

## SCTS 612: MEDICAL AND HEALTHCARE ETHICS

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R 6:30-9:20, Curtis 255A

### DESCRIPTION

The relatively new discipline of bioethics, which encompasses medical and healthcare ethics, has often been concerned with clinical practice. Work in the field has been designed to guide the behavior and decision-making of medical professionals. However, the scope of topics that might be designated by the term “medical ethics” is in fact far broader, encompassing such subjects as medical research priorities, healthcare inequalities, and the social and cultural experience of disability. This course will introduce students to bioethics in the more capacious sense, seeking to identify points of contact between choices made at the bedside and in the headquarters of governments and international health organizations.

This course will introduce students to a range of topics including the role of explanatory narratives and patient experience in healthcare, the ethics of the design and conduct of clinical trials, the evolution of diagnostic categories, and the problem of healthcare access both in the US and in a global context.

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Develop an understanding of the disciplinary origins of and key concepts in bioethics, including informed consent, distributive justice, and patient autonomy.
2. Learn how empirical research in the social sciences can enhance understanding of problems in bioethics.
3. Learn how to read and summarize the literature in professional journals in bioethics and the social sciences as part of research on a specific topic.
4. Improve analytic reading and writing skills.

### EXPECTATIONS

This course will be run as a seminar structured around course readings and in-class discussions of case studies. This means that students are responsible for coming to class prepared to discuss the materials critically and in depth—in other words, you should have engaged seriously with the readings for that session and have come up with questions and discussion points, preferably in a written list that you will bring with you to class. In addition, you will be expected to keep up to date with current discussions about healthcare and biomedical research—reading the *New York Times* (especially the Tuesday science/health section), the *American Journal of Bioethics*, or the *Hastings Center Report* are only three of many possible ways to do this. I will also periodically inform the class of talks on campus. While attendance at the talks is not required, you should make every effort to attend.

### CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

**Three 3-page response papers** will be due over the course of the semester, generally at the conclusion of each unit. The papers should summarize and critique the main arguments of the

assigned texts, compare methodological and analytic approaches among the texts, and highlight remaining problems or unresolved issues in the areas discussed.

These response papers will constitute practice for your final assignment, a **10-12 page project proposal** in an area of relevance to bioethics, which you will select yourself. A two-page summary of the argument and your sources will be due by mid-quarter. The objective of this assignment will be to summarize key articles on your chosen topic, identify gaps in knowledge, and propose a feasible research plan for broadening knowledge of the topic.

Grading Criteria: In your papers and other written assignments, I will look for you to state an argument clearly and support it using evidence presented in coherent language. You should not rely exclusively on online sources for your papers, and when citing sources, use the MLA style of citations. Guidelines for using MLA style can be found here: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/>.

Written assignments are graded based on appropriate use of evidence, analytic rigor and effective argumentation, and mechanics, including grammar, spelling, and correct use of citations. Your participation grade in the course will reflect your contributions to class discussions as well as other in-class activities.

## **EVALUATION**

Your course grade will be calculated as follows:

Participation	20%
Response papers	45%
Final Paper	35%

Grade ranges are: A+ 97-100, A 93-96, A- 90-92, B+ 87-89, B 83-86, B- 80-82, etc.

I do not permit make-up exams or accept late assignments, except for excused, documented absences such as a student's personal medical emergency. Leaving town for work, having a busy week, etc. do not count. It will be your responsibility to ensure that I receive a hard copy of any excused absence documentation.

## **ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

Students must not violate the University's academic dishonesty policies, as specified by the Provost's Office: [http://www.drexel.edu/provost/policies/academic\\_dishonesty.asp](http://www.drexel.edu/provost/policies/academic_dishonesty.asp)

Violations will be punished as follows:

- 1) Students will receive an "F" for the course.
- 2) The Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards will be notified of the violation.

## **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

I will extend reasonable accommodations on examinations to students who have been granted an Accommodation Verification Letter ("AVL") by the Office of Disability Resources.

<http://www.drexel.edu/oed/disabilityResources/students/>

## **OFFICE HOURS AND CONTACT INFORMATION**

Office Hours are M 2-3:30 or by appointment. Please check in with me by email or in person about the location.

## REQUIRED TEXTS

Angela Garcia. 2010. *The Pastoral Clinic: Addiction and Dispossession Along the Rio Grande*. University of California Press.

Rebecca Skloot. 2010. *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*. New York: Crown Publishers.

Hamdy, Sherine. 2012. *Our Bodies Belong to God: Organ Transplants, Islam, and the Struggle for Human Dignity in Egypt*. University of California Press.

Guthman, Julie. 2011. *Weighing In: Obesity, Food Justice, and the Limits of Capitalism*. University of California Press.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### 1. BIOETHICS, CLINICAL PRACTICE, AND EXPERIMENTATION

#### April 3

Shuster, E. 1997. "Fifty Years Later: the Significance of the Nuremberg Code" *N Engl J Med*. 337: 1436-1440.

Beecher, Henry K. 1966. "Ethics and Clinical Research" *New England Journal of Medicine*.

The Belmont Report, available at:

<http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/belmont.html>

#### April 10

Farmer, P., Nizeye, B., Stulac, S., and Keshavjee, S. 2006. "Structural Violence and Clinical Medicine," *PLoS Medicine*, 3 (10): e449.

Wolpe. 1998. "The Triumph of Autonomy in American Bioethics: A Sociological View."

Gordon, A. H. 1934. "The Patient as a Person." *Can Med Assoc J* 31 (2): 191-193.

#### April 17

Fisher, J. A. 2006. "Co-ordinating 'Ethical' Clinical Trials: the Role of Research Coordinators in the Contract Research Industry," *Sociology of Health and Illness*, 28 (6): 678-694.

Fisher, J.A. 2007. "'Ready-to-Recruit' or 'Ready to Consent' Populations?: Informed Consent and the Limits of Subject Autonomy," *Qualitative Inquiry*, 13 (6): 875- 894.

Petryna, A. 2005. "Ethical Variability: Drug Development and Globalizing Clinical Trials," *American Ethnologist*, 32 (2): 183-197.

#### April 21 – *Response Paper 1 Due*

### 2. BODIES, OWNERSHIP, AND CONTROL

#### April 24

Hamdy, *Our Bodies Belong to God*, selections.

Cohen, L. 1999. "Where it Hurts: Indian Material for an Ethics of Organ Transplantation," *Daedalus* 128 (4): 135-165.

### **May 1**

Skloot, *Immortal Life*.

Landecker, H. 1999. "Between Beneficence and Chattel: The Human Biological in Law and Science," *Science in Context*, 12 (1): 203-225.

### **May 8**

Roberts, Elizabeth F.S. 2007. "Extra Embryos: the Ethics of Cryopreservation in the U.S. and Elsewhere," *American Ethnologist*, 34 (1): 181-199.

Fullwiley, Duana. "The Biological Construction of Race: Admixture Technology and the New Genetic Medicine," *Social Studies of Science*, 38 no. 5 (2008): 695-735.

### **May 12 -- Response Paper 2 Due**

## **ADDICTIONS AND UNRULY BEHAVIORS**

### **May 15**

Caplan, Arthur. "Denying Autonomy in Order to Create It: the Paradox of Forcing Treatment on Addicts," *Addiction*, 103 no. 12 (2008) 1919-1921.

Campbell, N.D. 2009. "Toward a Critical Neuroscience of 'Addiction'" *BioSocieties*, 5: 89-104.

### **May 22**

Garcia, *Pastoral Clinic*, selections.

Joao Biehl, "Will To Live: AIDS Drugs and Local Economies of Salvation" (a photographic essay with Torben Eskerod). *Public Culture*, 2006, 18(3):457-472.

### **May 29**

Guthman, *Obesity*, selections.

Callahan, D. 2013. "Obesity: Chasing an Elusive Epidemic" *The Hastings Center Report*, 32 (1): 34-40.

Tough, P. "The Poverty Clinic: Can a Stressful Childhood Make You a Sick Adult?" *The New Yorker*, March 21, 2011.

### **June 2 – Response Paper 3 Due**

### **June 5**

Present and Workshop Project Proposals

### **June 9**

**Project Proposals Due**