Ethics Unit 2018 – Extension Opportunity

Applying ethical theory to real-life situations

Radio Lab “Playing God”

Listen to the Radio Lab broadcast from August 21, 2016 “Playing God.” Reflect on the following questions. Record your notes and responses.

1. Utilitarianism is one of the “consequentialist” theories of ethics that has been most influential. Jeremy Bentham proposed that decisions should be made that increase the overall happiness or “utility.” Decisions that increase happiness are the MOST ethical decisions. **Consider the real-life situation of the hospital in New Orleans in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. In what way were the principles of Utilitarianism applied?**
2. What is “triage?”
3. In what ways can we justify extraordinary efforts for the benefit of a few individuals or even one person?
4. How and in what ways do people (as recorded as part of a disaster readiness focus group) struggle with the problem of limited resources for great need, in the case of a pandemic or natural disaster?

**Keep track of the following words and phrases in the broadcast:**

**“Tent of the Damned” “Lottery”**

**“System of 1’s 2’s and 3’s” “Fairness”**

**“Triage” “Facts”**

**“Double effect” “Rules, reason, emotion”**