

Global Bioethics

Course Details

Course Designator & Number: TLDO 3012

Number of Credits: 3

Language of Instruction: Spanish

Contact Hours: 45

Instructor: Prof. Dr. Benjamín Herreros Ruiz-Valdepeñas, MD, MsC, PhD

Course Description

Bioethics was initially projected with very wide objectives. V.R. Potter understood it as a dialogue between scientists and humanists to preserve humanity from its self-destruction and promote quality of life. In his words, "Mankind is urgently in need of a new wisdom that will provide the 'knowledge of how to use knowledge' for man's survival and for improvement in the quality of life....I therefore propose the term bioethics in order to emphasize the two most important ingredients in achieving the new wisdom that is so desperately needed: biological knowledge and human values." The Encyclopedia of Bioethics, edited by Warren Reich in 1978, suggests the following definition of bioethics: "systematic study of human conduct in the area of the life sciences and health care, insofar as this conduct is examined in the light of moral values and principles."

The complex, multi-disciplinary model of modern healthcare creates numerous ethical conflicts. When the values of all the actors are taken into account when making decisions, there is inevitably a disparity of criteria. The conflicts generated are not merely technical; they are also ethical, because the values of the people or institutions involved can be in conflict. In these instances, it is important that the medical professional knows to consider technical issues (the medical facts) and the values at play (the preferences of those involved, principles, norms, etc.), in order to make a good decision. At present, bioethics is considered a practical or applied ethics (to biomedicine), that attempts to resolve ethical dilemmas present in biomedicine.

There are various fields within bioethics. The most relevant are foundational bioethics (which deals with the philosophical foundations of bioethics), environmental bioethics, clinical bioethics, and the bioethics of research. Bioethical issues tend to be complex problems that

extend beyond the limits of a sole profession, for which reason it is essential to consider the input of healthcare professionals, philosophers, lawyers, psychologists, social workers, sociologists, and any other profession involved in the most hot-button ethical issues relating to the life sciences.

All the fields mentioned have great relevance due to the importance and prevalence of the issues taken on by bioethics. There are a great number of publications that indicate how numerous professionals confront common, difficult-to-regulate bioethical dilemmas in the clinical sphere as well as in the area of research or in relation to the environment, but the formation needed to tackle these problems is insufficient. In a significant number of these articles, it is concluded that it is necessary to improve the bioethical formation of future professionals to be able to better address these issues. For this reason, education in bioethics has become a priority both in the United States and in Europe, as well as the rest of the world, as these issues are not limited to a specific area, but rather are global.

Course Objectives

General

1. Learn what bioethics is as well as its primary fields.
2. Learn about the most important historical events that have impacted the development of the field of bioethics.
3. Integrate knowledge of the history of bioethics with modern bioethical issues in order to better understand their complexities and the need for a multi-disciplinary approach.
4. Learn how the primary theories of ethics and bioethics have emerged and study a general overview of these theories.
5. Acquire the capacity to recognize when a problem is ethical and when it is social, legal, deontological, or some other type.
6. Identify the importance of taking a global approach (scientific, ethical, social, legal, deontological) to issues.
7. Analyze the primary bioethical conflicts and gain the tools needed to provide solutions.
8. Learn methods of analysis and find the best solutions to bioethical problems.

Specific

1. Learn about the relationships between ethics, rights, and deontology and their differences.
2. Learn what principlism, casuistry, and virtue ethics are and their moral justification.
3. Develop the necessary abilities to apply the theories of principlism, casuistry, and virtue ethics to everyday clinical problems.
4. Learn in what manner to resolve a problem based on whether it is an ethical, social, legal, or deontological issue, or a mixture of some or all of these areas.
5. Learn to tackle bioethical dilemmas using teamwork, conducting a participatory deliberation.
6. Recognize and analyze the primary issues in clinical bioethics.
7. Recognize and analyze the primary issues in environmental bioethics.
8. Recognize and analyze the primary issues in the bioethics of research.

Methodology

The course is designed for class participation, and questions and comments from the students are always welcome. There will be debates in class and deliberations over case studies (2/3 of the program) and the students will also have to act out dramatizations of the case studies (“role-playing”).

Each class will begin with an exposition followed by questions, dialogue, and practical cases.

- A first introductory part, a type of seminar, with active participation from the students through dialogue and the sharing of experiences.
- A part with practical cases for debate and deliberation. The cases will be real and will utilize narrative material (texts) and audiovisual material (movie clips, documentary clips, and material created by the department of bioethics).

On occasion there will be dramatizations of ethical problems (“role-playing”) to help make the course’s practical application apparent.

The students will receive complementary material that they should work on to complete their formation. They will also have lists of recommended texts available to them into which they can go deeper into the topics discussed in class.

Required Reading / Materials

- Historia Ilustrada de la Bioética, Herreros B and Bandrés F (editors), ADEMÁS Comunicación Gráfica, Madrid 2015. ISBN: 978-84-939918-9-0. Available at: https://www.institutoeticaclinica.org/files/Monografia-Historia-de-la-Bioetica_web.pdf
- Sánchez González MA. Ética, bioética y globalidad. Editorial CEP, Madrid, 2006.

Complementary Bibliography

- Sánchez González MA. Bioética en Ciencias de la Salud. Madrid, Elsevier, 2012.
- Jonsen AR, Siegler M, Winslade WJ. Clinical Ethics: A Practical Approach to Ethical Decisions in Clinical Medicine, 8ª ed., 2015.
- Beauchamp TL, Childress JF. Principios de ética biomédica. Barcelona, Masson, 1999.
- Palacios G, Pinto P, Márquez O, Herreros B. Valoración de la competencia de los pacientes para tomar decisiones. Revista Clínica Española, 2019 (in print).
- Jonsen AR, Siegler M, Winslade WJ. Clinical Ethics: A Practical Approach to Ethical Decisions in Clinical Medicine, 8ª ed., 2015.
- Beauchamp TL, Childress JF. Principios de ética biomédica. Barcelona, Masson, 1999.
- Fernández G, Jiménez L. Mediuris: derecho para el profesional sanitario. Marcial Pons 2008.
- Herreros B, Moreno-Milán B, Pacho-Jiménez E, Real de Asua D, Roa-Castellanos RA, Valentia E. Terminology in clinical bioethics. Rev Med Inst Mex Seguro Soc. 2015 Nov-Dec;53(6):750-61.
- Sánchez-González M, Herreros B. Bioethics in clinical practice. Rev Med Inst Mex Seguro Soc. 2015 Jan-Feb;53(1):66-73.

- Palacios G, Herreros B, Pacho E. Refusal to medical interventions. Rev Clin Esp. 2014 Oct;214(7):389-95.
- Herreros B, Palacios G, Pacho E. Limitation of the therapeutic effort. Rev Clin Esp. 2012 Mar;212(3):134-40.
- José Ortega y Gasset, ¿Qué es filosofía? Madrid, Austral, 2001.
- Bertrand Russell, Historia de la filosofía occidental I, II. Alianza, Madrid, 2005.
- Michel Serres, Historia de las Ciencias. Cátedra, Madrid, 1991.
- Pedro Laín, Historia de la medicina. Masson, Barcelona, 2004.
- Steven Shapin, La revolución científica. Una interpretación alternativa. Paidós, Barcelona, 2000.
- Victoria Camps, Breve Historia de la Ética, RBA, Madrid, 2011.
- Platón, La República. Madrid, Gredos, Madrid, 2003.
- Aristóteles, Política, Madrid, Gredos, Madrid, 1988.
- Aristóteles, Ética Nicomaquea, Gredos, Madrid, 1993.
- Aristóteles, Acerca del alma, Gredos, Madrid, 1978.
- Tomas de Aquino, Suma de Teología III, Parte II-II, BAC, Madrid, 1990.
- Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, Discurso sobre la dignidad del hombre, PPU, Madrid, 2002.
- Baruj Spinoza, Ética demostrada según el orden geométrico, Trotta, Madrid, 2000.
- Immanuel Kant, Crítica de la razón práctica, FCE, México DF, 2011.
- Immanuel Kant, Crítica de la razón pura, Losada, Buenos Aires, 1961.
- Augusto Comte, Discurso sobre el espíritu positivo, Biblioteca Nueva, Madrid, 1999.
- Max Weber, El político y el científico, Alianza, Madrid, 1979.

Grading

Grading Rubric

| Letter Grade | Score or Percentage | Description |
|--------------|---------------------|--|
| A | 93–100 | Achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements. |
| A- | 90–92 | Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements. |
| B+ | 87–89 | |
| B | 83–86 | |
| B- | 80–82 | Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect. |
| C+ | 77–79 | |
| C | 73–76 | |
| C- | 70–72 | Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to fully meet the course requirements. |
| D+ | 67–69 | |
| D | 60–66 | |
| F | 0–59 | Represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an I. |

Summary of How Grades Are Weighted

| Assignments | Percentage of Grade |
|------------------------------|---------------------|
| Midterm Exam | 30% |
| Final Exam | 30% |
| Attendance and participation | 10% |
| Final project | 30% |
| Overall grade | 100% |

Assessment Details

Exams:

The exams will consist of an oral presentation and the development of a written work about a topic taken from the table of course content. The presentation will constitute 60% of the exam grade and the written portion will equal 40%. The session prior to each exam will be dedicated to answering students' questions.

Projects:

- Topic: Critical review of a bioethical problem selected for the student and recommendations for resolving it.
- Structure:
 1. Introduction to the selected problem
 2. Overview
 3. Personal critique
 4. Bibliography
- Formal Characteristics:
 1. Individual project
 2. The project will be about four pages long, single-spaced
 3. For citations and bibliography, students should use the Vancouver referencing style.

Course Content

Unit 1

Introduction to bioethics.

- What is bioethics?
- Field of bioethics. Ethics, rights, and deontology.
- Schools and theories in bioethics. Principlism, casuistry, utilitarianism, virtue ethics. Other theories. Advantages, limits, and comparative analysis of the theories.
- Neuroscience, Biological bases of moral decisions.
- Methods of analysis and decision making. Practical comparative analysis of the bioethical methodologies.

Unit 2

Ethics & health throughout history.

- The Greco-Roman world. The Agora. Health and illness in the Greco-Roman world. The role of medicine in the Platonic Republic. The political doctor in the work of Aristotle.
- The Middle Ages. The monastery. Health and illness in the Middle Ages. Medical ethics in Thomas Aquinas.
- The modern world. The university, the new concept of human dignity. The scientific revolution, the ethics demonstrated through geometrical order.
- The contemporary world. The laboratory, the moral law, and the battle for autonomy in Immanuel Kant. Augusto Comte and positive philosophy. The politics, science, and ethics of responsibility.

Unit 3

Clinical ethics.

- Principle issues in clinical ethics.
- Consultancy in clinical ethics. Ethics committees for medical and ethics counseling.
- Models of clinical relationships and communication.
- The problem of competency and capacity. Decision-making for minor patients and patients with cognitive deficits.
- Ethical problems at the end of life. Limiting of therapeutic efforts and therapeutic obstinacy, Triage, palliative care. Sedation, euthanasia, and assisted suicide, living will. Persistent and permanent vegetative state.
- Organ transplants.
- Rejection of treatment. The duty to not abandon.
- Ethical issues at the beginning of life. Voluntary termination of pregnancy. Techniques of assisted reproduction, prenatal diagnosis, genetic therapy, stem cell research.

Unit 4

Environmental ethics.

- Environmental problems. Ecology and environmentalism. History and content of environmental ethics.
- Precursors to environmental ethics: Aldo Leopold, Rachel Carson, Lynn White, Garret Hardin.
- Deep ecology. Arne Naess. Spiritual ecology. James Lovelock.
- The relationship of human beings to animals.

Unit 5

Ethics of scientific research.

- Good, evil, and reason.
- Philosophical and practical fundamentals of animal research.
- Gene ethics.
- Human research.
- Networks and actors in the scientific arena.

Policies

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to be on time and attend all classes while abroad. Many instructors assess both attendance and participation when assigning a final course grade. Attendance alone does not guarantee a positive participation grade; the student should be prepared for class and engage in class discussion. See the on-site syllabus for specific class requirements.

University of Minnesota Policies & Procedures

Academic integrity is essential to a positive teaching and learning environment. All students enrolled in University courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else's work as your own can result in disciplinary action. The University Student Conduct Code defines scholastic dishonesty as follows:

Scholastic Dishonesty

Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis.

Within this course, a student responsible for scholastic dishonesty can be assigned a penalty up to and including an "F" or "N" for the course. If you have any questions regarding the expectations for a specific assignment or exam, ask.

Student Conduct

The University of Minnesota has specific policies concerning student conduct. This information can be found [on the Learning Abroad Center website](#).