1-1-2009

CS 680 Bioethics: Death and Dying

James R. Thobaben

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Course: CS680 W1 (JA 2009)  
Title: Bioethics: Death & Dying  
Hours: 1.00  
Published: Yes, on 11/06/2008  
Prerequisites:  
CS601

Department: Church in Society  
Faculty: Dr. James Thobaben

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Office: AD  
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Meetings:  
On Tuesday, 01/13/2009 from 8:00a to 9:00p in AD306.

Maximum Registration: 20  
Catalog Description: Students will examine the social and cultural interpretation of death and the theological implications. The ethical focus is on euthanasia and the morality of care for the dying.

Objectives:  

BIOETHICS: Death & Dying  
CS 680

Section W1:  13 JAN 2009 Tuesday  8 am - 9 pm  
AD 306 (tentative)

James R. Thobaben, Ph.D., M.P.H.  
ASBURY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY  
Office Location: AD302
Purpose:

To prepare students for ministry by training them to analyze and address issues in the arena of healthcare from a Christian perspective. To develop ministers who are responsive to the needs, contexts, and insights of parishioners and members of the larger community who are patients, family members of patients, or practitioners. To enable ministers to equip their congregations for understanding their moral responsibility in decisions about the delivery and receiving of health care and the impact of social decisions in health care and biotechnology on the broader community.

This course focuses on the bioethical issues that most commonly arise for pastors, chaplains, and other caregivers in clinical settings. Specifically, the course examines the cultural and religious meanings of and the moral response to sickness, disability, and death. The course specific consideration of how Christian death rituals, specifically the funeral.

This course is one of five 1-hour bioethics courses. The others examine:

- Biotechnologies (focusing on genetic alteration, abortion, stem cell research, etc.),
- The moral questions arising from current discussions of cosmology, evolution, and creation,
- Environmental ethics, and,
- Sickness and disability (along with the distribution of healthcare).

OBJECTIVES:

Students will be able:

To demonstrate competence with various Biblical and Christian traditions used in responding to moral issues in the fields of health care, in particular those most likely to arise in pastoral care (especially around death & dying)

To demonstrate competence with various ethical categories and frameworks used in responding to health care and biotechnology issues.

To demonstrate competence in utilizing social and cultural analysis in response to contemporary health care issues.

To develop an understanding of death and death ritual that can inform the Christian ethical response to the dying and their families, friends, communities, etc.

To explain how healthcare technology can assist and/or hurt various individuals and groups in society

To apply ethical analysis in developing responses to healthcare issues at a congregational and/or institutional level.

To explain how responses to moral problems and moral integrity shape congregational
life.
To recognize the distinctive insights arising from particular social locations (these
include particularity
arising from ethnic, gender, and class location; also, specific recognition of the insights
of persons with disabling conditions).
To describe how responses to bioethical concerns, especially death and dying, shape
society.

As a core elective course in ethics, students will be able:
Students will be able:
To demonstrate competence with various Biblical and Christian traditions used
in responding to selected moral issues.
To demonstrate competence with various ethical categories and frameworks used
in responding to specific contemporary moral issues.
To demonstrate competence in utilizing social, cultural, and/or historical
analysis in response to contemporary moral issues.
To apply ethical analysis in developing responses to moral issues at a
congregational and/or institutional level.
To recognize the distinctive insights arising from particular social locations
(these may include, but are not limited to, particularity arising from ethnic, gender,
class, and geographic location).

TEXTS & ARTICLES:

REQUIRED: NOTE only the Lammers & Verhey book has been ordered by the
bookstore; material is NOT on reserve unless noted. Links are provided, though (as is
sometimes the case with web resources, sites may have moved) - students are
responsible for finding the material).

- Lammers & Verhey, On Moral Medicine (2nd edition)
- Chia, Cooper, Thobaben, Fergusson, and Kilner, Bioethics: Obstacle or
  Opportunity for the Gospel Lausanne Occasional Paper No.58 based on Pattaya,
- Thobaben, JR "A United Methodist Approach to End-of-Life..." Christian Bioethics
  (3)3:222-248 [under course icon]
- Poe, Edgar Allan, "The Premature Burial" (a copy may be found at:
  [http://eserver.org/books/poe/premature_burial.html]
- Tolstoy, Death of Ivan Ilych (a good translation may be found at:

SCAN ONLY (need not be read carefully, but should be familiar with basic argument)

- Kübler-Ross, On Death & Dying
- Lewis, C.S. A Grief Observed
- Hospice material:
  "What is Hospice?" [http://www.hospicefoundation.org/what-is/]
  "Debunking Myths" [http://www.americanhospice.org/griefzone/articles
NOTE: Additional or changed material may be provided through the e-mail prior to class as the subject matter in bioethics changes rapidly with the development of technologies, court cases, and media presentations. Every effort will be made to add or change in enough time to delete some other material.

EXPECTATIONS:

Written Work: One 6-7 page paper. Make sure the paper includes "fair" consideration of major positions and a clear assertion of the position you, the student, hold. The paper should include moral reasoning explicitly intended for the Christian community, as well as arguments that would be coherent in a highly secularized setting. Do not focus on counseling issues, but on social and cultural factors and on moral reasoning. Pick only one of the following three.

#1 How or how not does the way Christian funerals are conducted match the local church's declarations about the process and meaning of death AND are these declarations evident in how the dying are treated? This paper MUST include consideration of the morality of the treatment of the dying by Christians (in and/or out of hospital settings).
#2 How does the legalization of euthanasia (in its various forms) impact the civil and Christian understandings of the dying and the "very sick" in the United States (if not a "United States-ian," then the home country); include cultural analysis of the current public debate AND specific Christian responses.
#3 Open topic, but must focus on ethics, not counseling or pastoral care and topic MUST be approved by professor.

All written work must be typed with 12 point type, one inch margins on all four sides, and true double spacing. Document formatting WILL BE taken into account when evaluating the work (in other words, the quality of presentation does matter). Do not include substantial quotes from Scripture; use citations. Written material will be evaluated for reasoning, referencing, and for structure and grammar. All references must be noted properly; include page numbers or download information, when appropriate (please use endnotes, not footnotes; specific style of notes is open, but be consistent). Follow page limit requirements. Required length of paper does not include reference or title pages.

In accordance with ATS policy, all written work must use inclusive language when reference is made to human beings (male and female). This provides for both greater inclusion and greater precision.

Papers are graded anonymously. Each paper should include a title page with the student's name. Do NOT put name on each page; place it only on a distinct title page. Papers must be stapled. Electronic submissions are acceptable, but must be in one file
Papers are due at Dr. Thobaben's office in Wilmore. If an ExL or Orlando student AND living more than 50 miles from Wilmore, then the paper may be delivered to the Course Icon electronically in Word formatting. It is the obligation of the student to assure compatibility between his/her word processing program and the program used by ATS (Word). There will be a penalty for late papers commensurate with the degree of lateness and the adequacy of the excuse. Late papers will receive grades, but may not include any written comments.

Final Examination: A one-hour, in-class final. Part of the exam will be an objective examination over concepts in medical ethics (perhaps including a response to a case study). The exam will be given at a time to be determined. Students who live at a great distance, including those in the ExL section, may arrange on the day of the class session to take the exam elsewhere, if proctored. The exams will be graded by the students in the ½ hour after the exam is taken; schedules should be adjusted accordingly.

Participation: Students are required to complete all assigned readings. Acknowledgement of completion will be sought the last day of class. Failure to complete readings on time may result in a lowering of the final grade, as will poor attendance for class. The deduction for low participation and/or late or incomplete reading of assigned material will be up to 10% against the final grade (a full letter grade reduction).

FINAL GRADE:

Exam 40% Date: To be determined Time: TBA
Paper 60% Date: 20 JAN Time: 9 am
Class Participation Deduction if lacking
Reading Deduction if lacking

Grade Range: Work for CS 680 will be evaluated at a graduate/professional school level.

A (93-100) = Exceptional work: surpassing, markedly outstanding achievement of course objectives.
A- (90-92) =
B+ (87-89) =
B (83-86) = Good work: strong, significant achievement of course objectives
B- (80-82) =
C+ (77-79) =
C (73-76) = Acceptable work: basic, essential achievement of course objectives
C- (70-72) =
D+ (67-69) =
D (63-66) = Marginal work: inadequate, minimal achievement of course objectives
D- (60-62) =
F (> 60) = Unacceptable work: failure to achieve course objectives

COURSE SCHEDULE

Session #1  INTRODUCTION TO MORAL REASONING

Session #2  DEATH & BIOETHICS
   REQUIRED:  L & V:  Chapters 4, 5, 7, 9
   Kübler-Ross, On Death & Dying (Chapters 3 - 9).
   The chapters on each of the stages & "Hope" and "Family")
   Lewis, C.S. A Grief Observed (scan)
   Poe, "Premature Burial"
   Chia, et al. , Part I & Part II: 3

Session #3  DEATH & RELIGION

Session #4  DEATH CHOICES: THE GOOD DEATH, THE RIGHT DEATH, THE RIGHT TO DEATH
   REQUIRED:  L & V:  Chapters 14, 15
   Thobaben, JR  "A United Methodist Approach to End-of-Life..." Christian Bioethics (3)3:222-248
   Scan SOME of the following court cases and laws:
   KY Advanced Directive Law (or state in which you reside)
   Oregon Right to Die Law (just "scan" material)
   U.S. Supreme Court ruling on 'right to die' (just "scan" material)
   Quinlan case (just "scan" material)
   Conroy case (just "scan" material)
   Wendland v. Wendland case (just "scan" material)
   Hospice material:
      "What is Hospice?"  [http://www.hospicefoundation.org/what—is/]
      "Debunking Myths"
      [http://www.americanhospice.org/griefzone/articles/debunking.htm]
   Try these addresses for these laws and cases (remember, they change rapidly, so there may be a need to "look around" the Web if the sites have gone dormant):
   [http://supct.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/95-1858.ZC1.html]
   Quinlan (N.J.): In re Quinlan (1976) 70 N.J. 10, 44...,: excerpts at:


Wendland v. Wendland (California Supreme Court) [http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/opinions/documents/S087265.DOC] or [http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/opinions/archive/S087265.PDF]

VIDEO: "Selling Death"

Session #5 DEATH FINAL THOUGHTS AND NEW CONSIDERATIONS
OPTIONAL READING: Tolstoy, Death of Ivan Ilych