COURSE OBJECTIVES.

a) Course Description. This course is presented in seminar format that dedicates most of class time to presentation and discussion of the assigned readings and to the development of the course research essays. The goal is to provide a systematic overview of major topics in the field to inspire excellence in the student’s research and writing.

b) Specific Competencies to be expected. Upon completion of the course students should master the following major competences, as should be demonstrated both in class participation and in the course essay:

   a. an understanding of major ethical issues that address recent developments in the science of the human genome integrating pluralistic/philosophical and secular/religious perspectives;

   b. the capability of presenting in a succinct manner a complex ethical and scientific debate on selected topics in the field;

   c. a capacity for argument formation, literature integration, and critical analysis when writing a research essay in the field.

c) General Program Learning Outcomes.

   a. Fundamental Knowledge.
      Students can understand and analyze the major ethical and scientific debates around the human genome.

   b. Multi-disciplinary Study.
      Students can critically relate discourse on genetics and ethics with multi-disciplinary fields in health care as a diverse and global enterprise (empirical research, law, medicine, philosophy, religion, science, etc).

   c. Scholarship.
      Students can research and write scholarly essays, teach and communicate effectively, and present academic papers that:
      - present cogent argument(s),
      - engage scholarly literature, and
      - demonstrate critical thinking and analysis.

   d. Professionalism.
      Students can integrate academic learning with experiential learning by applying discourse on ethics and genetics to practical and professional issues in health care.
e. **Ethical Leadership.**
Students can provide ethical leadership in the field of ethics and genetics.

f. **Co-Curricular Practices for Life-long Learning.**
Students can foster co-curricular practices for life-long learning to personally value and engage discourse on genetics and ethics in a global context. Practices include: accessing journals and literature for developments in HCE; networking with colleagues in professional associations; fostering a community of scholars in the HCE program, for example, participating in seminars/colloquia/speaker events, preparing for comprehensive exams, writing doctoral projects.

**RESEARCH COMPETENCIES & REQUIRED READINGS.**

The course is designed around three Research Competencies regarding genetics and ethics. These three competencies will be explored and analyzed in the three Research Projects (RP) and a Course Research Essay.

1. **Research Competency #1, SCIENCE & ETHICS: Stem Cells:**
Understand how recent discoveries in the molecular biology of stem cells are shaping ethical discourse.

   **5 Page Project:** Because there are only 2 weeks for this RP1, there will be one required text and only 5 pages with 15 references for this Research Project (RP1).

   **RP1:** Identify and explain why recent discoveries in stem cell research have significant implications for discourse in bioethics.

   **Required Readings:**
   - **AND/OR,**

2. **Research Competency #2, SYSTEMATIC ANALYSIS:**
Understand the ethical debate in genetics around Transhumanism & Enhancement.

   **10 Page Project:** RP2 requires the typical 10-page research project.

   **RP2:** Provide a systematic analysis of some basic issues in the ethical debate in genetics around Transhumanism & Human Enhancement.
Required Readings:
AND/OR,

3. **Research Competency #3, APPLIED ANALYSIS:**
Understand a select debate on an applied topic in genetics, to connect science with ethical theory.

**10 Page Project**: RP3 requires the typical 10-page research project.

**RP3**: Provide a practical ethical analysis of an applied topic in genetics, connecting science with ethical theory.

**Note**: there are three options below from which the applied topic must be selected.

**Required Readings**: Students must select one option for RP3 noting that the same option must carry forward into the course essay.

**Option #1. Reproduction & Screening**:

**Option #2: Protocells & Gene Transfer**:

**Option #3: Neuroethics**:

**AND/OR, related to all three options**:
RESEARCH PROJECTS.

1. **Reading Requirements.** Each Research Project (RP) will require students to critically engage the equivalent of 2 books to (a) master the relevant knowledge and (b) engage in critical reading and writing. RP1 has only 1 required text.

2. **Research Competencies.** The Research Competencies are identified in the three Research Projects. Each Research Project will demonstrate that the student has mastered the relevant Research Competency.

3. **Literature Integration.** Students should include approximately 30 notes in each 10-page research project referring to the texts assigned for the Project. RP1 requires only 15 notes.

4. **Relation of Projects with Essay.** The three Research Projects may be integrated into the Research Essay but not in a manner of cut-and-paste from one to the other.

RESEARCH SEMINARS.

The Research Seminars discuss the three Research Competencies and the Research Essay. Drafts of the three Research Projects may not be submitted. While students will not formally present their Research Projects during the Seminars, the Instructor may call upon students individually to discuss their Projects during the Seminars: hence, everyone must be ready to briefly present their materials.

RESEARCH ESSAY.

Please note several related points underlined below.

Ethics Thesis as the Essay Title.

Students will submit for the Research Essay a specific ethics thesis as the title from the three options below. The course essay enables the student to combine RP1 & RP2 with RP3 on an applied topic in genetics by writing an expanded essay on the topic selected. Students may NOT cut and paste from the RPs, but they may integrate the materials to write the course essay.

The general purpose of the essay is to integrate the science and ethical debate in RP1 & RP2 with an applied topic in genetics by combining. The applied topic must be the same one that is selected for RP3. These are the options.

Option #1. Reproduction & Screening.
Option #2: Protocells & Gene Transfer.
Option #3: Neuroethics.
Drafts of the Research Essay may not be submitted. However, progress on the Research Essay will be discussed throughout the course with a dedicated focus in the final segment of the course, with class critique of voluntary submissions. Students wishing to have class discussion of their essays must submit them by April 10 for the Seminar on April 12.

There are three standards adopted in the HCE program for evaluating Research Projects and the Research Essays, as follows:

- Argument Formation.
- Literature Integration.
- Critical Organization and Analysis.

Essay’s Technical Requirements:
1. Start research from the beginning of the course.
3. Progress will be reported in the Seminars.
4. Focus on Research Essay progress during the final Seminar.
5. Submit a copy of the essay by date assigned.
6. The essay length should be **30 pages**, double-spacing.
7. Adopt the format of the *Chicago Manual of Style*, as required by the College for dissertation submissions.
8. Provide a Cover Page (name and essay title) plus an Essay Outline.
10. Include an Outline of sections and sub-sections after the Title Page.
11. Notes to the references made in the essay.
   a. Use end notes (as opposed to foot notes at the bottom of the page).
   b. Do not use notes for narrative explanations – they belong in the text.
   c. There should be approx. 100 end notes in the essay.
   d. Avoid repeat references to pages from the same resource.
12. Bibliography. List all the references in alphabetical order by author. Only list items actually referred to in the essay.
13. Online references are not permitted.
14. Divisions and subdivisions. Use major divisions and subdivisions, evenly distributed throughout the essay, for example:
   
   **Title:** The ethical justification of mandating patient safety programs in health care organizations.
   I. Introduction.
   II. The organizational ethics problem of medical error.
      a. The range of medical problems.
      b. The range of organizational problems.
   III. The ethical principles that guide systems for patient safety.
      a. Principle 1: Protection of Patients from Medical Error.
   IV. The policy options for stem cell research.
      b. Joint Commission Accreditation Policy.
V. The ethical justification of practical policy options for stem cell research.
   a. Justifying oversight proposal A.
   b. Justifying accreditation policy B.
VI. Conclusion.
VII. End Notes & Bibliography of references cited.

**COURSE SCHEDULE.**
- Course Intro, Seminar #1; Thu. Jan.5.
- Research Project #2 (10 pages); due Tue. Feb.14 for Seminar RP2, Thu. Feb.16.
- Research Project #3 (10 pages); due Tue. Mar.13 for Seminar RP3, Thu. Mar.15.
- Research Essay (30 pages plus end notes & bibliography).
   b. Submit Research Essays electronically by Thu. Apr.19 (no class).

**COURSE GRADE.**
There will be no examinations. The course grade will be assigned based on the quality of the course Research Essay and the three Research Projects. The grade will be a combination of 10% for each of the three research projects and 70% for the final essay. No midterm grades will be assigned. End of term grades will be assigned adopting grading policy in the McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts, as follows:

- A  4.0  distinguished scholarly work
- A-  3.7  
- B+  3.3  
- B  3.0  normal progress towards degree
- B-  2.7  
- C+  2.3  
- C  2.0  warning; student subject to departmental action
- F  0.0

**HCE Handbook.** The Center for Healthcare ethics has developed a *Handbook* of Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines to guide students in all curriculum related matters. See the HCE website.

**Academic Integrity.** This syllabus incorporates the “Expectations of Academic Integrity.” Cheating and plagiarism cannot be tolerated. All relevant policies of the McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts apply.

**Reasonable Accommodations.**
Students with documented disabilities are entitled to reasonable accommodations if needed. If you need accommodations, please contact the Office of Freshman Development and Special Student Services in 309 Duquesne Union (412-396-6657) as soon as possible. Accommodations cannot always be granted retrospectively.