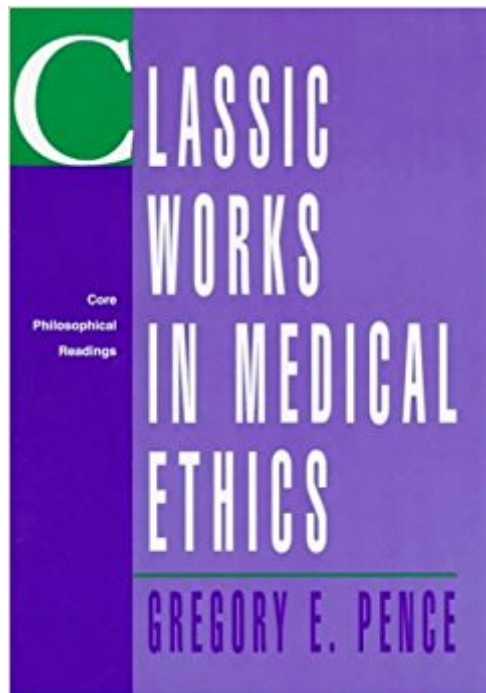




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# Classic Works In Medical Ethics: Core Philosophical Readings



## Synopsis

After thirty years, Medical Ethics has matured to where a collection of core writings in the field is now possible. There is even a danger that some classic articles will cease to be known because they are no longer included in "issue of the moment" anthologies. This book offers classic, well-written articles that have stood the test of time and have something to teach. These are articles with good philosophical analysis dealing with important topics and making significant contributions to understanding of issues. There are no long, boring selections from government commissions or technical pieces from scientific journals. Many selections illustrate how and why philosophers contributed to the progress of medical ethics. The articles cluster around several broad philosophical questions: terminating the lives of dying patients; assisting human life to begin outside the womb; terminating the beginnings of human life; personhood and higher animals, fetuses, impaired newborns, comatose patients; individual rights against the greater social good; and allocating scarce medical resources.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Gregory Pence is one of the pioneering bioethicists of America. Having taught for thirty years in a medical school, he has seen many past prophecies of doom fail. He is optimistic about biotechnology. He is internationally famous for defending cloning and genetically modified food against bioLuddites who oppose research on stem cells and cloning. Because of his views, his talks have been picketed by Greenpeace and anti-cloning zealots. His *Classic Cases in Medical Ethics: Accounts of the Cases that Shaped Medical Ethics*, 4th ed., 2003, is one of the standard textbooks

of bioethics. His *Who's Afraid of Human Cloning?* (1998) is already regarded as a classic in bioethics for its rigorous attack on opponents of cloning. His *Cloning After Dolly: Who's STILL Afraid of Human Cloning?* will appear in late 2004. His *Designer Food: Mutant Harvest or Breadbasket of the World?* won a Choice Outstanding Academic Title in 2003. He doesn't think the sky will fall if a cloned baby is born. In opposing laws against cloning, he was asked to testify in 2001 before Congress and in 2002 before the California Senate. Constantly in demand for national television, Pence has been interviewed on Bobby Battista's "Talk Back Live" with Bobby Battista, "The Point" with Gretta von Susteren on CNN, "The Early Show with Bryant Gumbel" on CBS, "Wolf Blitzer's Washington" on CNN, as well as on National Public Radio's "Marketplace" and its "Weekend Edition." He has also been interviewed by TIME magazine, the New York Times, and most national publications. He has published in Newsweek, the New York Times, and the Wall Street Journal. Pence has given the Soundings Lecture at Castleton State College, VT, the Thornton Lecture at Alma College, MI, the Seidman Trust Lecture at Rhodes College, TN, and the Hughes Memorial Lecture at West Liberty State College in WVA. He has talked at Princeton, Yale, and Stanford. He has given keynote talks about cloning at universities in Portugal, London, Switzerland, and Australia. Pence teaches at the medical school at the University of Alabama in Birmingham (UAB), where he also directs a program for gifted undergraduates pre-admitted to UAB medical school. There, he has been voted Best Teacher. He grew up in Washington, D.C., was graduated from the College of William and Mary cum laude in Philosophy, and earned his doctorate from New York University in 1974, where he worked on his dissertation under bioethicist Peter Singer, now at Princeton University.

*Classic Works in Medical Ethics*, edited by Gregory E. Spence may be the perfect approach to a difficult subject, since, by its nature, medical ethics is a case by case, issue by issue driven kind of subject. One may be a bit surprised that in spite of the appearance in the title of the word "Classic", there is no article older than the 20th century. There is nothing by Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, Kant, or even Dr. William James. This is appropriate, since most questions in medical ethics probably developed over the last 50 years, with the advent of antibiotics, organ transplants, and genetic research. Issues over practices as recent as the pre-WW II experiments on Tuskegee students with syphilis are already part of the history of medical ethics, for which you may want to go to Spence's book "*Medical Ethics, Accounts of the Cases That Shaped and Define Medical Ethics*". Another game changing event was Roe Versus Wade Supreme Court decision which changed the playing field for many issues, not just abortion. I am not an expert on this field, but I have read several other

books on the subject, and I see that most of the "Usual Suspects" are here, such as Peter Singer, Don Marquis, and Joseph Fletcher. I am a bit surprised that there is nothing by Tom Beauchamp or Bernard Gert, authors of major contemporary books on Medical Ethics. For those who are unfamiliar with writings in philosophy, I must warn you that most articles here are pretty tough reading. Sometimes the gap between agreeing and disagreeing on a subject is wafer thin. But that's the point of providing two or more articles on opposite sides of questions. You get to see if the chap arguing side A is not misrepresenting side B. And, from many of these articles, it appears most authors are playing fair, which is only to be expected, since most articles come from professional journals (medical or philosophical) where articles are reviewed by contemporary experts in the field for accuracy and fairness. It may even be appropriate to say this book has value in a Pastoral care curriculum, since one thing practicing clergy face far more often than other non-medical people, is how these questions affect people in medical crises.

good collection of ethical arguments, i quiet enjoyed going through them

Came as described, i hated this class

different text to get into and comprehend.

This product came on time but it's got two giant slices through the back of the book through the entire last chapter like someone took a box cutter through it. Hope I don't need that one for class. So much for book sale back time.

Lots of philosophy articles on medicine. I'm a philosophy professor who teaches medical ethics and I'm distressed that most books and discussions leave out the PHILOSOPHICAL REASONING behind positions on both sides. To this book's credit, all the articles (each reproduced in full) emphasize how and why the author supports or rejects a position on: euthanasia, abortion, genetic testing, locking up the harmless insane, and national medical coverage. I used it in my class and will use it again.

This is a premiere collection of the top philosophical essays behind medical ethics today. I, too, teach a philosophy course on medical ethics and use this anthology as supplementary reading material. Some of the articles are a little heady for undergrads who aren't (yet) philosophy majors,

so I also recommend Gregory Pence's companion book, *Classic Cases in Medical Ethics*, which is considerably more approachable and even interesting to read.

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