

MIDTERM PAPER ASSIGNMENT – HANDOUT

DUE DATE – Friday, March 7th – Bring a printout to class. Also, send a copy to me by [e-mail](#).

FORMAT – 10-15 pages (**plus bibliography**), double-spaced, 12-pt Calibri font, 1” margins

GRADING – The paper is worth 25% of the final grade. Papers will be graded according to the overall quality of analysis, clarifications, observations, and reasoning provided.

PLEASE NOTE THAT STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO EXHIBIT COLLEGE-LEVEL PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH.

Students who struggle with spelling or grammar are advised to make use of the free services provided by UK's Writing Center, located in the W. T. Young Library: <http://wrd.as.uky.edu/writing-center>.

For advice about how to write a good philosophy paper, read Jim Pryor's:

[GUIDELINES ON WRITING A PHILOSOPHY PAPER.](#)

BIBLIOGRAPHY – Bibliographies must include (but are not limited to) the following readings:

Death, Thomas Nagel

Death: A Propitious Misfortune, William Ferraiolo

Death's Distinctive Harm, Stephan Blatti

Death, Todd May

The Philosophy of Death, Steven Luper

CHOOSE ONE OF THE TOPICS BELOW.

PAPER TOPIC 1 – Assume for the sake of argument that death is annihilation. Perhaps death is a harm, perhaps a benefit, or perhaps, as Epicurus insists, it is nothing to us. Does harm or benefit require a subject? If so, does death have such a subject? Who or what, if anything, is harmed or benefitted by death? What is the nature of such harm or benefit? When does it occur? Are the terms *death* and *brain death* synonymous? Discuss your own views in light of the following:

[Brain-dead Texas woman taken off ventilator](#)

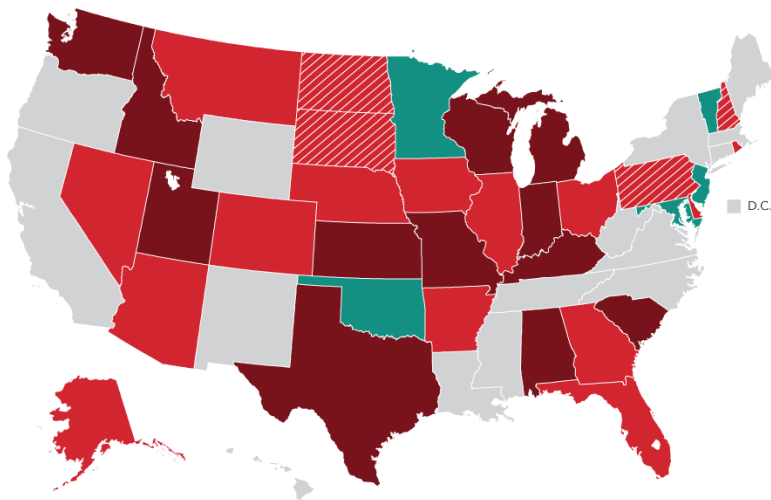


[Brain-dead Canadian woman taken off life support after giving birth to baby boy](#)



Where Pregnant Women Are Forced To Stay On Life Support

In most states, terminally ill pregnant women can be forced to accept life-sustaining treatment, even when the patient has authorized a directive against it. States in dark red here have the most restrictive laws, requiring life support to be continued regardless of the progression of the pregnancy, with no exceptions for pain or physical harm caused by the treatment.



■ Automatically invalidates a pregnant woman's advance directive, no exceptions

■ Requires life support when it is probable the fetus will develop to the point of "live birth" or viability outside the uterus

■ Exceptions may be made for pain or harm caused to the woman by life-sustaining treatment

■ Allows women to write their wishes regarding pregnancy into their advance directives and guarantees that their instructions will be followed

■ Lacks statutory language regarding the validity of advance directives in the case of pregnancy, or unknown

Source: Center For Women Policy Studies

THE HUFFINGTON POST

Include the following readings in your **BIBLIOGRAPHY**:

On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion, Mary Anne Warren
Why Abortion Is Immoral, Don Marquis

OR

PAPER TOPIC 2 – Setting aside a discussion of fetuses and the brain dead, when might it be wrong (a harm or an evil) to cause someone's death? When might it be acceptable (a benefit or a good)? What must one consider in making such determinations? For example, what role does *intention* play (for killer and killed)? Discuss your own views in light of the following:

[Dunn convicted of attempted murder; hung jury on murder in 'loud music' trial](#)



[Washington governor suspends death penalty](#)

The Washington Post

Include the following reading in your **BIBLIOGRAPHY**:

What Is So Wrong with Killing People? Robert Young