APPLIED ETHICS PROBLEMS: USEFUL LINKS AND REFERENCES

Part of the ‘A’ level philosophy syllabus requires students to study a ‘real life’ moral dilemma. In this document, I provide some web links and book references relating to a selection of key moral problems. Also Area C in the Edexcel Religious Studies syllabus unit 2 includes a study of medical ethics.

General anthologies:

James E. White (ed.), *Contemporary moral problems*
This (largely American-orientated) collection is an excellent introduction, including readings from a wide variety of topics, each group preceded by its own mini-introduction. References are to the fourth edition of 1993.

Peter Singer (ed.), *Applied Ethics*
This collection of excellent readings is a little more demanding than the above, but would suit brighter students.

A very accessible book, covering the key issues connected with death such as capital punishment, euthanasia, abortion and war.

References to the above works appear below in square brackets.

**Abortion**

A clear, accessible summary of the debate may be found at:

[www.quickoverview.com/issues/abortion-debate.html](http://www.quickoverview.com/issues/abortion-debate.html)

‘A defence of Abortion’ by Judith Jarvis Thomson in [Singer]

‘Abortion and infanticide’ by Michael Tooley in [Singer]

‘Why abortion is immoral’ by Don Marquis in [White]

**Euthanasia**

This site includes explanations of key terms as well as describing the views of doctors:

[www.catholiceducation.org/articles/euthanasia/eu0010.html](http://www.catholiceducation.org/articles/euthanasia/eu0010.html)


James Rachels, ‘Active and Passive Euthanasia’ in [White]

Tom L. Beauchamp, ‘A Reply to Rachels on Active and Passive Euthanasia’ in [White]
J. Gay-Williams, ‘The wrongfulness of Euthanasia’ in [White]
Perter Singer, ‘Justifying Voluntary Euthanasia’ in [White].

The Death Penalty

A good source of factual information about the death penalty in the U.S. is the Death Penalty Information Center at http://www.deathpenaltyinfo.org/, which features interesting podcasts, among other things.

Anthony G. Amsterdam, ‘Capital Punishment’ in [White]

Ernest van den Haag, ‘The ultimate punishment: A Defence’ in [White]

[White], chapter 18, pp. 228-250, also reprinted in [White]

War

http://www.bbc.co.uk/ethics/war/
A very readable webpage from the BBC.

[White], chapter 19, pp. 251-285

Jan Narveson, ‘Pacifism: A Philosophical Analysis’ in [White]

Cheyney Ryan, ‘The Morality of Pacifism’ in [White]

Jeffrie G. Murphy, ‘The Killing of the Innocent’ in [White]

Nicholas Fotion, War and Ethics: a new just war theory
A very clear, book-length treatment of ‘Just War Theory’, in which the author proposes modifications to the theory to take account of contemporary realities.

Homosexuality

http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/homosexuality/
The entry on this subject in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy includes a discussion of the ‘natural law’ objection.

http://www.religioustolerance.org/hom_bibc.htm
A very comprehensive and even-handed compilation of the various references in the Bible to homosexuality, together with helpful analyses.

Paul Cameron, ‘A Case Against Homosexulaity’ in [White]

Hunger, Welfare and Population control

http://www.cceia.org/index.html
The website of one of many bodies advocating more international action to combat world poverty.

Peter Singer, ‘Famine, Affluence and Morality’ in [White]
Garrett Hardin, ‘Living on a Lifeboat’ in [White]
Robert N. Van Wyk, ‘Perspectives on World Hunger and the Extent of Our Positive Duties’ in [White]
Peter Martin, ‘Helping and Hating the Homeless’ in [White]
Charles Murray, ‘A Proposal for Public Welfare’
Louis Pascal, ‘Judgement Day’ in [Singer]

Circumcision

http://www.bbc.co.uk/ethics/femalecircumcision/femalecirc_1.shtml
Deals with female circumcision

http://www.bbc.co.uk/ethics/malecircumcision/
Deals with male circumcision

A freely accessible article from an ethical journal on ‘A child’s Right to Circumcision’.

http://www.circumstitions.com/Ethics.html
An article which is much more critical of male circumcision than the above.

http://www.doctorsopposingcircumcision.org/info/info-medicaethics.html
The discussion includes reference to the views of UNESCO and to the ‘cardinal principles of medical ethics’.