

What Each Student Must Submit

On November 18th, we will have an in-class debate on a topic related to the course material. You will work with a group of students to present a case for your side of the issue. The night before, you (each student) must submit 750 words on what you want to contribute to the debate. Some possible questions you can respond to as your contribution: What are the competing interests or obligations in this issue? How should the moral interests be weighed or understood? Based on your position, what is the most challenging aspect of resolving these ethical problems? What is a problem with one of the opposing views? Do not attempt to answer all of these questions in your paper. **Focus on one particular ethical/philosophical aspect of the case** that you will present with your team. Depth and thoughtfulness are more important than breadth. You should incorporate ideas, terms, or insights from course material. Your contribution should **clearly integrate at least one class reading and at least one debate reading**. On your paper, include your team assignment (e.g.: Disability Activist). Submit to Blackboard SafeAssign.

Below are the readings for this debate.

“Opinion 2.211: Physician-Assisted Suicide” by the AMA

<http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/physician-resources/medical-ethics/code-medical-ethics/opinion2211.page>

“Physician Assisted Death” by Timothy E. Quill and Jane Greenlaw

<http://www.thehastingscenter.org/Publications/BriefingBook/Detail.aspx?id=2202>

“Sunday Dialogue: Choosing How We Die”

http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/31/opinion/sunday/sunday-dialogue-choosing-how-we-die.html?pagewanted=1&version&_r=1&action=click®ion=searchResults

“Why Do So Many Disability Groups Oppose Physician Assisted Suicide?” by James D. McGaughey

<http://www.ct.gov/opapd/cwp/view.asp?Q=519546&A=3683>

What Each Group Needs to Do

Before the debate begins, you will have some class time to strategize with your teammates. You should put together a coherent and compelling argument that reflects your interests in the issues at hand and responds to the debate questions (see below). If some members of the team want to “go rogue” and disagree with the majority opinion, that is fine. However, everyone must provide arguments from their assigned standpoint. Keep in mind that when a team has numerous rogues, it will be increasingly difficult to present a coherent argument together. So do your best to accommodate the various concerns

that people have to form a unified argument that you can present together. Without a minimally coherent argument, you cannot hope to hold much sway in this debate.

You have some flexibility in how you flesh out your position. There are several philosophical approaches and commitments that people from each side could have.

Format

After the teams have had 20 minutes to form a team strategy, the debate will open with each team providing an overview of their argument for 3–5 minutes. The moderator (Laura GG) will then ask each of the below questions. After each question, the teams will take turns providing a response. After a team responds to the question, the other two teams should provide a rebuttal to the team’s answer. The debate will close with the teams trying to find at least minimal agreement on whether physician–assisted suicide would serve the moral aim of respecting patient autonomy and whether this moral aim is trumped by other competing moral concerns.

Questions

1. Can someone autonomously choose to commit suicide? Is there a *right* to “death with dignity,” and what might this right involve or entail?
2. Does offering physician–assisted suicide (PAS) respect patient autonomy or serve the aim of beneficence? What are some moral concerns about informed consent procedures for PAS? Is maximizing patient choice in this way too morally problematic?
3. Are physicians *morally obligated* to offer or participate in PAS for patients in places where it is legal? If so, why? If not, why not? How should physicians respond to the stance taken by the American Medical Association (AMA)? Should individual conscience outweigh the dictates of a professional organization?
4. Given the importance placed on autonomy and choice in healthcare decision–making, are there strong moral reasons for legislatures to make PAS legal? What should be some moral considerations that inform those laws? What about objections from vocal disability activist groups?

Groups

American Medical Association

Kevin Carter

Estevan Cohn

Grace Foley

Doctors in Local Community

Hannah Gerdes

Jane Larkins

Maria Marek

Patients in Local Community

Ryan Murphy

Moira Redmond

Julie Reiter

Disability Activists

Chris Scott

Jordan Smith

Imane Soubiane

Catherine Zolbrod