Voyage: Fall 2015  
Discipline: Public Health  
PHS 3559: Biomedical Ethics in a Global Perspective  
Division: Upper  
Faculty Name: Lois Shepherd  
Credit Hours: 3; Contact Hours: 38

Pre-requisites: None. This course is open to students from all academic disciplines.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This is a course in biomedical ethics that will be equally accessible to students of all disciplines. Through reading, directed observation, discussion, and writing, it will introduce students to some of the most divisive, sharply debated, and rapidly evolving issues in society today. The course, which explores the intersection among medicine, technology, ethics, and law, will address bioethical principles as well as cultural and legal approaches to the following topics (among others): human reproduction, death and dying, organ transplantation, research involving human subjects, infectious disease and war, access to health care, and informed consent. Readings and class discussion will focus on health care ethics in the countries we visit and in the U.S. Along the way, we will increase our skills in ethical reasoning and in articulating the rationale for our views of the right things to do.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: The objectives of this course are to (1) introduce students to the conceptual frameworks used to examine the range of ethical issues that arise in medical care and the promotion of health, and (2) encourage student thinking, reasoning, and decision-making; to help students become astute observers and evaluators of the subtle, pervasive, and often unintentional way ethics decisions are made in a variety of medical and health policy contexts.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS:


TOPICAL OUTLINE
Note that we will be doing a number of in-class writing responses. Your ability to do these well will depend upon your having read the assigned materials for the day. Together with your participation in class discussions, these in-class writing assignments will count for 25% of your grade. The outline also specifies when five outside assignments are also due. These outside assignments relate to the Field Lab and field experiences. They will count for another 50% of the grade. You may also earn extra credit points for writing response papers to some of the materials on reserve for this class. All of these matters are explained more fully below, under “Methods of Evaluation.”

Depart Southampton—September 13

A1—September 15
TOPIC: AN INTRODUCTION: Moral Reasoning in the Medical Context
READ: Textbook, pp.1-42.
WRITING: In class reading responses.
DISCUSS: The case of Mary and Jodie, conjoined twins.

A2—September 17
TOPIC: AN INTRODUCTION: Autonomy, Paternalism, and Medical Models
READ: Textbook, pp. 43-84.
WRITING: In class reading responses.

A3—September 19
TOPIC: Withdrawal of Life-Sustaining Treatment—Choosing for Once-Competent Patients
READ: Textbook, pp. 369-416.
   Readings comparing Case of Terri Schiavo and Eluano Englaro
   From Bobbi Schindler:
   Excerpt from Kathy L. Cerminara, Federico Gustavo Pizzetti & Watcharin, H.
   Photangtham, Schiavo Revisited? The Struggle for Autonomy At the End of Life in Italy, Marquette’s Elder Advisor, 2011.

Civitavecchia—September 21-23
Naples—September 24-26
In Italy: Think back to our first class, in which we discussed moral reasoning in the medical context. From your observations in Italy, which of the approaches discussed in the first class (e.g., religious ethics, communitarian ethics, feminist ethics, etc.) would the culture(s) of Italy seem most hospitable to? Did you observe different cultures that would be more open to different approaches?
A4—September 27
TOPIC: Physician-Assisted Death
READ: Textbook, pp. 437-483
DISCUSS: Your observations from Italian culture and your understanding of different cultural approaches to dying and to physician-assisted death.

A5—September 29
TOPIC: The Morality of Abortion
WRITING: In class reading responses.
READ: Textbook, pp. 543-574.
Semih Semin, Bioethics and Turkey: Crossroads and challenges
News item on abortion in Turkey: http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/feb/01/turkish-law-abortion-impossible
Comparative international abortion rates

Istanbul—September 30-October 5

A6—October 7
TOPIC: Procreative Responsibility
READ: Textbook, pp. 595-630.
WRITING: In class reading responses.
DISCUSS: In class, we will discuss ethics prompt suggestions for Athens
DUE: Field Assignment 1

Piraeus, Greece—October 8-13. In Greece: observe and record attitudes about pregnant women or about disability, to the extent you encounter them.

A7—October 15
TOPIC: Assisted Reproduction
READ: Textbook, pp. 631-668
WRITE/DISCUSS: Ways in which cultures influence and create pressure in decision-making about the use of reproductive technology. Share observations from Greece.
DUE: FIELD ASSIGNMENT 1

A8—October 17
TOPIC: Organ Transplantation
Readings on “opt in” and “opt out” donation systems, include Spain’s “opt-out” system.
WRITE: In class reading responses.

Barcelona—October 18-23. In Barcelona: speak with at least one local person about any question relating to bioethics that we have touched on so far.
Also, for Barcelona and/or Casablanca: After we leave Casablanca, be prepared to share in class a story, picture, or news item from either Barcelona or Casablanca which relates to bioethical issues.

A9—October 25
TOPIC: Reproductive Cloning
READ: Textbook, pp. 669-696.
   Is Human Reproductive Cloning Inevitable: Future Options for UN Governance

Casablanca—October 26-31.

A10—November 2
TOPIC: Power and Biomedical Ethics
READ: Farmer, Introduction and Excerpts from Part I
WRITE: In class reading response.
BRING: A story, picture, or news item from either Barcelona or Casablanca which relates to bioethical issues.

A11—November 4
TOPIC: Doing Good and Doing Well
READ: Farmer, Excerpts from Part II
DUE: FIELD ASSIGNMENT 2

Study Day: November 6

A12—November 7
TOPIC: Health and Human Rights
READ: Farmer, Excerpts from Part II
   John Arras, Bioethics and Human Rights: Curb Your Enthusiasm
WRITE: In class reading response to Farmer and Arras

A13—November 9
TOPIC: Human Subjects Research
WATCH: Film
DUE: FIELD ASSIGNMENT 3

A14—November 11
TOPIC: The Ethics of Human Experimentation—International Research Ethics
READ: Textbook, pp. 711-741
The Nuremberg Code

WRITE: in class reading response
BRING: Ethics prompt suggestions for Salvador

Salvador—November 12-17.

A15—November 19
TOPIC: Ethics of Human Experimentation—International Research Ethics
The Declaration of Helsinki (skim)
DISCUSS: Two case studies prepared by Professor John Arras: Havrix Case & The Surfaxin Trial

A16—November 21
TOPIC: Global Health Crises
Excerpt from *Quarantine and Isolation: Lessons Learned from Sars, A Report to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*, 2003.

Study Day: November 23

A17—November 24
TOPIC: Class presentations of Field Assignment 4.

A18—November 26
TOPIC: Class presentations of Field Assignment 4.

A19—November 30
TOPIC: Professional Roles and Responsibilities
READ: Textbook, pp. 100-121.
Fearon MA. The legal and ethical issues raised by the practice of alternative and homeopathic medicine in the Caribbean. West Indian Med J. 2000 Dec;49(4):268-70.


Port of Spain—November 27-28.

A20—December 3:
TOPIC: Global Health and the Social Determinants of Health
WHO Social Determinants of Health Closing the Gap and the Global SDH Initiative see: http://www.who.int/social_determinants/en/

Study Day—December 2
WORK: Put your final portfolio together. This will include your in-class writing assignments, Field Assignments, field notes, and any extra writing you have done on reserve assignments.

A21—December 5:
TOPIC: Corporate Responsibilities
Reading on CVS’ decision not to sell cigarettes.
Feb. 2003, Report of WHO’S TOBACCO FREE INITIATIVE
WRITE: In class response to reading assignments.

Puntarenas—December 6-11. In Puntarenas: Observe and record patterns of tobacco use—who, what, when, where.

A22—December 13:
TOPIC: Global Bioethics

SHARE: Your observations on tobacco use in Puntarenas.

A23—December 15:
TOPIC: Review.
DUE: FIELD LAB paper due (800-1000 words).

Study Day—December 17

A24—December 18; A-Day Finals

Arrive San Diego—December 21

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

FIELD LABS
Potential Field Labs: In Barcelona, Spain, visit with transplant/organ procurement personnel in a hospital or procurement agency to discuss Spain’s practices in organ donation and allocation of organs. You will write up an analysis of the field lab which compares what you have learned with what you have observed in other field settings, in readings, and in classroom discussion.

METHODS OF EVALUATION / GRADING RUBRIC

Grading

25% In class reading responses and participation in class discussion.

50% Field lab and 5 field assignments.

25% Final exam.

Near the end of the semester, you will place all written assignments, field notes, and extra credit responses to reserve materials in a portfolio to hand in together. Please organize this portfolio as follows: Reading Responses, Field Assignments, Extra Credit Reserve Material Responses (if any). Within each section, please organize chronologically, in relation to the ports we visited. You will also include any materials you would like on your Case Presentation.
Assignments

1. **Field Assignments and Field Observations.** In class, prior to each port of call, we will discuss options for observing, engaging, and evaluating comparative ethical decisions we might relating to biomedical ethics. The objective will be to compare these ethical approaches with those of other ports, or the US. We will, as a class, come up with ideas; it will be the responsibility of each student to find an appropriate particular ethics issue, story, or context to discuss in their three formal Field Assignment writings, described below. The fourth Field Assignment, which is more creative, will be more individualized.

**Field Assignment 1: Bioethics Issue in the News.** Find current news coverage of a bioethics issue within one of the countries we visit and write an essay that (a) summarizes the issue discussed in the article, (b) compares treatment of the issue identified with current U.S. treatment of the same or similar issues, (c) analyzes the issue using the theoretical concepts discussed in class. Total word count: 800-1000. Please attach the actual news article to your essay. Also, prepare a summary of your essay (150 words) to post on our electronic discussion board. This assignment is due ____, but I would encourage you to submit it earlier, soon after you identify the news item you wish to discuss. You are also encouraged to respond thoughtfully to other students’ contribution on the electronic discussion board. Your responses will count towards your participation grade. Your summary and analysis of the news item you choose will count for 10% of your final grade.

**Field Assignment 2: Bioethics Narrative.** Look for a story (a personal narrative) to tell about modern medicine in one of the countries that we visit. This story may come from news sources, from conversations with the people you meet, or from something you observe relating to the people of one of the countries we visit. Write an essay that summarizes the story and relates it to the theoretical concepts in bioethics that we have been studying in class. Focus on the cultural elements of the story that make it appear different to you than a story you would learn about in the U.S. How do you think the story would be different if it took place in the U.S.? Or in another port? What does the story tell us about the underlying bioethics issues that we might miss if we only read academic articles and policy papers? This essay assignment will count for 10% of your final grade. Total word count: 800-1000.

**Field Assignment 3: Paul Farmer—Applied Worldwide.** Write an essay engaging the work of Paul Farmer in *Pathologies of Power*. Do you think his insights have global application? In what ways are they convincing and in what ways less so? Are there certain places and contexts in which his approach has more applicability? Less? When you write this essay, it will be important to draw on your observations in our various ports of call about the health conditions, working capacities, economic systems, political systems, stereotypes, etc. (whatever you believe relevant) to provide an analytical critique to the book. Have fun with this essay. And make it interesting. This essay assignment will count for 10% of your final grade. Total word count: 800-1000.
**Field Assignment 4: Photographic reflection.** Throughout our journey and at various ports, take photographs of non-human objects, landscapes, etc. (anything, really, other than a human) that represent for you or speak to you about suffering, illness, disability, health, happiness, healing (total of 6 photos). Upload these soon after taken to your folder on the electronic course site, together with a fairly contemporaneous written description (short paragraph) of what you see and how it relates to the concept it represents for you. As the semester goes on, you might replace one of your photos for one you like better. At the end of the semester, you will present these photos to the class, along with your explanation for why you selected them. This essay will count for 10% of your final grade.

**Primary field lab report and analysis:** You will write up an analysis of the field lab which compares what you have learned with what you have observed in other field settings, in readings, and in classroom discussion. This essay will count for 10% of your final grade. Total word count: 800-1000.

2. **A final essay exam.** If you have prepared well for class during the semester, preparing for this exam should not be onerous.

3. **Extra credit** responses to reserve materials. **With a partner,** choose one of more articles, films, or books from the reserve list; discuss with your partner what you have learned, and write a brief response. The writing can be done together or separately with your partner, but must reflect that a discussion with your partner took place.

**A Note on Grading.** Missing class, field work, or deadlines will significantly impact a student’s grade. Excuses are granted at the discretion of the professor, and excepting verified illness or emergency (such as the death of a loved one), students should expect that missing class, field work, or deadlines will result in a lower final grade, including the possibility of a failing final grade.

Students are expected to attend class, arrive on time, and be prepared. Each of the assignments contributes to the final grade. Extra credit opportunity is available, as specified above, but should not be used to make up for repeated instances of absence, tardiness, or unpreparedness.

In general, students earn an A for work which demonstrates the highest levels of imagination, talent, preparation, skill, and a high level of accomplishment, with excellent attendance, participation, and attention to deadlines. Students earn a B for work which is highly skilled, with great attention to deadline, detail, precision, participation, and attendance, which strives for imagination, and which shows a willingness to learn and work hard. Students earn a C for work which is skilled, with attention to deadline, detail, precision, participation, and attendance, but which might have benefited from more work, willingness to learn, or imagination. A failing
grade is awarded to students whose attendance, work, attention to detail, participation, or willingness to learn has been inadequate for performance at the college-level.

As with course in which grades are based on writing and discussion, there is an element of subjectivity, although exceptional writing and work are easily recognized. The professor reserves the right to weight the above grading rubric to the benefit of a student whose work is of a *remarkably* higher caliber in a specific area.

**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].”
[to be completed]

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AUTHOR:
TITLE:
PUBLISHER:
ISBN #:
DATE/EDITION:
ELECTRONIC COURSE MATERIALS


http://www.nytimes.com/2013/12/19/world/asia/after-collapse-bleak-struggle.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0


http://www.management.pamplin.vt.edu/directory/Articles/Wokutch2.pdf

http://www.usc.edu/schools/business/FBE/seminars/papers/AE_4-28-06_FISMAN-parking.pdf

AUTHOR: Bucky McMahon
ARTICLE/CHAPTER TITLE: “The Terrifying True Story of the Garbage that could Kill the Whole Human Race”
JOURNAL: Medium
WEB ADDRESS: https://medium.com/matter/the-terrifying-true-story-of-the-garbage-that-could-kill-the-whole-human-race-b17eebd6d54
DATE: August 18, 2014

END

Parking lot:

    David B. Morris, Conclusion: Narrative bioethics, in *Illness and Culture in the Postmodern Age* (California, 1998), 247-78 (on narrative)