Voyage: Spring 2015  
Discipline: Public Health  
PHS 3559: Medical Ethics in Global Perspective  
Division: Upper  
Faculty Name: Jim Sabin  
Credit Hours: 3; Contact Hours: 38

Pre-requisites:

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course will introduce students to the field of medical ethics as it has been developed and applied in the countries we visit and the US. Classes will focus on questions that include: Is health care a right or a privilege? What is the role of informed consent in different cultures? Is rationing ethical – and if so, how should it be conducted? How do different societies think about and deal with women’s health, family planning and abortion? What values should guide medical care at the end of life? What are the ethical risks for medical research in developing countries? And, throughout the course, how do different societies deal with health and human rights? Class discussion will focus on real life situations in different cultural settings. We will seek to increase skills in ethical reasoning and in formulating the rationale for our views of the right things to do.

COURSE OBJECTIVES
By the end of the course, students will be able to:
● Recognize major issues in medical ethics as they are manifested in different cultures  
● Discuss in some detail informed consent, truthfulness, privacy, rationing and other foundational concepts in medical ethics  
● Establish their own views on ethical issues in bioethics based on critical examination of the relevant facts and identification of the relevant values  
● Apply a thoughtful, systematic approach to deliberating about issues in medical ethics

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

TOPICAL OUTLINE OF COURSE
Depart Ensenada- January 7:

B1- January 10:
● Medical ethics: Introduction to the field
Reading: Vaughn “Moral Reasoning in Bioethics” pages 3-30.

B2- January 12:

- Central theoretical approaches to medical ethics:

  Reading: Vaughn “Bioethics and Moral Theories” pages 33-50.

B3- January 15:

- Universal versus culturally specific values

  Reading: Cultural context in medical ethics: lessons from Japan. Powell T. Philosophy, Ethics and Humanities in Medicine 2006;1(4). Published online at: http://www.peh-med.com/content/1/1/4.


Hilo: January 14

B4- January 17:

- How much risk to self is fair to expect and allow: the Fukushima nuclear disaster as an example


B5- January 21:

- Is telling the truth always the right thing to do in health care?


  Vaughn “Truth-Telling and Confidentiality” pages 131-139.
B6- January 23:

- Ethical issues in organ transplantation


B7- January 25:

- Culture and ethical reasoning: Preparing to learn from our own observations on country visits.

  Reading: Vaughn pages 13-17 (“Ethical Relativism”) & 17-18 (“Ethics & Religion”)


**FIRST ESSAY DUE.** In this first assignment students will choose one case from among three or four choices. The cases will be set in Japan or China and will pose issues of policy and practical action. The students will be asked to take on the role of policy maker or health professional and present their reasoning about the question(s) posed by the case they choose in 3-5 pages, drawing on relevant readings. The essays will (a) contribute to their preparation for visits to Japan and China and (b) give me an early sense of how well they understand basic concepts of medical ethics and the process of moral reasoning.

Yokohama: January 26-27
In-Transit: January 28
Kobe: January 29-31

B8- February 2:

- Individual preferences and community welfare: China’s one child policy


Shanghai: February 3-4
In-Transit: February 5-6
Hong Kong: 7-8

**B9- February 10:**

- Discussion: What did we learn from our time in Japan and China that helps us understand those country’s approaches to medical ethics?

Ho Chi Minh City: February 11-16

**B10- February 18:**

- Singapore’s unique blend of individual & collective responsibility for health care


  Is there a right to health care, and if so, what does it encompass? Daniels N. In Vaughn pages 696-702.

Singapore: February 19-20

**B11-February 23:**

- Politics, Health and Humanitarian Aid: the 2008 cyclone in Myanmar


Rangoon: February 24-March 1

**B12-March 3:**

- Ethical issues in Reproduction: the example of surrogacy in India

Vaughn “Surrogacy” pages 398-400.

Surrogate mothering: exploitation or empowerment? Purdy LM. In Vaughn pages 454-463.

**B13- March 5:**

- The ethics of sex-selective abortion in China and India


Cochin: March 6-11

**B14-March 13:**

- Discussion: What did we learn from our time in India that helps us understand India’s approach to medical ethics?

**FIELD LAB RESPONSE DUE (PRIOR TO THE CLASS)** In this assignment students will be asked to write 500-750 words to explore an issue associated with the field lab experience. The topics to choose from will include: (a) a question about ethical issues associated with medical tourism; (b) a question about ethics of surrogacy; and, (c) a question/questions to be specified at the end of the field lab in accord with suggestions that come from the students, based on their experience.

**B15-March 16:**

- Ethical issues in inter-cultural collaboration in health care.

Reading: International collaborations with community-based organizations: a case study of the partnership between the CDC Global AIDS Program/India and the Indian Network for People Living with HIV/AIDS. Sabin J. Organizational Ethics 2006;3 (2):83-
Port Louis: March 18

B16- March 19:

● Access to HIV medications in Africa versus PHARMA property rights

Reading: “Fighting for our Lives: The History of the Treatment Action Campaign.”

“We all have AIDS”: case for reducing the cost of HIV drugs to zero.

B17-March 22:

● Privacy rights versus protection of others: HIV status as an example


Why privacy is important. Rachels J. In Vaughn pages 156-164.

B18- March 24:

● Resource limits and rationing in developing countries


Rights to health care, social justice, and fairness in health care allocations: frustrations in the face of finitude. Engelhardt HT. In Vaughn pages 708-716.

Cape Town: March 25-30

B19-April 1:

● Discussion: What did we learn from our time in South Africa that helps us (a) understand South Africa’s approach to medical ethics and (b) prepare for the visit to Namibia?

SECOND ESSAY DUE (PRIOR TO THE CLASS). The second essay will give students choices for which they will write 3-5 page essays: (a) drawing on observations made during the country visits we have made to discuss cultural influences on a major issue in medical ethics,
drawn from topics we have addressed or a topic that they have chosen; (b) discussing a question based on the field lab in India to be posed after the visit that goes beyond what was written about in the “Field Lab Response” essay; as in the first assignment, (c) cases set in countries we have visited since then that will pose issues of policy and practical action, with the students being asked to take on the role of policy maker or health professional and to present their reasoning about the question(s) posed by the case; or (d) another topic of the student’s choice that has been OK’d by me.

Walvis Bay: April 2 – April 6

**B20-April 8:**

- The ethics of cultural practices: female genital cutting and male circumcision


**B21- April 11:**

- The ethics of cultural practices continued: female genital cutting and male circumcision

  **Reading:** The child’s interests and the case for the permissibility of male infant circumcision. Mazor J. Journal of Medical Ethics 2013;39:421-428.


**B22-April 13:**

- Ethics of doing research in developing countries and with vulnerable populations

  **Readings:** Racism and research: the case of the Tuskegee Syphilis Study. Brandt AM. In Vaughn pages 266-278.

  The ethics of clinical research in the third world. Angell M. In Vaughn pages 279-282.

  Ethical issues in clinical trials in developing countries. Brody B. In Vaughn pages 283-287.

**Study Day: April 14**
A23: April 16:

● Optional topic – to be chosen during the course

  Reading: TBD in accord with the topic.

Casablanca: April 18 – April 22

B24: April 23

● Review of the main themes discussed in the course and preparation for the final examination.

April 24: Global Lens Exams and Study Day

April 26 - B Day Finals

April 29: Arrive in Southampton
FIELD WORK
Field lab attendance is mandatory for all students enrolled in this course. Please do not book individual travel plans or a Semester at Sea sponsored trip on the day of your field lab.

FIELD LAB
We will visit a hospital specializing in medical tourism, in particular in-vitro fertilization and surrogacy. The facility provides services for couples from other countries who travel to India to have their embryos created & implanted into Indian women who will serve as gestational carriers for the couples at a cost significantly less than they would have paid in their home countries. We will also explore contraceptive and abortion services in India with practitioners, as a means of managing Indian population growth and reducing infant and maternal mortality in India.

METHODS OF EVALUATION / GRADING RUBRIC
Class participation: 15%
Essays: 40% (20% each)
Field Lab: (20%)
Final examination: 25%

RESERVE LIBRARY LIST


ELECTRONIC COURSE MATERIALS

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

HONOR CODE
Semester at Sea students enroll in an academic program administered by the University of Virginia, and thus bind themselves to the University’s honor code. The code prohibits all acts of lying, cheating, and stealing. Please consult the Voyager’s Handbook for further explanation of what constitutes an honor offense.

Each written assignment for this course must be pledged by the student as follows: “On my honor as a student, I pledge that I have neither given nor received aid on this assignment.” The pledge must be signed, or, in the case of an electronic file, signed “[signed].”