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  
B Day Schedule: 8-9:15

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 (1) to 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) to 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 20% 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 60% of the grade. The final 20% of the course grade will come from a final exam. 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

**B1—September 16**

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

**B2—September 18**

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

**Civitavecchia**—September 19-22  
**Naples**—September 23-24  
**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?

**Film available:** The Silver Mirror: A Global Documentary Film on Aging

**B3—September 26**

**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:  
(Optional: 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.)

IN CLASS: PowerPoint Presentation

DISCUSS: Your observations from Italian culture and your understanding of different cultural approaches to dying and to physician-assisted death.

B4—September 28

TOPIC: Physician-Assisted Death
READ: Textbook, pp. 437-483
Optional: Rachel Aviv, The Death Treatment: When should people with a non-terminal illness be helped to die? The New Yorker, June 22, 2015.

DISCUSS: In class, we will discuss ethics prompt suggestions for Istanbul.

Istanbul—September 30-October 5

B5—October 5

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: http://www.nytimes.com/2007/10/12/world/12abortion.html
Optional: https://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/AIU-2012-estimates.pdf (information on contraception access)

DISCUSS: In class, we will discuss ethics prompt suggestions for Athens.

Piraeus, Greece—October 6-10. In Greece: observe and record attitudes about pregnant women or about disability, to the extent you encounter them.

B6—October 12

TOPIC: Procreative Responsibility
READ: Textbook, pp. 595-630.
WRITING: In class reading responses. Share observations from Greece.

Film Available: GATTACA, 1997

B7—October 14

TOPIC: Organ Transplantation
Readings on “opt in” and “opt out” donation systems, including Spain’s “opt-out” system:

http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/282905.php
http://www.newsweek.com/2015/02/20/spain-has-become-world-leader-organ-donations-305841.html

WRITE: In class reading responses.

FILM AVAILABLE: "Dirty Pretty Things, 2002 (British)"

Valencia/Barcelona—October 15-19.
FIELD LAB—Spain's Success in Organ Donation, Monday, 19 October (Last Day)

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.

B8—October 21
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.
DUE: FIELD LAB REPORT (at 5 p.m.)

Film Available: Made in India, 2010 (gestational surrogacy)

Casablanca—October 22-26. 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.

B9—October 28
TOPIC: Reproductive Cloning
READ: Textbook, pp. 669-696.

Is Human Reproductive Cloning Inevitable: Future Options for UN Governance; focus on pp. 16-29 (skimming is fine)
BRING: A story, picture, or news item from either Barcelona or Casablanca that relates to bioethical issues.
DUE: FIELD ASSIGNMENT 1 (at 5 p.m.)

B10—October 30
TOPIC: Global Health Crises

- **NO** – *Ebola Doesn't Abide by Borders* by Georges Benjamin
- **YES** – *Isolate Ebola at Its Source* by Renee Ellmers
- **YES** – *Business As Usual Is Too Risky* by Ted Poe
- **NO** – *Isolate Ebola, Not West Africa* by Witney Schneidman
- **NO** – *Vigilance, Not Bans* by Isabelle Nuttall


WRITE: In class reading response to debates on travel restrictions.

DISCUSS: In class, we will discuss ethics prompt suggestions for Dakar.

Dakar—October 31-November 3.

**B11—November 5**

**TOPIC:** Power and Biomedical Ethics

**READ:** Farmer, Introduction and Excerpts from Part I (to be announced)

**WRITE:** In class reading response.

Study Day: November 6

**B12—November 8**

**TOPIC:** Doing Good and Doing Well

**READ:** Farmer, Excerpts from Part II (to be announced)

**DUE:** FIELD ASSIGNMENT 2 (at 5 p.m.)

**B13—November 10**

**TOPIC:** Health and Human Rights

**READ:** Farmer, Excerpts from Part II (to be announced)

- John Arras, *Bioethics and Human Rights: Curb Your Enthusiasm*

**WRITE:** In class reading response to Farmer and Arras

**BRING:** Ethics prompt suggestions for Salvador

Salvador—November 11-16. In Brazil: speak with at least one local person about any question relating to bioethics that we have touched on so far.
**B14—November 18**  
**TOPIC:** Human Subjects Research (introductory lecture)  
**IN CLASS:** Powerpoint Presentation; ads for research  
**DUE:** FIELD ASSIGNMENT 3 (at 5 p.m.)

**B15—November 20**  
**TOPIC:** The Ethics of Human Experimentation—International Research Ethics  
**READ:** Textbook, pp. 711-741  
**WRITE:** in class reading response  

**Study Day:** November 21.

**B16—November 23**  
**TOPIC:** Ethics of Human Experimentation—International Research Ethics  
**READ:** Textbook, pp. 753-770  
- The Declaration of Helsinki (skim)  
**DISCUSS:** Two case studies prepared by Professor John Arras: Havrix Case & The Surfaxin Trial

**B17—November 25**  
**TOPIC:** Class presentations of Field Assignment 4.

**Port of Spain—November 26-27.**

**B18—November 29**  
**TOPIC:** Class presentations of Field Assignment 4.

**B19—December 1**  
**TOPIC:** Professional Roles and Responsibilities  
**READ:**  

**Panama Canal—December 2.**
**B20—December 4**

**TOPIC:** Global Health and the Social Determinants of Health


**Puntarenas—December 5-9. In Puntarenas:** Observe and record patterns of tobacco use—who, what, when, where.

**B21—December 11**

**TOPIC:** Corporate Responsibilities


Reading on CVS’ decision not to sell cigarettes:
[http://www.cvshealth.com/research-insights/health-topics/this-is-the-right-thing-to-do](http://www.cvshealth.com/research-insights/health-topics/this-is-the-right-thing-to-do)

Feb. 2003, Report of WHO’S TOBACCO FREE INITIATIVE

**SHARE:** Your observations on tobacco use in Puntarenas.

**B22—December 13**

**TOPIC:** Global Bioethics


**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.

**B23—December 15**

**TOPIC:** Review.

**Study Day—December 17**
B24—December 18; 8-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 LAB (Barcelona, Monday, 19 October (Last Day)

Spain is frequently described as having an “opt out” system for deceased organ donation as compared to the U.S.’s “opt in” system; it also has a very high rate of organ donation from deceased individuals and is often cited as an example in this area. By visiting a hospital in which organ donation occurs and discussing with transplant/organ procurement personnel Spain’s laws and medical practices relating to organ donation and allocation of organs, we will gain a comparative perspective. We will learn about different legal and ethical frameworks for organ donation and consider how those differences may or may not reflect a country’s cultural and civic norms. We will also gain general insights into the Spanish health care system.

METHODS OF EVALUATION / GRADING RUBRIC

Grading

20% In class reading responses and participation in class discussion.

60% Field lab and 5 field assignments.

20% 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.

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 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 2: 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 Nov. 8, 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 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 and your participation in the field lab will count for 20% 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. Please tie your response papers to something you have learned or observed in port or otherwise in our travels.

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 any 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].”

Optional and Reserve:

Rachel Aviv, The Death Treatment: When should people with a non-terminal illness be helped to die? The New Yorker, June 22, 2015.

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 Advisor2011 (excerpt).

Marilyn Friedman, Domestic violence against women and autonomy, in Autonomy, Gender, Politics (Oxford, 2003), 140-59.


Leili Monfared & Lois Shepherd, Organ Procurement Now: Ethical Shortcomings in America’s Blended System (unpublished manuscript) (only pages 1-12 are assigned; but the entire article might be read for extra credit writing response).

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


Daniel P. Sulmasy, Every ethos implies a mythos: Faith and bioethics, in Dena S. Davis and Laurie Zoloth, Notes from a Narrow Ridge: Religion and Bioethics (University Publishing Group, 1999), 227-46.


Films:
GATTACA, 1997
Dirty Pretty Things, 2002
Made in India, 2010
The Silver Mirror: A Global Documentary Film on Aging
Any of the films on the loop as long as you identify and write about a bioethics issue you observe in it.