

# Philosophy 305: Biomedical Ethics (Fall 2014)

## Syllabus

This syllabus is subject to change.

Professor: Dr. Rachel Fredericks

I prefer to be called Rachel, but you may call me Professor (or Doctor) Fredericks if that makes you more comfortable.

Classes: Mondays & Fridays, 12:30–2:10 p.m. in Ivey 201

Email Address: [rachel.fredericks@colby-sawyer.edu](mailto:rachel.fredericks@colby-sawyer.edu)

I prefer to be contacted by email rather than telephone. If you send me an email, I will usually be able to respond within 24 hours during the week and 48 hours on the weekend.

Office Hours: M&F 2:15 – 3:15 p.m., T&TH 11:45 a.m. – 12:45 p.m., and by appointment

Office Location: Colgate 234

Office Phone: 603 526 3422

Supplemental Instructor (SI): Padmina Shrestha

Study sessions: Wednesdays, 3:00 – 4:00 p.m. & Sundays, 4:00 – 5:00 p.m. in Ivey 206

### **Course Description**

This is a survey course in biomedical ethics, a challenging course in which we confront ethical questions about health and contemporary healthcare. That is, we ask and attempt to answer (using philosophical arguments) various normative questions, which are questions about what we *should* do and why we *should* do those things. The particular normative questions we engage with are those that arise when health and healthcare are at stake, situations in which we might be patients, family members, healthcare professionals, citizens, policy makers or otherwise involved. Since this is a survey course, we touch on a wide range of topics, and we lack the time to engage as deeply with them as we might wish; there is no way we can discuss all the defensible positions one could take relative to the problems we explore. However, the two main goals of the class, which are (a) to make you familiar with a variety of morally significant challenges relating to health and healthcare and (b) to give you the tools to develop and justify your own views about how to respond to those challenges, can be achieved without our discussing as many different positions on a single issue as we would in a more narrowly focused class.

Students in their first philosophy class often find it more difficult than they were expecting, but since our focus is on building skills step-by-step, students also tend to see a lot of improvement over the course of the term. Success in this course requires you to (a) prepare yourself for class by carefully, actively and critically reading *all* the assigned texts (many of which will be dense and technical), (b) defend your own views with reasons and arguments (both during class discussion and in writing), while showing respect for those who disagree with you, and (c) give a good faith effort to develop your philosophical skills by engaging with your assigned readings, your peers, and your professor about philosophically complex, abstract theories that have implications for how you and others should think, feel, and act.

## Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the course:

1. Students will have gained knowledge of key moral problems faced by people in a variety of roles relating to contemporary health care and of arguments supporting a range of responses to those problems.
2. Students will have improved their ability to read carefully and critically.
3. Students will have improved their oral and written communication skills, especially in terms of:
  - a. Clarity and precision of expression
  - b. Attentive listening to others
  - c. Accuracy and charity in presenting others' views
  - d. Persuasiveness in articulating the justifications for their own views (that is, giving good reasons in support of their beliefs)
4. Students will have developed their ability to think critically, which involves:
  - a. Identifying arguments and their parts within a text
  - b. Recognizing the assumptions behind an argument that are not expressed in a text
  - c. Recreating others' arguments in their own words
  - d. Asking (and answering) questions about the content and quality of arguments
  - e. Criticizing (their own and others') arguments' content and structure in a rigorous and fair-minded way
  - f. Defending (their own and others') arguments from criticism
  - g. Taking a stand for and/or against philosophical arguments and overall views as individuals and
  - h. Applying what they have learned about moral reasoning in new contexts.

## Required Book

Pierce, Jessica, and George Randels, eds. *Contemporary Bioethics: A Reader with Cases*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Additional required readings (not from this book) are available online via Moodle and are marked on the schedule with a \*.

You should have all required readings done before class on the day for which they are scheduled, and you should always bring a copy (paper or electronic) of them with you to class on the day for which they are scheduled!

## Recommended Books

Graff, Gerald, and Cathy Birkenstein. *They Say, I Say: The Moves that Matter in Persuasive Writing*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2007.

Weston, Anthony. *A Rulebook for Arguments*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2009.

More recommended readings are available via Moodle. Pay attention to which resources on Moodle are required and which are recommended! Some recommended readings are meant to help struggling students catch or keep up, some are meant to challenge students who are doing well to push themselves further, and some are mostly just for fun.

## Schedule

All groups of students are different in their interests, needs, and talents, so I reserve the right to make changes to this schedule (though I do that as little as possible and give as much advance warning as possible if/when I do).

If Mountain Day falls on a day when we are scheduled to have class, the deadline for any assignment due that day will be extended by 24 hours, and we will pick up where we left off during the next scheduled class. During that next class, I will announce any further adjustments to the schedule, and post them to Moodle in the form of a revised syllabus.

If Mountain Day falls on a day when a paper is due, the deadline for that paper will be extended by 24 hours.

If Mountain Day falls on a day when we are not scheduled to have class, *nothing changes* (unless a paper is due that day, in which case, the only change will be the one mentioned above). The schedule of required readings will not change, nor will homework assignments and deadlines. The fact that yesterday was Mountain Day does not constitute a legitimate excuse for missing class today, failing to turn in an assignment, or not doing the required reading.

### Week 1

#### 9/8: Introduction to the Class:

Today we introduce ourselves, talk through the class policies and goals as described on the syllabus, and begin to see what makes philosophy classes different from other classes.

#### 9/12: Introduction to Philosophical Arguments:

Today we discuss different types of arguments, exploring basic examples from each category under consideration. We also begin to identify the key ways that some arguments are better or worse than others; that is, we begin to evaluate example arguments.

- Required reading: John D. Mariana, “How to Read Philosophy”\*
- Required reading: Rachel Fredericks, “Guide To Philosophical Reading And Questioning”\*
- Required reading: Rachel Fredericks, “Guide to Submitting Assignments Electronically via Moodle”\*
  - Recommended reading: for those who learn visually and/or those who want to see some common mistakes in reasoning, see Ali Almosawi, “An Illustrated Book of Bad Arguments”\*
  - Recommended reading: for those who would like some more detailed explanation of good strategies for reading philosophical texts, or who just want to see a different way of explaining some of the same guidelines we’ve already touched upon, see Jim Pryor, “Guidelines on Reading Philosophy”\*

### Week 2

#### 9/15 (**Add/drop deadline**): Arguments, Objections, & Responses:

Today we continue thinking about how to evaluate arguments, this time by discussing what it means to make or consider an objection to an argument and to respond to an objection. Considering objections and responding to them is the primary way that philosophers make their arguments strong and persuasive. The material we cover about

what makes objections and responses better or worse will be extremely important to know when you write your papers later in term.

- Required reading: Rachel Fredericks, “Guide to Philosophical Note-Taking”\*
- Required reading: Sharon Rupp, “Be Employable. Study Philosophy”\*
- Required reading: Rachel Fredericks, “Guide to Learning from Comments on Your Assignments”\*
  - Recommended reading: if you want even more information about reading philosophical texts, this time in the form of an academic paper written by a teacher who aims to teach best practices to other teachers (and who includes a handout about reading philosophy that he distributes to his students), see David Concepción’s “How to Read Philosophy”\*

#### 9/19: Introduction to Bioethics & Healthcare Professionals’ Obligations:

Today we begin putting what we’ve learned about philosophical methodology to work in the context of biomedical ethics and discuss some questions and goals that will frame the rest of our discussions throughout the term. There is no way that we will discuss everything in the reading assigned for today, which provides a very general background to the field of bioethics. I will spend some of our class time focusing our attention on a few particularly important parts of the reading, but I also want you to come prepared with questions and/or comments about the parts of the reading that jumped out at you as individuals.

- Required reading: Jessica Pierce and George Randels, “Chapter 1 Bioethics: An Introduction to the Discipline,” pp. 2-25

#### Week 3

#### 9/22: Patients’ Responsibilities:

Today we begin by briefly discussing the obligations of healthcare professionals to their patients and then we transition into consideration of the other side of the coin, the responsibilities of patients. Usually, students (especially those training in a medical profession) have already thought quite a bit about the former, and not so much about the latter, which is where we will direct more of our attention today.

- Required reading: Louis Lasagna, “Hippocratic Oath, Modern Version,” p. 48,
- Required reading: AMA, “Principles of Medical Ethics,” pp. 48-49
- Required reading: AMA, “Fundamental Elements of the Patient-Physician Relationship,” p. 53
- Required reading: Maureen Kelley, “Limits on Patient Responsibility,” pp. 94-101

#### 9/26: Euthanasia:

Today we begin a discussion of medical care at the end of life, which we build on the next few classes. The particular skill that you should work on with this reading at this point in the term is mapping out exactly where Singer is speaking in his own voice and where he is describing the views of his opponents, which he must do in order to explain why he thinks we should agree with him rather than them.

- Required reading: Peter Singer, “Voluntary Euthanasia: A Utilitarian Perspective,” pp. 206-213
  - Recommended reading: Paul Carrick, “Deep Ecology and End-of-Life Care,” pp. 704-713

## Week 4

### 9/29: Physician-Assisted Suicide:

Today we continue thinking about health care at the end of life, specifically the role of doctors in helping terminally ill patients to end their lives, a practice that is legally protected in the state of Oregon. Gill's focus is on autonomy, which he thinks of in a way that is somewhat different from how other people understand that concept; you should spend some time thinking about what exactly he means when he talks about autonomy, why he thinks it is a good thing, and how it is related to the Oregon law. Notice that Gill does a lot of signposting in his writing, and that following his example in your own writing is a good thing.

- Required reading: Michael B. Gill, "A Moral Defense of Oregon's Physician-Assisted Suicide Law," pp. 227-237

### 10/3 (**Pass/fail deadline**): Euthanasia & Physician-Assisted Suicide:

Today we continue to consider ethical issues at the end of life, this time focusing on how differences relating to our socialization by gender influence our own and others' expectations and judgments. During class, I'll walk you through what she means when she (and most other philosophers) mean when they say that their position is feminist, which isn't necessarily what your average person on the street means when they are talking about feminism

- Required reading: Susan M. Wolf, "Gender, Feminism, and Death: Physician-Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia," pp. 217-226
  - Recommended reading: Alix Spiegel, "How a Woman's Plan to Kill Herself Helped Her Family Grieve"\*

## Week 5

### 10/6: Philosophical Writing:

Today we'll spend our class time reflecting on what we've learned about philosophical writing thus far, and share ideas about how to be successful in the essays we are writing. Bring your paper assignment prompt, a copy of the assignment that was due before class today, and any draft, outline, and/or notes that you have made for your paper so far.

- Required reading: Rachel Fredericks, "Guide to Philosophical Writing"\*
- Required reading: In addition to the above, choose at least one of the following two:
- Simon Rippon, "A Brief Guide to Writing the Philosophy Paper"\*
- Jim Pryor, "Guidelines on Writing a Philosophy Paper"\*

### 10/10: Abortion:

Today we turn from consideration of ethical issues relating to the end of life to ethical issues at the beginning of life. One of the most important things to learn from the article we read for today is about reframing the debate. Thomson points out at least one key assumption that is/was generally taken for granted by both sides in the debate on the morality of abortion; by highlighting and challenging that inadequately defended assumption, she changed the terms of this debate (at least among philosophers). This kind of move is very philosophically sophisticated; it takes a lot of practice and skill to be able to undercover underlying assumptions and reframe debates as she does. We will see a similar move (in terms of structure) in the next article we read as well.

- Required reading: Judith Jarvis Thomson, "A Defense of Abortion," pp. 265-274
  - Recommended reading: "Veto Power," pp. 368

## FIRST PAPER DUE AT 11:59 P.M. ON FRIDAY, OCTOBER 10

### Week 6

#### 10/13: Fall Recess (no classes)

#### 10/17: Abortion:

Today we continue thinking and talking about the morality of abortion, this time by reading an author who, like Thomson, thinks that familiar assumptions and ways of framing the debate about abortion are mistaken and problematic. Pay attention to how Marquis and Thomson are alike in terms of how they respond to the structure of existing debates about abortion, but different in terms of the content of the positions they ultimately support.

- Required reading: Don Marquis, “Abortion and the Beginning and End of Human Life,” pp. 275-283

### Week 7

#### 10/20: Abortion:

Today we continue our discussion of abortion, integrating considerations relating to reproductive technology, which we will continue thinking about in the coming days. We pay special attention to the ways that women (and patients more generally) in different cultural contexts have different priorities and different goals for health care policy, given the facts on the ground.

- Required reading: Farhat Moazam, “Feminist Discourse on Sex Screening and Selective Abortion of Female Foetuses,” pp. 283-290
  - Recommended reading: if you want to learn more about the costs of being presented with more choices or options (ones having to do with our psychology and the ability to exercise willpower), see John Tierney, “Do You Suffer From Decision Fatigue?”\*

#### 10/24: Reproductive Technology:

Today we continue thinking about ethical questions relating to the beginning of life, but instead of thinking about abortion, we consider the large category of practices and technologies designed to enable or aid people in reproducing. That is, we consider the morality of how people use technology in support of conception and gestation, which (in this country) is generally considered to be something that people are free to choose to do, so long as they have the resources to pay for it.

- Recommended reading: Thomas H. Murray, “What Are Families For? Getting to an Ethics of Reproductive Technology,” pp. 317-321

### Week 8

#### 10/27: Reproductive Technology:

Today we investigate how the concept of embodiment plays a role in two different kinds of opposition to reproductive technologies: opposition that comes from feminist people and opposition that comes from Roman Catholic people. A key lesson to learn from this reading is how different people can agree on a conclusion even if they disagree strongly about the reasons that support said conclusion.

- Required reading: Paul Lauritzen, “Whose Bodies? Which Selves? Appeals to Embodiment in Assessments of Reproductive Technology,” pp. 321-329

10/31: Reproductive Technology:

Today we consider the effect that the linguistic framing of certain reproductive practices as involving “gifts” or “donations” has on our thinking about the morality of those practices. One major lesson to take home is that the words we use to describe a practice influence the evaluations we make regarding that practice; that is, what might look like a value-free description often is not. To the extent that this is so, it challenges the commonly made assumption that science is “value-neutral.”

- Required reading: Janice G. Raymond, “Reproductive Gifts and Gift Giving: The Altruistic Woman,” pp. 330-335

Week 9

**11/3 (Midterm grades due):** Biomedical Research:

Today we turn to questions of justice in biomedical research. When many people think of ethical issues relating to biomedical research, they think of a handful of famous historical examples of research that were clearly conducted without subjects’ informed consent. However, there are many ethical issues relating to biomedical research on subjects who do (or at least appear to) give informed consent, and we will be exploring some of those during our discussion.

- Required reading: Carl Elliott, “Guinea-Pigging,” pp. 523-530

11/7: Biomedical Research:

Today we continue to think about ethical questions relating to biomedical research that are more complicated than just questions about whether informed consent on the subject has been achieved. One of the things that makes research on non-human animals especially ethically complex is the fact that non-human animals cannot give us informed consent to be research subject. One important lesson to learn from DeGrazia is how to use philosophical tools to find commonalities between people who seem to disagree a lot, a move that makes it more likely that people will be able to cooperatively address their concerns in the real world. As you prepare for today’s discussion, it is worth thinking about how DeGrazia’s points regarding research on animals relate to research on humans (especially infants, disabled people, and others whose capacity for informed consent might be impaired temporarily or permanently).

- Required reading: David DeGrazia, “The Ethics of Animal Research: What Are the Prospects for Agreement?” pp. 556-564

Week 10

**11/10 (Withdraw deadline):** Health Care Distribution:

Today we turn to questions about the justice of various ways of distributing health care within a society, a topic that we continue next week. I selected this article in part because, when we reflect on it, we can see that media coverage of public political debates in this country often imply that there are only two positions that one could take toward universal access to health care: a liberal position supporting it and a conservative position rejecting it. That way of framing the debate leaves out many possible positions that are worth listening to, and today we discuss one of those.

- Required reading: Paul Menzel and Donald W. Light, “A Conservative Case for Universal Access to Health Care,” pp. 404-411
  - Recommended reading: Malcolm Gladwell, “The Moral-Hazard Myth”\*

11/14: Health Care Distribution:

Today we continue our discussion of ethical issues relating to the distribution of health care, this time looking at the way that such issues intersect with issues relating to immigration, employment, and gender (among others). One caution to keep in mind during your reading and our discussion: our concern in this class is with the morality of various policies, and evaluating policies using moral standards is not the same as evaluating policies using economic criteria. Much of the public debate around these issues focuses largely or solely on economics, and while that is relevant to what we do, it is not the only or primary focus for us.

- Required reading: James Dwyer, “Illegal Immigrants, Health Care, and Social Responsibility,” pp. 412-419

Week 11

11/17: The Environmental Turn:

Throughout the term, we have been gradually expanding the scope of our ethical concern. We began by focusing on individual actions and decisions, then those of families, then of research teams and institutions, then of nations and international institutions, and now we begin to consider the ethical significance of health care practice and policy on the environment and all the living things in it. Today’s reading gives you a very brief introduction to various approaches to environmental ethics and their potential contributions to biomedical ethics. As you read, think about all the concrete ways that we would probably need to change our health care practices and policies if we were to follow the authors’ recommendations.

- Required reading: Jessica Pierce and Andrew Jameton, “New Ways of Thinking about Bioethics,” pp. 681-690
  - Recommended reading: Kara Manke, “Few Doctors Warn Expectant Mothers About Environmental Toxics”\*

**SECOND PAPER DUE AT 11:59 P.M. ON TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 18**

11/21: The Environmental Turn:

Today we continue on the same theme as last time, but this time we focus on the ways current health care practice and policy negatively impacts the natural environment and the ethical obligations we have because of that. As you read, try to brainstorm how health care professionals might be able to have a particularly large and positive influence on the ways that health care impacts the natural environment.

- Required reading: Andrew Jameton and Jessica Pierce, “Sustainable Health Care and Emerging Ethical Responsibilities,” pp. 697-701
  - Recommended reading: Franklin G. Miller, Howard Brody, and Kevin C. Chung, “Cosmetic Surgery and the Internal Morality of Medicine,” pp. 101-106
  - Recommended reading: Daniel Bednarz, “Medicine After Oil,” pp. 702-703

Week 12

11/24: Bioengineering:

Today we begin our exploration of the morality of bioengineering: the practice of using technology to change life forms, including our own, to suit our purposes. Many people



argue against bioengineering by focusing on its relation to autonomy, but Sandel takes a different task, focusing on its relation to responsibility. While you read this piece, take some time to think about whether you and Sandel would agree about any time when it would be morally acceptable or good to practice bioengineering; to do this, you will need to think about *why* you would or would not accept bioengineering in certain cases.

- Required reading: Michael J. Sandel, “The Case Against Perfection: What’s Wrong with Designer Children, Bionic Athletes, and Genetic Engineering,” pp. 598-606

### 11/28: Thanksgiving (no classes)

### Week 13

#### 12/1: Bioengineering:

Today we continue discussing bioengineering, though we turn our focus away from enhancement and toward the attempt to eliminate or mitigate conditions traditionally categorized as disabilities, diseases, or pathologies. Goering pushes us to challenge our assumptions about which of these conditions are *necessarily* problematic and our beliefs about whether genetic engineering is ever an appropriate intervention for those that are not. I encourage you to spend some time thinking about some examples (beyond the ones Goering discusses) of ways that we could change our physical environment or our thoughts, feelings, and actions so that a condition currently categorized as a disability would no longer be seen that way.

- Required reading: Sara Goering, “Gene Therapies and the Pursuit of a Better Human,” pp. 607-611
  - Recommended reading: Leana Wen, “Doctors’ Ignorance Stands in the Way of Care for the Disabled”\*
  - Recommended reading: Eva Feder Kittay, “Forever Small: The Strange Case of Ashley X”\*

#### 12/5: In class activity:

Today we do an activity that is designed to help you learn to apply what you have learned in this class when reading articles in the news media that relate to health and medicine. Your homework assignment will be to find one article from a reputable news source that makes an identifiable argument about health or medicine, print it out, and bring the paper copy to class.

- Required reading: Find and read one news article of your choice from a reputable news source that contains an argument about health or medicine

### Week 14

#### 12/8: In class activity:

Today we work together as a class to think about the various roles we might play within the healthcare system over time and how (within those roles and in practical terms) we might successfully speak up and act upon our ethical convictions when they seem to be (in danger of) being violated. Your classmates are going to be counting on you to do your reading so that we can complete our activity, so don’t let the group down by not doing the reading ahead of time.

- Required reading (choose at least one from the following set):
- R. Rhodes and J.J. Strain, “Whistleblowing in Academic Medicine”

- T. Faunce, S. Bolsin, and W.P. Chan, “Supporting Whistleblowers in Academic Medicine: Training and Respecting the Courage of Professional Conscience”
- Norman Fost, “Ethical Issues in Whistleblowing”
- Debra Jackson, Kath Peters, Sharon Andrew, Michel Edenborough, Elizabeth Halcomb, Laretta Luck, Yenna Salamonson, and Lesley Wilkes, “Understanding Whistleblowing: Qualitative Insights From Nurse Whistleblowers”
- O.G. Aasland and R. Førde, “Impact of Feeling Responsible for Adverse Events on Doctors’ Personal and Professional Lives: The Importance of Being Open to Criticism From Colleagues”
- David Thomasma, “Why Philosophers Should Offer Ethics Consultations”\*

#### 12/12: Exam Review:

Today you are in charge! You should come with an understanding of where your strengths and weaknesses are, so that we can revisit the material that you need the most help with as you study for your exam. The burden is on you to ask questions and answer the questions of your fellow students, and my role is to facilitate the discussion and intervene if you get off track.

### **Final Exam**

Monday, December 15<sup>th</sup>, from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in our regular location (Ivey 201)

### **Assignments & Assessment**

All assignments (other than those completed during class time) must be typed (double-spaced) and submitted electronically via Moodle. All assignments will be processed using Turnitin, a plagiarism-detecting technology that also allows me to efficiently give you individualized, legible comments on your work. Thus every assignment must include appropriate citations for all quotations and paraphrases, as well as a complete list of bibliographic references at the end. You must use the MLA style guide to format your citations and references, but contrary to the MLA style guide, you do not need to put the Works Cited section on a separate page, and you do need to provide the URL for any source materials found on the Internet. You must always submit your assignments as Microsoft Word documents. To ensure consistent, correct formatting, I have posted an assignment template on the Moodle site for the course for you to use as the starting point for each assignment.

There will be a homework assignment due most days that we have class; homework assignments will always be due at noon, and will never be due on a non-class day. Late homework will not be accepted unless (a) arrangements have been agreed upon with the professor in advance, which requires planning and good reasons, or (b) in case of documented illness or other emergency beyond the student’s control. If the latter, the student must contact me as soon as possible to make arrangements.

Papers will always be due at 11:59 p.m. Late papers will be accepted (via email), but they will be penalized 5% for the first minute they are late and an additional 5% for each day that passes between the deadline and submission.

Attendance and active participation in class discussions is crucial to success in mastering the course material and developing your skills. You are expected to come to class with informed questions and opinions about the relevant readings. I will keep track of attendance in class, but it is only one factor relevant to your participation grade. The quality and quantity of your contributions to discussion will be the primary basis for the participation aspect of your grade, but participation in office hours, email exchanges with the professor, and communication via note cards will also be considered.

If you miss five classes without communicating an adequate justifying or excusing reason to me, I may initiate an administrative withdrawal to remove you from the course, based on your performance in the course so far and my best estimation of whether you will be able to successfully complete the course.

A significant portion of your grade will be determined by how successfully you complete small in-class assignments and homework (usually worth 5 or 10 points). You will only receive credit for these assignments if you turn them in on time, since we usually discuss them extensively (and/or complete them) during class immediately after they are due, and if a student were allowed to turn in homework late, they would get a distinct and unfair advantage over other students.

However, I recognize that *occasionally* one will have a good reason for not being in class and/or completing one of these assignments on time. Therefore, I will assign approximately 160 points worth of homework assignments, even though I will calculate grades as though there were only 150 points worth of homework (that is, you only need 150 points to get 100% for this portion of the class, though there are about 160 points possible). Thus, if you forget or botch an assignment or two, you can still get a high score for the homework portion of the course (though you should plan to attend class every day and complete all the in-class and homework assignments).

So it is possible for you to earn more than 100% of the available homework points. If you do an excellent job completing all of these small assignments, you will effectively receive a bonus for this portion of your grade. There will be no opportunities for extra credit other than this one.

The papers you write will be short (approximately four pages double-spaced), and will require you to bring together the skills that you have been practicing in your reading, in class, and in your homework assignments. You will write a thesis statement that tells the reader exactly which claim you will argue for in the paper, recreate (in your own words) an argument from one of the texts assigned for class, and then critically evaluate that argument by discussing an objection to the argument and a response to that objection. Thus, in writing your papers, you will have to take a stand on an issue as an individual and defend that position using the best reasoning you can. Notice that in writing these papers, students will be making progress toward all the learning outcomes for this class! Since philosophy papers tend to be an unfamiliar and challenging form of writing for students, I recommend that you devote some quality attention to (a) the detailed paper assignment prompts I give you, (b) the detailed writing guidelines and tips that I post to Moodle, and (c) the written feedback that you receive from me on your homework assignments. We will also talk about philosophical writing during class.

The final exam will be comprehensive (that is, cumulative), though there will be more questions about the material on which you have not written papers than on the material about which you did write papers. Questions on the exam will be divided into sections according to how long your

answer should be, and you will have some choice of which questions you answer, although you must answer a fixed number of questions from each section. If you answer more questions than I ask you to, you will not receive credit for the surplus answers. A much more detailed explanation of what to expect will be provided via Moodle.

Participation: 50 points  
In-class assignments and homework: 150 points  
First paper: 100 points  
Second paper: 100 points  
Final exam: 100 points  
Total: 500 points

If you earn the points listed below, you are guaranteed *at least* the corresponding letter grade. Grades will not be rounded up, nor curved, but I may, at my discretion, boost the final grade of students who show *significant* improvement over the course of the term.

A = 95% = 475 points	C = 73% = 365 points
A- = 90% = 450 points	C- = 70% = 350 points
B+ = 87% = 435 points	D+ = 67% = 335 points
B = 83% = 415 points	D = 63% = 315 points
B- = 80% = 400 points	D- = 60% = 300 points
C+ = 77% = 385 points	F = <60% = ≤299 points

In general, written assignments will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

1. Structure and Organization
  - a. Is the assignment well organized?
  - b. Does it have a clear introductory paragraph, thesis statement, and concluding paragraph?
  - c. Are there clear transitions between paragraphs and sections of the assignment?
2. Exposition and Interpretation
  - a. Do you give a clear and charitable interpretation of the view(s) under consideration?
  - b. Do you make clear the underlying assumptions of the view(s) as well as their implications?
  - c. Do you support your interpretations with relevant citations to the text?
3. Argument and Critical Evaluation
  - a. Do you provide rational arguments for the claims you make? Is it obvious what they are?
  - b. When critiquing a view, do you consider possible responses to that critique?
  - c. Do you show that you have thought independently about the problem in question?
4. Writing Style
  - a. Is your prose style clear and easy to understand?
  - b. Are there any recurring grammatical or spelling errors?
  - c. Do you avoid awkward and confusing sentence structures?

## Student Conduct

A respectful, civil environment is crucial for learning any subject, but especially so for philosophy, which involves questioning, defending, and criticizing the beliefs and practices that mean the most to us. Conduct that interferes with other students' ability to learn or my ability to teach is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. In particular, students should not interrupt other students or me, otherwise dominate class discussion, disparage or otherwise disrespect the ideas and beliefs of others (which does not mean that one cannot or should not respectfully provide reasons to disagree), habitually arrive late or leave early, make or receive phone calls, text, surf the internet, or use other technology that is not directly related to course goals.

## Schedule Conflicts

Students are responsible for meeting all of their academic obligations, even if they are engaged in college-sponsored activities, i.e. theatre, athletics, or field trips. There are no excused absences for such activities. In the case of a scheduling conflict between two classes, students should make appropriate arrangements with the course instructors, being mindful that a regularly scheduled class has the higher priority.

Colby-Sawyer acknowledges that religious practices differ from tradition to tradition and that the demands of religious observance in some traditions may cause conflicts with student class schedules. If religious observance will cause a student to be absent from class or otherwise affect his or her ability to complete academic assignments, he or she must notify the instructor in advance and make necessary arrangements to complete the course materials.

## Academic Integrity

All Colby-Sawyer College students are expected to understand the meaning of academic honesty and to behave in accordance with the college's policies on academic honesty as published in the Code of Community Responsibility. To read these policies, see the links found at <http://www.colby-sawyer.edu/campus-life/conduct/honesty/index.html>

Plagiarism is the use of creations, ideas, or words of others without formally acknowledging the author or source through appropriate use of quotation marks, references, and the like. Plagiarizing is presenting someone else's work or thought as one's own original work or thought, whether it is intentional (on purpose) or unintentional (an accident).

More detailed resources explaining what counts as plagiarism and how to avoid plagiarizing are posted on the Moodle site for the class. If, after investigating those resources, you have questions about how to cite appropriately, please contact me *as soon as possible*. It is much better for everyone involved if a student gets help clearing up any confusion right away, before turning in the assignment, rather than waiting and having to deal with the bigger problem of plagiarism.

If I discover that a student has plagiarized or cheated in any way, the student will receive a score of zero for the assignment in question (and this may be sufficient to cause the student to receive a failing grade for the course overall). Whenever a student receives a score of zero for this reason, I arrange a meeting with the student so I can explain why the assignment constitutes plagiarism (or

another form of academic dishonesty) and answer the student's questions. The main purpose of these meetings is to ensure that the student understands how to avoid similar problems in the future. After the meeting, I document my findings about the assignment and the content of our discussion in a letter, and send copies of that letter and the related evidence both to the student and to Dean Burton Kirkwood. The student is then asked to sign a copy of the letter (indicating that it is an accurate representation of what has occurred) and return the signed copy to Dean Kirkwood. Generally, for a first offense, no further penalties are assigned beyond the grade penalty on the specific assignment, but decisions about such things are in the hands of the dean, since only he has access to information about whether the student has been reported for a similar infraction before.

### **Disability Accommodations**

Students who have a documented disability will be provided with reasonable accommodations. They are encouraged to contact Access Resources ([accessresources@colby-sawyer.edu](mailto:accessresources@colby-sawyer.edu)) as soon as possible to ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely manner. All accommodations must be approved by CSC Access Resources.

### **Concerns or Problems**

If you have a concern or problem relating to any aspect of the course or your performance in it, get in touch with me, the professor, as soon as possible. I want to be able to help you, but if I do not know about your concern, I cannot address it. If discussing your concern with me and implementing any plan we agree upon does not resolve the issue, your next step would be to contact the chair of the department, Prof. Tom Kealy.