and McGill’s protocols. It is important, however, to ensure you have read and abide by the following:

- Please review and follow the Health Guidelines for Students, and it is imperative that you understand when to stay home if, for example, you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms.
- If you develop COVID-19 symptoms while on campus, please follow the required guidelines, which include ensuring you have a mask on, isolate in a closed, private room, immediately call 1-877-644-4545 (Info-Santé) for instructions, and notify the University by calling 514-398-3000.
- Masks are required in classroom and teaching lab settings, at all times, and masks will be available for you on campus. Masks are also to be worn when entering and circulating in buildings and classrooms.
- If you are in a situation that might require you to miss some lectures or assignments because of short-term absences due to COVID-19, you are to request an academic accommodation using the online form found under the “Personal” menu in MINERVA; the form is called “COVID-19 Academic Accommodations Request Form”. You are asked to use this form instead of requesting accommodations directly from your instructor.

Finally, the context of attending University during a pandemic will bring on additional stress and may impact your wellbeing. Please do not hesitate to reach out for support if necessary, and access the many resources available, including Student Services, the Office of the Dean of Students, and your Faculty’s Student Affairs Office.