**THE RIGHT TO CONTROL HOW WE DIE**

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Course Description

This course offers an introduction to ethical and legal issues involving health care decisions near the end of life. Among the questions addressed are: When and how can patients and families refuse unwanted medical interventions near the end of life? Can patients choose the time and manner of their own death? When can doctors decide there is nothing more to be done? Conducted over three sessions, this course goes into greater depth on end-of-life issues than what was covered in Contemporary Issues in Medical Ethics in Fall 2024.

This class provides an interdisciplinary framework for thinking about these and other questions in medical ethics. Class sessions will be a mix of lecture and interactive, case-based discussion. Recommended readings will be 15 pages or less per session. Readings will be sent to participants by email.

Class Schedule and Topics

1. The Right to Refuse Life-Sustaining Treatment

Reading: Alan Meisel, et al., “Seven Legal Barriers to End-of-Life Care: Myths, Realities, and Grains of Truth,” *Journal of the American Medical Association* 284(19) (2000): 2495-2501.

Compassion & Choices. Dementia Provision (Advance Directive Addendum). <https://finalexitnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Dementia-Adv-Dir_CandC-2020.0629.pdf>.

Paula Span, “Complexities of Choosing an End Game for Dementia,” *New York Times*, Jan. 19, 2015.

1. Choosing the Time and Manner of Death: Medical Aid-in-Dying

David N. Hoffman and Emily Beer, “Have the Arguments For and Against Medical Aid in Dying Stood the Test of Time?,”*Voices in Bioethics* 9 (2023).

1. When Doctors Say No: The Problem of Medical Futility

Reading: Paul R. Helft, et al., “The Rise and Fall of the Futility Movement,” *New England Journal of Medicine* 343(4) (2000): 293-296.