



PHI 237:
Medical Ethics
with Dr. Sarah Vincent



Course Description

From the UB Course Catalog, the course description is as follows: “Examines current ethical positions and their application to ethical and social questions in medicine. This course is the same as SSC 237, and course repeat rules will apply. Students should consult with their major department regarding any restrictions on their degree requirements.”

To add more detail to the catalog’s course description, we will begin by discussing some basics of arguments; these are useful for engaging any area of philosophy. We’ll also review some important terms that are likely to appear in ethical arguments. Then, we will outline four principles that have tremendously influenced the development of medical ethics in particular. With the stage set during these first two weeks, we will spend most of the course exploring a variety of topics within the purview of medical ethics (e.g., clinical trials, paternalism, physician integrity, informed consent, a right to healthcare, euthanasia, abortion). Near the end of the course, we will consider ways in which medical ethics still needs to develop (e.g., with respect to mental health, race, and gender).