Outline
This course follows a seminar format in which the students will be specifically trained in case analysis, scientific presentation and reporting in the field of clinical ethics. The course consists of three parts. In the first part, we undertake a general exploration of the aims of clinical ethics and the place of clinical ethics consultations therein. In the second part, we look at approaches to ethical analysis in case consultation. The students gain insight into the merits of these approaches and learn to apply them to clinical cases. In the third part, we focus on an issue that is central in clinical ethics: decision making. We study the standard of informed consent, and decision making for mentally incapacitated patients and patients who are unable to communicate.

Course Objectives

a) Course Description
This course follows a seminar format which after an introductory session devotes most of class time to presentations by students, group discussion and development of the research essay. Through their own research and the critical input of other students the students gain insight into clinical ethics; they become acquainted with appropriate approaches to case analyzes; and learn to develop a coherent argument regarding central issues in clinical ethics.

b) Competencies
Upon completion of the course, students should master the following competencies, as should be demonstrated in specific research projects and presentations, class participation and in the research essay:

a. The capacity to critically examine and explain the nature of clinical ethics, and understand the importance of core competencies for healthcare ethics consultation
b. The ability to analyze clinical cases by applying approaches that have been influential in the field of clinical ethics
   c. The capability to assess and report on central issues in clinical ethics, particularly problems that can arise regarding informed consent

   c) General HCE Program Learning Outcomes
The following HCE Program Learning Outcomes pertain to this course.
Fundamental Knowledge. Students can understand and analyze clinical ethics as both an academic and practical discipline in healthcare ethics.

Multi-disciplinary Study. Students are able to integrate observations from multidisciplinary fields in healthcare (empirical research, law, medicine, philosophy, religion, science and technology) into clinical ethics analysis.

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 in the field of clinical ethics.

Professionalism. Students can integrate academic learning with experiential learning by applying Care Ethics to practical and professional issues in health care.

Ethical Leadership. Students can function with expertise and provide ethical leadership in clinical contexts.

Course Procedures

a) Research Projects and Required Readings

a.1) General Procedure
For this seminar, the students have to complete four written assignments: three research projects (each 9 pages and a poster presentation) and one research essay (25 pages plus endnotes & bibliography). Students will prepare and submit these assignments as per the schedule below.

i. Research Project #1, week 1-4, due Wednesday, February 3
ii. Research Project #2, week 5-8, due Wednesday, March 2
iii. Research Project #3, week 9-13, due Wednesday, April 6
iv. Research Essay, week 14-16
   - Option to submit mid-term essay. For students who want to be assisted in their progress, a draft of the essay can be submitted for feedback by Monday, March 28.
   - Final version is due Wednesday, April 27.

Reading Requirements. Each Research Project will require students to critically engage the equivalent of two or three books to (a) master the relevant knowledge and (b) engage in critical reading and writing.

Literature integration. Students should include approximately 30 notes in each 9-page research project referring to the texts assigned for the project. Endnotes and bibliography as well as title page and table of content do not count within the 9 pages.

Research competencies. The research competencies in the course are identified by the three Research Projects: (a) examination and explanation of the nature of clinical ethics and clinical ethics consultation, (b) case analysis, and (c) assessing and reporting on central issues in clinical ethics. Each Research Project will demonstrate that the student has mastered the specific competency.
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. The Research Essay typically demonstrates that the student has mastered a specific research competency. While the research papers are focused on one specific competency, the course essay must demonstrate all three competencies. The course essay furthermore is based on a self-selected thesis different for each student, while the topics of the research papers are given and identical for all students.

a.2) Research Project #1: Exploration of the field: aims of clinical ethics and ethics consultation

In the first session, the students get a general overview of the aims and scope of clinical ethics. They are also introduced to the main resources (journals and books) in the field of clinical ethics. In the first research paper, the students formulate a coherent, encompassing, but at the same time succinct definition of clinical ethics. This definition gives a clear and direct answer to the question ‘what is clinical ethics?’ This definition is presented at the end of the paper’s introduction. In the subsequent sections, the students analyze the various components of their definition. The students also explain how their definition relates to and/or integrates the ASBH core competencies for healthcare ethics consultation.

Required readings


a.3) Research Project #2: How to do a case consultation?

In the second paper, the students analyze three approaches to clinical ethics case consultation: the 4 topics method (Jonsen, Siegler, and Winslade), CASES (Veterans Health Administration), and process and format (Orr, and Shelton). The students formulate an argument as to which approach is best suited for healthcare ethics consultation. They illustrate their point through the analysis of one case. This case will be presented to the students at the end of the second session. The case will also be emailed to the students.

Required readings. The journal articles will be available through the Gumberg Library e-reserves. The link to the readings is: ?????. The password is: clineth.

a.4) Research Project #3: Decision-making in medical ethics

In the third research paper, the students formulate a logically structured answer to the following question: In what sense can decision making for mentally incapacitated patients and patients who are unable to communicate live up to the standard of informed consent?

Required readings


b) Research Seminars

There will be four seminars. After the introductory first seminar, in each of the seminars, the focus will be on one of the three research competencies. For these sessions, students will be requested to prepare a presentation of maximum 15 minutes of their research papers. These presentations will follow the format of a conference poster presentation. Presenting students first read a 250 word abstract of their presentation. The abstract should be projected as a PowerPoint slide or printed copies of the abstract should be distributed in the class as this will facilitate discussion. Then, the students present their poster. The poster need not be printed but can be projected as one PowerPoint slide. Each student will do one formal presentation in the course. In the first seminar, a schedule of these presentations will be made so that students know on which day they are expected to do their presentation. Other students may be invited to discuss their project and to comment on their colleagues’ presentations. Students who are due to present send their abstract to the instructor at least one hour before the beginning of the class.

1. **Week 1: Mon Jan 11** Seminar #1: introduction
   i. Introduction to the course
   ii. Discussion of research paper requirements and course essay
   iii. Introduction to clinical ethics and its resources

2. **Week 5: Mon Feb 8** Seminar #2: Exploration of the field: aims of clinical ethics and ethics consultation (Research Project #1)
   i. Discussion of progress on research essays
   ii. Presentations of completed Research Project #1

3. **Week 9: Mon March 7** Seminar #3: How to do a case consultation? (Research Project #2)
   i. Discussion of progress on research essays
   ii. Presentations of completed Research Project #2

4. **Week 14: Mon April 11** Seminar #4: Decision-making in medical ethics (Research Project #3)
   i. Discussion of progress on research essays
ii. Presentations of completed Research Project #3

c) Research Essay
The research essay will require students to substantively apply the Research Competencies of this course to a particular issue in clinical ethics. The students begin their essay with a clinical case (derived from the literature or their own hospital experience) that illustrates the relevance of the studied issue. Throughout the essay, the students refer to that case. It is important that they demonstrate their acquaintanceship with all three research competencies in their essay.

Requirements:

1. Start to reflect on the thesis of your course essay from the beginning of the course.
2. Thesis, a 500 words abstract, outline, and basic bibliography to be submitted by Monday, February 29.
3. Students will receive feedback in Seminar #3.
4. Progress will be reported in Seminar #4.
5. Submit a copy of the essay by date assigned.
6. The course essay length should be at least 25 pages, double-spacing; the main body of text; title page, table of content, endnotes and bibliography do not count within the 25 pages.
7. Students must adopt the format of the Chicago Manual of Style, as required by the College for dissertation submissions.
8. Students can quote from publications in any language, but need to provide an English translation.
9. Select an Essay Title that reflects a research thesis.
10. Make a Title page and a separate Table of Content.
11. Present a brief Introduction and Conclusion.
12. 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 main text.
   c. There should be approximately 100 end notes in the essay.
13. Bibliography. List all the references in alphabetical order. Only list items actually referred to in the essay.
14. Divisions and subdivisions. Use major divisions (headings) and subdivisions (subheadings), evenly distributed throughout the essay, to lay out the sequence of concepts and arguments.
15. Use of online references. Online references must be accurately identified with complete web address etc., including the date of access. Students are requested to critically deal with content from the internet.

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

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

**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.