

Life Issues Final Exam Study Guide:

Answer all questions in complete sentences. It is preferred that you answer as thoroughly and articulately as possible.

Thematic Ethical Issues:

1. What major ethical theory do you primarily use in decision-making? Identify. Explain. (**Consequentialism, Deontology, Rights Ethics, Intuitionism**)
2. Do you think a health care professional has a moral obligation to care for someone with AIDS?
3. Why is the concept of informed consent so important? What functions does it perform for both patient and health care professional?
4. What method of allocation of resources seems most just to you? Identify. Explain. (**Comparative Justice, Noncomparative Justice**)
5. Do you think people should have the right to refuse treatment?
6. Can you justify treating someone against his or her will?

Birth Technologies

Abortion:

1. Is the sanctity of life compatible with the taking of life?
2. Many people argue that one should be consistent in one's position on killing. That is, if one is against abortion, then one should be against war or capital punishment. Do you agree? How would you make exceptions?
3. What are the strengths and weaknesses of each of the major definitions of a person indicated in this course? (**The genetic school, the developmental school, and the school of social consequences**)
4. Does the argument for the moderate position on abortion work? How do you justify your response to this?
5. Do you think RU 486 is a contraceptive or causes death? Explain.

Reproductive Technology:

1. Do you think that biology or nurturing should be given priority in determining parenthood?
2. Do you think the fertility industry should be regulated? By whom: the federal government, the state government, the professions, or some independent agency?
3. Should the costs of infertility treatment be covered by all insurance plans?
4. Do you think IVF presents too many risks for the woman?
5. Do you think surrogacy is baby selling?
6. Should surrogate motherhood be prohibited?
7. Identify:
 - a. Artificial Insemination
 - b. In Vitro Fertilization (IVF)
 - c. Gamete Intra-Fallopian Tube Transfer (GIFT)
 - d. Zygote Intra-Fallopian Tube Transfer (ZIFT)
 - e. Intracytoplasmic Sperm Injection (ICSI)
 - f. Cryopreservation

Prenatal Diagnosis:

1. What is the problem that prenatal diagnosis is intended to solve?
2. Does preimplantation diagnosis resolve many of the problems surrounding traditional forms of prenatal diagnosis?
3. Should prenatal diagnosis be a routine part of prenatal health care? Why or why not?
4. Some refer to prenatal diagnosis as a “search and destroy mission.” Others argue that it allows many fetuses to live that might otherwise have been aborted because their health condition was unknown. Which do you think is a more accurate description of prenatal diagnosis?
5. Do you think selecting against certain characteristics through abortion is a form of eugenics (*Eugenics is a social philosophy which advocates the improvement of human hereditary traits through various forms of intervention*) or genetic engineering?

Death and Dying

The Definition of Death:

1. Why has defining death become so difficult?
2. What kind of technical resources complicate defining death? How do they do this?
3. What are some of the social implications of redefining death?
4. Who should be responsible for redefining death?
5. Does Linda Emanuel, M.D.’s understanding of death as a process of losing life help resolve problems such as those caused by the irreversible loss of the neocortex or Alzheimer’s disease?
(“The traditional model of life and death as poles of a binary opposition is therefore in need of modification. The new model must have only one state; there is only life and its cessation. The challenge shifts from understanding death to understanding life and its loss. Attempts to define death must therefore be recast as attempts to define loss of life.”)

Forgoing and Withdrawing Treatment

1. Why has the advanced directive become an issue?
2. Do you think the advanced directive might open the door to the practice of mercy killing (i.e., euthanasia)?
3. Do you think the technology that provides nutrition and hydration to a person in a persistent vegetative state is ordinary or extraordinary therapy?
4. Do you think that the proxy decision maker strategy is better than the written document of the loving will? Why or why not?
5. Do you think that the recent federal regulations requiring that information on advance directives be made available to any one admitted to a hospital are a good idea? Try to think of reasons why people might be admitted to a hospital. Do you think these are good reasons to make out an advance directive?
6. Who should make decisions on behalf of an infant? On what basis?

Euthanasia:

1. Do you think the distinction between euthanasia and suicide is relevant?
2. Do you think euthanasia is an autonomous and private act, or are there social consequences to it as well?
3. Do you think legalizing euthanasia would complicate the physician-patient relationship?
4. Do you think that the legalization of euthanasia would open the door to other socially sanctioned forms of killing?
5. Do you agree with the practice of giving increasing levels of pain relievers, even though they may hasten the death of the patient?

Physician-Assisted Suicide:

1. Do you see any dangers in physician-assisted suicide?
2. What benefits are there in this practice?
3. Is it important to distinguish between pain and suffering in thinking about physician-assisted suicide?
4. Should physician-assisted suicide be limited to somatic illnesses, or should mental illnesses be included as well?
5. Do you think procedural safeguards such as those suggested by Dr. Quill will protect patients against abuses?
 - a. *The patient must, of his own free will and at his own initiative, clearly and repeatedly request to die rather than continue suffering.*
 - b. *The patient's judgment must not be distorted.*
 - c. *The patient must have a condition that is incurable and associated with severe, unrelenting, intolerable suffering.*
 - d. *The physician must ensure that the patient's suffering and the request are not the result of inadequate comfort care.*
 - e. *Physician-assisted suicide should only be carried out in the context of a meaningful doctor-patient relationship.*
 - f. *Consultation with another experienced physician is required.*
 - g. *Clear documentation to support each condition above is required.*

Specific Problems

Genetic engineering: Plants and Animals:

1. Do you think the power to intervene in nature and change it is any more dangerous than our previous abilities to alter nature?
2. What is an appropriate length of time to monitor or test for long-term consequences of genetic interventions?
3. Do you think patenting of life forms is a violation of the sanctity of life?
4. Do animals have any rights that are violated when they are used as subjects of experiments?
5. Do you think genetically engineered foods are a cause for worry?

THINGS WE HAVE NOT YET COVERED (05/09/3008)

Genetic Engineering: Human Beings:

1. How do you think that having a map of the entire human genome will impact our understanding of human nature?
2. Who do you think will receive the benefits of genetic interventions?
3. Do you approve the therapeutic use of gene therapy? Why or why not?
4. Do you see any problems with germ-line genetic interventions?
5. Is there any difference between sending a child to a high-quality school to enhance his or her intellectual capabilities and trying to do this through genetic interventions?

Organ Transplantation:

1. What problems, if any, do you see with organ donations from living donors, for example, parent to child, sibling to sibling, cousin to cousin?
2. Do you think individuals with high school status receive preferential treatment for organ transplantations? If so, is this fair or unfair?
3. An individual who filled out an organ donor form dies. Her relatives object to her being a donor. Whose wishes should be followed?
4. What is your reaction to the practice of using non-heart beating cadavers as organ donors?
5. Does using animals as a source for human organ transplants raise any problems for you?

Patient's Rights

1. Which do you think are more important, moral rights or legal rights?
2. Do you think that claiming rights is a good way to correct problems within the physician-patient relationship?
3. Who do you think should have access to your health records?
4. Do you see electronic patient records as a threat to your privacy?
5. When there is disagreement over how to treat a patient, whose decision should take priority?