

ETHICS: AUTONOMY AND HEALTH (SPRING 2014)

END-OF SEMESTER ASSIGNMENT OPTIONS

ASSIGNMENT OPTION #1: EXTENDED CASE ANALYSIS OR FINAL PROJECT

For this option, as announced on 4/7, you would complete either an extended case analysis or extended final project. This single assignment would be worth **40%**, and it would be due on **5/9 @ 11:59 pm**. This means that nothing would be due on 4/12. You would still submit to Blackboard. The instructions are the same for the original assignments (pasted below) with a few small changes.

- Since this extended assignment is substituting two smaller assignments, it would need to be longer—the equivalent of **3,300 words**.
- To make sure the level of research is comparable for the other option, if you choose to do one extended assignment instead, you **must include at least three quality outside resources**.
- If you do an extended case analysis, you would have to write a 3,300-word term paper using the exact same format as the original assignment (so you would still cover the five main headings in the ethics case work-up). You could go into more depth for each of these headings, or you could also add the sixth heading (preventive ethics) and/or seventh heading (moral distress) of the case work-up. The cases you have to choose from are the same (Jackie's or Miguel's). You would not create a visual component for this particular option.
- If you do an extended final project, your research topic would remain the same. You would just go into more philosophical/moral depth. You could still create a visual component for this particular option (as described in the original instructions for the final project).

If you already completed some work on one of the other assignments (e.g., you've decided to do an extended case analysis, but you have already started some work on the final project option),

you can send me your work via email, and I will boost your final participation grade for the course. It will be a relatively small boost, but it could make the difference if you are on a border between, for example, a B+ or A- for the participation portion of your grade.

ASSIGNMENT OPTION #2: CASE ANALYSIS + FINAL PROJECT

For this option, you would complete the case analysis (worth 20%, due 4/12 @ 11:59 pm) and final project (worth 20%, due 5/9 @ 11:59 pm). The instructions for these assignments are the same as what has been posted all semester. I have copied and pasted the original instructions below for your convenience.

CASE ANALYSIS INSTRUCTIONS (FOR OPTION #2)

Using the ethics case work-up handout (separate document on course website), you need to methodically break down a clinical ethics case. Your analysis should conclude with a concrete recommendation for what the medical professionals should do to resolve the case. Put yourself in the shoes of a clinical ethicist called for guidance. The analysis should thoughtfully integrate at least **two class readings** and **two outside readings**. The case analysis should be 1,500 words (for option #2) and submitted to Blackboard.

You need to highlight **one key ethical issue** (or a small cluster of closely related issues). All of the cases deal with problems associated with advance directives or previously stated wishes, so you should direct your attention there. However, you ultimately have freedom on which issue is the subject of your focused analysis.

For your outside materials, you should find college-appropriate research. For example, non-academic blogs and websites are not good places to find rigorous bioethical analysis. I recommend using the PubMed database, Philosopher's Index database, the blog and journal of the American Journal of Bioethics (<http://www.bioethics.net>), the Bioethics Research Library (Healy 102, <https://bioethics.georgetown.edu>), and other similar sources. News articles could be appropriate, but you need to use your discretion. Your research materials should really help illuminate key ethical issues in the case you choose to discuss. **All outside materials need to be included in a bibliography** (not part of word count).

FORMAT

The format and organization of your paper should roughly follow the layout of the case work-up. Some of the elements of the work-up are less relevant than others, depending on your chosen case and issue. Use your discretion, and make sure you do not neglect aspects of the work-up that are crucial for your analysis. But although you have some leeway here, some of the elements of the case work-up absolutely must be addressed in your case analysis.

These main headings must be included in your analysis (with these headings marking sections of your paper):

1. What are the facts?
 - For this, simply copy and paste the case description that you have chosen. This will not be part of your word count.
2. What is the issue?
 - Again, do not try to offer a comprehensive account of all morally relevant issue. Focus on one main issue that will drive your analysis.
3. Frame the issue.
 - Identify the relevant decision-maker; apply criteria to be used in reaching clinical decisions; establish health care professionals' moral/professional obligations
4. Identify and weigh alternative courses of action, and then decide.
 - You have leeway here in what you highlight/weigh/discuss, but you must offer a concrete recommendation for what should be done in this case in regards to the issue you have identified.
5. Critique

CASE DESCRIPTIONS (CHOOSE ONE)

Case 1:

Jackie, fifty years old, was hiking in the Rockies with her spouse and children when she fell into a ravine, hitting numerous rocks along the way. Three months have passed since the accident, and Jackie remains in a vegetative state. With a traumatic brain injury such as this, it is

unlikely that Jackie will have a good recovery of consciousness or function, though it is not impossible.¹ For the past few weeks, Jackie's physicians have tried to convince her family to end what the physicians consider to be futile treatment. They have an instructional advance directive (AD) on file for Jackie that she filled out seven years ago when she was diagnosed with metastatic breast cancer. Jackie's cancer went into remission, but she never filled out a new AD. The AD states that Jackie does "not want to be kept alive on machines" if she will "not have a good quality of life" or if her care causes a "burden to her loved ones." In other parts of her AD and in her prior discussions with family from that period, it is evident that Jackie did not want to live with a permanent disability, though the type and severity of disability were never specified. Her physicians are now using the AD to insist that Jackie would not want to be kept alive, since she does not have a good quality of life, and even if she does become conscious again, it is likely that she will experience moderate to severe disability.

Her children, Sandra and Max, are both in their late twenties, and they are inclined to go along with the doctors' recommendation to discontinue life-supporting care. Looking over all the machines that are supporting his mother's respiration and nutrition and hydration, Max told the doctors that his mother "would not want to be kept in such an undignified state." Their father and Jackie's spouse, Daniel, believes that his wife's AD should not be considered in these circumstances, however. He is convinced that his wife became a new person after surviving cancer, and she has a strong will to live no matter what the circumstances. He believes that her AD is too vague and too outdated to be reliable, and the physicians should respect his judgment. Sandra and Max are worried that their father will want to keep Jackie alive indefinitely.

Case 2.

Miguel celebrated his twenty-first birthday six months ago. Around the same time, his roommate Vick, a Jehovah's Witness, suggested that Miguel start going to church with him. After attending church for a month, Miguel experienced a religious conversion. His personality, values, and behavior radically changed. Before the conversion, Miguel was

¹ <http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJM199406023302206>. See especially the summary in table 4. Note: this will not count as an outside source for this paper.

introverted, slightly depressed, and unmotivated. After the conversion, Miguel became excitable and increasingly immersed in church activities. Over winter vacation, he decided not to travel home for the holidays. His atheist parents were completely baffled by their son's changes, and he was tired of fighting with them about it. He went snowboarding with some of his new friends from church instead, and he had a major accident. He lost a significant amount of blood in transport to the hospital, and he is now unconscious.

His parents, Lorea and Paul, quickly arrived at the hospital and found Vick at Miguel's bedside. Vick insisted to the parents that Jehovah's Witnesses do not support blood transfusions under any circumstances, and he showed the parents a paper that Miguel wrote for his Introduction to Bioethics class. In the paper, Miguel explicitly states that he would not want to receive blood transfusions even if it were medically necessary. The doctor informed the parents that Miguel needs a blood transfusion soon, or he will die. The doctor handed Lorea and Paul the consent form for standard treatment. The doctor told the parents that if they had been any later in arriving, the hospital would have provided the blood anyway as an emergency measure.

Lorea read her son's clearly written college paper, and she feels conflicted. She does not understand her son's new religious faith, but she knows that he would not want the blood transfusion. Paul is infuriated that his wife is even considering not signing the form. He exclaims, "Our son's life is more important than this silly fad he's going through!" Paul and Lorea debate whether it is possible that Miguel has actually gone through a life-transforming religious conversion—a conversion that is worth their son sacrificing his life.

FINAL PROJECT INSTRUCTIONS (FOR OPTION #2)

You should find a topic relevant to the course that excites you. The topic should be manageable; in other words, "autonomy of pediatric patients" is not a manageable topic because it is too vast. Narrow in on a smaller topic that you can lay out and discuss critically. Once you find an alluring issue, you will need to research some of the necessary facts related to the topic, and you will also need to reflect on the relevant arguments that scholars have published. Then you need to make your own contribution. This project is meant to serve as a launching pad in case you wish to pursue it in the future for advocacy or scholarship purposes. You are free to take up any well-argued and well-researched position you find compelling. You need to email me by April 1st what your idea is for this project (failure to do so will affect

your participation grade). Your project can be in one of four formats: 1) a traditional term paper, 2) a website, 3) a videotaped scripted debate on the topic (uploaded to YouTube, Vimeo, or something similar) or 4) an extended Power Point/Prezi/Keynote (which you would not present). If you have another idea for a project format, you need to have it approved by me. Regardless of which format you choose, your project should be 1,800 words in length (for option #2). You need to a) lay out the ethical issue, b) explain and analyze some published philosophical viewpoints related to the topic, c) carefully and precisely argue how you believe the problem should be understood or resolved, d) identify and analyze an implication for personal responsibility for specific moral actors, and e) provide a compelling objection to *your* position. If you have the space, I will give extra points for including a nicely reasoned response to the objection. Submit the paper, website content and link, video transcript and link, or Power Point/Prezi/Keynote PDF through Blackboard.

FOR A TRADITIONAL TERM PAPER:

- Submit to Blackboard SafeAssign as .pdf or .doc(x) file.

FOR A WEBSITE:

- Copy and paste the substantive content (you can omit navigation bar, interactive elements) into a word document (.pdf or .doc(x)), and include the URL to your website at the top of the first page. Submit this file to Blackboard.
- It makes the most sense to organize the parts of your argument into tabs, pages, and subpages. There are many free website options out there—Blogger, Weebly, Wordpress, etc.
- You can include bulleted lists as well as full paragraphs.
- Your website can include pictures, videos, and interactive elements. If you borrow media or material from elsewhere, make sure you cite it (a link will suffice for pictures).

FOR A TAPED DEBATE:

- Type up the script of your debate into a document (.pdf or .doc(x)), and include the URL to where your video is uploaded at the top of the first page. Submit this file to Blackboard SafeAssign.
- You can include bulleted lists as well as full paragraphs.
- If you borrow media or material from elsewhere, make sure you cite it.

- Include a cast/crew list. Fellow students are allowed to participate in your video, but they will not receive class credit for it (only you will).

FOR A POWER POINT OR PREZI:

- Save as a .pdf document (yes, both PPT and Prezi let you do this), and submit to Blackboard SafeAssign.
- You can include bulleted lists as well as full paragraphs.
- Your presentation can include pictures and links. If you borrow media or material from elsewhere, make sure you cite it (a link will suffice for pictures).

FOR A CREATIVE WORK (E.G, SHORT STORY)

- Notify Laura if you want to pursue this option.
- It is strongly suggested that you provide annotations or footnotes that make your concepts and philosophical argument (and citations) as clear and precise as possible. The word count still applies.
- Submit to Blackboard as .pdf or .doc(x) file.