Philosophy Department

KALAMAZOO COLLEGE
1200 Academy St. Kalamazoo, MI 49006

PHI 495
Biomedical Ethics

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Course Goals
This course is designed to introduce you to some of the central issues of medical ethics. Ethics addresses questions such as 'How should I act?', 'How do I decide whether one way I could act is morally better than some other way?', and 'Are different ethical systems equally acceptable, or are some people's values just wrong?' Medical ethics addresses these questions in the context of patient care and the distribution of medical attention, and seeks to determine which actions or options in medical practice are obligatory, which permissible, and which impermissible. By the end of the course you should be familiar with the major ethical theories relevant to medical practice, and be able to apply these theories to ethical issues.

In addition to studying ethical theory, we will address several topics specific to medical ethics. These will include:

- Treating or Terminating Impaired Infants
- Research and Informed Consent
- Treatment and Informed Consent
- Genetic Engineering
- Allocating Scarce Resources
- National Health Care Systems
- The Concept of Health

Special attention will be paid to the ethical aspects of the most common interactions between patients and healthcare providers.

Required Text

Required Work and Grades
To pass this course, you must take two exams, write two very brief position papers, and participate in one in-class group presentation. The grades for the position papers will be lowered one letter grade for every day past the deadline they arrive. They must be typed, double-spaced. Keep hard copies of your
papers. I will not be held responsible for lost work.

You are required to read the assignments before each class, attend each class session for the full meeting and participate in class discussions. Your final grade for this course will depend equally on three factors. One is the midterm exam. Another is the final exam. The third factor is a combination of the position papers, the in-class group presentation and class participation.