

Ethics Bowl Group Assignment

PHI 102 - Fall 2015

Dr. Coffey

I. Summary of the Assignment

I have divided the class into eight teams of about four people each. Each team will be responsible for:

- a) Performance in an in-class Ethics Bowl style **competition**,
- b) A **written report** of the team's research and results.

In addition, each member of the team will need to privately submit to me:

- c) A report of their own contribution to the project, and the contribution of their team members.

Each team will be given TWO possible "cases"--short stories that raise interesting moral questions. For both cases, teams will determine what they deem to be the strongest argument in favor of the activity described in the case, AND against the activity described in the case. In total, each team will prepare FOUR arguments.

The teams should not only submit these arguments in the **written report**, but should be prepared to defend them on the date of their Ethics Bowl style **competition**.

II. The Competition

We will have two days of competition: Friday, Dec. 4th and Monday Dec. 7th. Before then, you will be informed of which team of eight you belong to, which team you will be competing against, and which day you will be competing.

Four teams will compete on Friday, and four will compete on Monday.

Suppose that Teams A, B, C, and D are scheduled to compete on Friday. They have all been given the same two cases: One on euthanasia, and one on government agencies reading citizens' emails. They will each prepare four arguments: One in favor of euthanasia, one against euthanasia, one in favor of government spying, and one against government spying.

On Friday, I will have a representative from Team A, B, C, and D each roll some dice. The team with the highest number will get to select which of the two topics they will debate with the team they are partnered with. So suppose that Team A rolls the highest

number. They pick the topic of euthanasia. They will compete against Team B (their competitor) on this topic.

Team B will get to choose which side they want to defend (for or against euthanasia). Suppose they want to argue in favor of euthanasia.

The event will then proceed as follows:

- i) Moderator reads the case (2 minutes)
- ii) Team B presents their main argument (1 minute prep, 5 minute presentation)
- iii) Team A offers an objection (1 min. prep, 2 min. prez)
- iv) Team B replies to the objection (1 min. prep, 2 min. prez)
- v) Team A presents their main argument (1 minute prep, 5 minute presentation)
- vi) Team B offers an objection (1 min prep, 2 min prez)
- vii) Team A replies to the objection (1 min prep, 2 min prez)
- viii) Moderator asks a question of each team (4 minutes)
- ix) Audience asks up to two questions of each team (up to 8 minutes, time permitting)

The audience will record who they thought won: Team A or B, and the remaining teams, (Team C and D) will roll the dice again. The team who rolls the higher number will get to pick which side they will defend on the remaining topic (in this example, government spying). So say Team C rolls higher--they then choose to defend that government spying is impermissible. They would present their argument first:

- i. Moderator reads the case (2 minutes)
 - ii. Team C presents argument (1 minute prep, 5 minute presentation)...
- etc.

III. Written Report

The written report has four required sections.

1. Analysis of Cases
2. Research Summary
3. Arguments
4. Questions

(1) First, one RATS style analysis for each of the two possible cases. (See Journal Assignment # 2 for guidance). Each analysis should contain at least two items in the category "Information that we wish we knew". For instance, if the topic were Euthanasia, I might want to know: Is euthanasia legal in any countries in the world? If so, what is the process of requesting and receiving euthanasia there? What safeguards are in place to protect the patient, and have they worked?

(2) Second, I want a short summary of research you have done related to the topic. Towards this purpose, at least one team member **must** go to the library and talk with either (a) Bob Schoofs, the Library Liaison to the Philosophy Department (<http://libguides.gvsu.edu/c.php?g=108288>), OR the student consultants in the Knowledge Market (<http://gvsu.edu/library/get-help-from-research-consultants-15.htm>). I will require evidence that you visited these folks in the library.

I want you to have these folks help you find (if possible) the information you listed under the “Information we wish we knew” category. Alternatively, they can also direct you towards philosophical essays, legal cases, or other real world cases that might help you in constructing your arguments.

You will write down the sources you utilize, and briefly summarize what you learned from them.

For instance, I might have discovered an article titled: “Euthanasia in the Netherlands--Standards and Safeguards” that details the process from the patient’s request to the patient’s being euthanized. I would write down the bibliographical information for this article, and “Details the process that patients undergo from requesting to receiving euthanasia”.

(3) Third, for each case, you will write the strongest argument you can think of in favor of the activity described in the case, and the strongest argument you can think of against that activity.

(4) For each of the arguments you wrote in step (3), you need to write the strongest objection or question you think the other group might make with respect to that argument. You must also give a response to that objection/question.

For ease of grading, please break the written report into TWO distinct documents--one for each of the two possible cases.

So Team A should have one document on euthanasia, which contains (i) an analysis of the case, (ii) the research summary related to euthanasia, (iii) an argument in favor, (iv) an argument against, (v) an objection to the argument in favor and (vi) a response to that objection, (vii) an objection to the argument against and (viii) a response to that objection. They should have a similar document on government spying.

III.Private Report

Each student will send me, via Blackboard, a report describing what they contributed to the group project. They should also alert me to any student in the group who they believe did less (or more) than his/her fair share. I will take into consideration both (a)

who worked on which parts of the project, and (b) who did more or less than his/her fair share, when deciding how to distribute the group's points. It will be possible for one person in the group to get an A, while someone else in the group gets an F.

For instance, Luz, from Team A, might report to me that she did 100% of the writing for the argument in favor of euthanasia, and 50% of the work on the objection to that argument and response. She might also remind me that she presented this argument in class, and answered one of the questions from the audience. She might also tell me that all that Larry did was write the argument in favor of government spying, and that his work was sloppy and poorly thought out. Other teammates had to edit and revise Larry's work, so Luz believes that Larry did much less than his fair share.

* A rubric for the **Written Report** and for the **Competition** will be posted shortly.