

Global Health and Ethics

Spring 2007

Tuesdays 4:30-7:30 PM

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Phone: 315.464.8455**Office Hours:** TH 2:00-4:00**Course Objectives:** Upon completion of this course, you will be able to:

1. Use various measures to describe the health prospects of populations.
2. Explain important ethical issues in global health.
3. Elaborate key ethical concepts like human rights, justice, and responsibility.
4. Formulate your own views in a more detailed and careful way.

Course Description: This course involves a careful examination of ethical issues in global health. The introduction to the course will contrast traditional issues in bioethics with ethical issues about global health, including issues about health inequalities within and between countries. After this introduction, the first part of the course will explore fundamental ethical issues about health prospects, the natural world, the global economy, war, and international aid. The second part of the course will explore more specific ethical issues about infectious diseases, human migration, sustainable development, malnutrition, and care of the elderly. To deal with these ethical issues, the readings and lectures will develop ideas about need, human rights, social justice, global justice, sustainability, and responsibility. The lectures will also try to evaluate how well particular ethical values and doctrines help societies respond to crucial problems. Class time will be devoted to lectures, presentations, discussion, and work in small groups.

Requirements: You are required to:

1. Prepare adequately for class (and pass quizzes on the readings).
2. Attend on a regular basis and participate in a meaningful way.
3. Make one office visit to get acquainted.
4. Pass the midterm exam.
5. Write a satisfactory final paper (due on April 23).

Grading: Course grades will be based on the following formula: 50% midterm exam + 50% term paper. Inadequate attendance, participation, preparation, or performance on quizzes may result in a lower grade.

Plagiarism. Plagiarism is the act of presenting someone else's words or ideas as if they were your own. Whenever you use someone else's words or ideas, you must document the source. Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism and will result in a failure in the course.

Readings: The readings include one book and a number of articles.

Singer P. *One World: the Ethics of Globalization*, second edition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004). This book is available at Follett's Orange Bookstore, Marshall Square Mall, under the course number PSC 400 (section m301).

The articles are available on Blackboard. Please check the readings for each week.

Introduction

Week 1. January 16. *Introduction*. Discussions in bioethics have tended to focus attention on ethical issues about treating individual patients, applying new technologies, and conducting research. But important ethical questions about global health have not received enough attention. This session will introduce ethical issues in global health and contrast those issues with the more traditional issues in bioethics.

Dwyer J. Part of my liver. *Transplantation* 2003; 76 (8): 1266-7.

Week 2. January 23. *Global Health and Justice*. In Australia, Japan, Sweden, and Switzerland, the average life expectancy is greater than 80 years. In Angola, Malawi, Sierra Leone, and Zimbabwe, the average life expectancy is less than 40 years. What are we to make of a world with such unequal health prospects? What does justice demand in terms of global health?

Dwyer J. Global health and justice. *Bioethics* 2005; 19 (5-6): 460-75.

Lappé F., et al. *World Hunger: Twelve Myths*, second edition (New York: Grove Press, 1998): 8-24.

UN. Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948.

Part One: Fundamental Features and Issues

Week 3. January 30. *Health, Climate Change, and Ethics*. Human health depends on the services of natural ecosystems, but these systems are being damaged. In this session, we shall focus on the earth's climate and human health. How are human activities changing the climate? What effect will climate change have on human health? What ethical responsibilities do people and nations have?

Singer P. 14-50.

McMichael A., et al. Climate change and human health: present and future risks. *The Lancet* 2006; 367: 859-869.

Week 4. February 6. *Health, Economics, and Ethics.* Health prospects depend, to a considerable extent, on basic economic well-being, but local and national economies are being shaped by globalization. How has economic globalization affected poverty, inequality, and well-being? Can and should the global economy be ethically managed?

Singer P. 51-105.

Week 5. February 13. *Health, War, and Ethics.* Many of the countries with the worst measures of population health have been ravaged by wars. When, if ever, are wars justified? What rules should govern the conduct of war? How should we think about humanitarian interventions? What are the duties of health professionals in time of war?

Rawls J. Fifty years after Hiroshima. In *Collected Papers* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999): 565-72.

Singer P. 106-149.

Week 6. February 20. *Health, International Aid, and Ethics.* People, associations, and governments sometimes send aid to people and countries in need. What forms of aid, if any, actually benefit people in need? Is there an ethical duty to contribute to effective aid programs? How much should people in relatively wealthy societies give and do?

Singer P. 150-195.

Week 7. February 27. *Midterm Exam.* The midterm exam will test your understanding the issues and concepts that we have covered. You will be given some sample questions the week before the exam.

Part Two: Particular Issues

Week 8. March 6. *Infectious Diseases and Social Duties.* The HIV epidemic has left millions dead, millions infected, and millions of children without parents. Epidemics like HIV raise ethical issues about duties, rights, and justice. What duties do health care workers have in the face of the dangers posed by infectious diseases? What rights do infected persons have? What duties do societies have?

Dwyer J. and Tsai D. Developing the duty to treat: HIV, SARS, and the next epidemic. Manuscript.

UNAIDS. Report on the global AIDS epidemic 2006. Executive summary: 1-24. Available at <http://www.unaids.org/en>.

Spring Break. March 13.

Week 9. March 20. *Human Migration and Medical Migration.* People migrate to escape war, persecution, environmental degradation, and other problems. They migrate to find places to build better lives, earn more money, and provide better support for their families. What responsibilities do doctors, hospitals, and societies have for people who come to live and work within their borders? How are we to view the migration of doctors and nurses from low-income countries to high-income countries?

Dwyer J. Babel, justice, and democracy: reflections on a shortage of interpreters at a public hospital. *Hastings Center Report* 2001; 31 (2): 31-6.

Cobbs L., Clark P., and Brusa M. Case study: the million dollar question. *Hastings Center Report* 2000; 30 (5): 24-6.

Dwyer J. Illegal immigrants, health care, and social responsibility. *Hastings Center Report* 2004; 34 (1): 34-41.

Dwyer J. An ethical analysis of the global migration of health care professionals. Manuscript.

Week 10. March 27. *Ecological Footprints, Life Expectancies, and Justice.* Some scholars developed the idea of an ecological footprint as a tool to measure environmental impact. We will elaborate this idea and combine it with measures of health. How should we bring together concerns about the natural environment and human health? What combination of concerns best expresses views of justice between societies and justice between generations?

Rees W. and Wackernagel M. *Our Ecological Footprint (Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers, 1996): 51-57.*

World Wildlife Fund. *Living Planet Report 2006: 1-19.* Available at http://assets.panda.org/downloads/living_planet_report.pdf.

Dwyer J. Just and sustainable life expectancy. Manuscript.

Week 11. April 3. *Sustainable Development.* Various ethical concerns may lead us to focus more attention on sustainable development. But what is sustainable development? And how is it related to human development, human health, and views of human good?

World Wildlife Fund. *Living Planet Report 2006: 20-27.* Available at http://assets.panda.org/downloads/living_planet_report.pdf.

Wikipedia. Human Development Index. Available at <http://en.wikipedia.org>.

UN. Millennium Development Goals. Available at <http://www.undp.org/mdg/goallist.shtml>.

Layard R. Happiness (New York: The Penguin Press, 2005): 29-38.

Week 12. April 10. *Obesity.* Rates of obesity, especially among children, are increasing not only in North America and Europe, but also in many middle-income countries. What health problems are associated with obesity? What accounts of the rising rates in different countries? What responses are promising? What ethical issues need to be articulated and addressed?

Ebbeling C., et al. Childhood obesity: public health crisis, common sense cure. *The Lancet* 2002; 360: 473-82.

Evans M., et al. Globalization, diet, and health: an example from Tonga. *Bulletin of the World Health Organization* 2001; 79: 856-62.

Week 13. April 17. *Aging Populations.* In many countries, populations are aging because life expectancies are increasing and birth rates are declining. This is true not only in Japan, Europe, and North America, but also in China and India. This demographic shift poses huge social and ethical problems about caring for the elderly. How should the work of caring for the elderly be shared among individuals, families, communities, and nations?

Daniels N. Equity and population health. *Hastings Center Report* 2006; 36(4): 27-29.

Levine C. The loneliness of the long-term care giver. *New England Journal of Medicine* 1999; 340: 1587-1590.

Hardwick J. Is there a duty to die? *Hastings Center Report* 1997; 27(2): 34-42.

Week 14. April 24. *Moral Examination and Civic Engagement.* Issues in global health often call for moral examination and civic engagement. What forms of moral examination are appropriate? What forms of civic engagement make sense? How much effort does an ethical life require?

Plato. *The Trial and Death of Socrates*, third edition (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2000): 38-39.

Putnam R. *Bowling Alone* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000): 336-340.