Introduction To Biomedical Ethics

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Graduate

CLASS OF 1989
INTRODUCTION TO BIOMEDICAL ETHICS

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Medicine has, since its earliest times, recognized that questions of ethics and morality are germane to medical practice. However, today there is considerable moral perplexity about the rights and duties of health professionals, patients, and society due to a number of contemporary factors: (1) the awesome advances in biomedical research and technology; (2) the practice of medicine in an increasingly complicated institutional setting; (3) heightened consciousness of social justice; (4) talk of "right" to health care; and (5) numerous problems of allocation of scarce medical resources. Since about 1970 members of various academic disciplines—biology, medicine, philosophy, religious studies, law—have become involved in the ongoing discussion of the complex ethical issues raised by these developments. Centers for bioethics research have emerged, full-fledged Encyclopedia of Bioethics (1978) have appeared, journals and books are available in growing numbers, and bioethics has become a subject of academic study in universities, medical schools, and seminars.

In order to address the ethical questions effectively and to assist their patients to do so as well, physicians require training in biomedical ethics, that discipline directed to sustained analysis and argument concerning human values in medicine, health care, and biological sciences.

To that end, the purpose of the biomedical ethics segment is four-fold: (1) to introduce the entering medical student to the wide range of ethical issues in medicine; (2) to flag the medical and humanities literature that addresses these issues; (3) to provide the student with the basic skills in analysis and argument used in bioethics; and (4) to train the student in the application of those habits of thought and interaction that integrate the humanities into intellectual life and professional practice.

The education experience will be tied directly to clinical problems and case studies in medical practice, research, and health care delivery. To insure a solid foundation and accurate information for the course, instructors are drawn from the fields of medicine, law, philosophy and theology.
II. OBJECTIVES

At the completion of the biomedical ethics segment, the student should be able to:

1. Identify and state the nature of basic ethical problems in medicine;

2. Differentiate between opinion and reasoned argument in ethics, defend in a reasoned argument one's own views on ethical problems in medicine, views other than one's own, and understand the reasons underlying ethical disagreements about moral problems in medical practice;

3. Know and understand the elements of valid consent and what constitutes adequate information;

4. Acquire a working knowledge of the principles, concepts and theories in bioethics;

5. Gain skills in procedures where the patient is partially competent or incompetent to consent or to refuse treatment, and where the competent patient refuses treatment;

6. Learn how to decide when it may be morally justifiable to withhold information from a patient or to breach confidentiality;

7. Acquire knowledge of the ethical aspects of the care of patients with poor prognosis, including patients who are terminally ill;

8. Acquire knowledge of distributed justice, patterns of access to health care, and the social effects that arise in different models of health care organization and funding;

9. Become familiar with and gain understanding of statutory law (legislation) and case law (judicial decisions) relevant to issues in bioethics; and

10. Demonstrate a level of mastery of bioethical issues, as well as the obligations, values, and rights to which physicians should subscribe.
III. SCHEDULE

The course meets on the following dates:

Tuesday, November 12 - 1:00-3:00 p.m. Medicine & Moral Reasoning
Friday, November 15 - 1:00-3:00 p.m. Physician-Patient Interaction
Friday, November 22 - 11:00-12:00 a.m. & 1:00-2:00 p.m. Euthanasia, Prolongation of Life, Determination of Death
Tuesday, November 26 - 9:00-10:00 a.m. Organ Transplantation/Allocation Issues
Tuesday, December 3 - 9:00-10:00 a.m. Ethical Issues in Biomedical Research

IV. RESOURCES

A. Required Textbook


B. Some Moorman Memorial Library Holdings:

Doctor-Patient Relationship in the Changing Health Scene, The. HEW, 1976.
Horan, Dennis J., and David Mall, Death, Dying, and Euthanasia, Aletheia, 1980.
Jakobovits, Immanuel, Jewish Medical Ethics, Block Publishing Co., 1959.
November 12, 1985
1:00-3:00 p.m.
"Medicine and Moral Reasoning"
John R. King, D.Min.
Mary Kennedy, M.D.

1. What is Ethics? What is Medical Ethics? Why Study It?
   Illustrated Discussion: "A Moral Dilemma" (handout)
3. Principles of Ethics in Health Care
   Nonmaleficence and Beneficence
   Autonomy and Justice
4. Methods for Resolving Ethical Problems
   Various Methods (handout)
   An Ethical Work-up (handout)
   Illustrative Case Study (handout)
5. Health, Disease and Values
   Concept of Health
   Concept of Disease
   Concepts of Personhood
   Role of Values

REQUIRED READINGS


ADDITIONAL READINGS

Beauchamp, Tom L., and James F. Childress, Principles of Biomedical Ethics, Oxford Univ., 1979. In the Library. Excellent discussion of the principles.
November 15, 1985
1:00-3:00 p.m.
"Physician-Patient Interaction"
John R. King, D.Min.
Thomas Pellegrino, M.D.
David B. Propert, M.D.

1. Medical Codes of Ethics: History and Fundamental Principles.
   Truth-telling, Lying and Right to Information.
   Informed Consent and Standards of Disclosure.
   Confidentiality.
5. Case Studies.

REQUIRED READINGS

Mapps, Thomas A., and Jane S. Zembaty, Biomedical Ethics,
Jacobs, Philip, *The Economics of Health and Medical Care*, University Park Press, 1980.

C. Some Additional Titles in NGH's Library:

V. EXAMINATION

The Examination will be given out at the end of the last class period on December 3rd and is due on December 5th by 5:00 p.m. in the Human Values Office, Lewis Hall. The Examination will be graded by the Course Instructors. It will comprise of four case studies of which the student will select one and address it according to methods of ethical analysis learned in the course. Students receiving a failing grade will be required to rewrite the examination or complete remedial study and write a new examination.
November 22, 1985
11:00-12:00 p.m.
1:00-2:00 p.m.
"Life and Death"
John R. King, D.Min.
Melissa A. Warfield, M.D.
E.H. Hunter Clarke, Lawyer
Thomas R. Pellegrino, M.D.

1. Definition and Determination of Death
   Conceptual and Ethical Issues
   Legal Issues
   Virginia's "Brain Death" Statute (handout)
   Case Study: Karen Quinlin (handout)
   Virginia's Natural Death Act (handout)
   The "Living Will" Concept

2. Euthanasia and the Prologation of Life
   Untangling Definitions (handout)
   Legalization of Voluntary Euthanasia: Pro and Con
   Criteria for Determining "Quality of Life"

3. Decisions about Infants and Other Incompetent Individuals
   Ethical Issues
   Defective Newborns
   Case Study or Video: Baby Downs, etc.
   Case Study: The Saikewicz Case

4. Abortion: Issues in Medicine and Law
   Moral Analysis

REQUIRED READINGS

November 26, 1985
9:00-10:00 a.m.
"Transplantation, Allocation and Health Policy
John R. King, D.Min.
Richard Hurwitz, M.D.
Melissa A. Warfield, M.D.
Mary Kennedy, M.D.

1. Transplants and Implants: Values and Choices
   Dialysis and Transplantation
   Artificial Heart
   Zenografts: Baby Fae
   Ethical Dilemmas

2. Allocation of Medical Resources
   Is Health Care a "Right"?
   What Is A "Just" Health Care Delivery System?
   Health Care Principles

3. Health Policy and Individual Liberty
   Lifestyle Intervention and Paternalism
   Health Policy and Social Justice
   Cost-Benefit Analysis
   Pre-Natal Screening

REQUIRED READING

December 3, 1985
9:00-10:00 a.m.
"Biomedical Research"
John R. King, D.Min.
Thomas R. Pellegrino, M.D.
Melissa A. Warfield, M.D.

1. Research Involving Human Subjects
   "Nuremberg Code"
   WMA's "Declaration of Helsinki"
   Moral Justification
   Informed Consent and Medical Experimentation
   Children in Medical Investigation

2. Scientific Freedom and It's Limits
   Research Involving Animals
   The Molecular Level: Recombinant DNA Debate
   Scientific Freedom and Public Interest

3. FINAL EXAMINATION (handout)
   Due Friday, December 5, 1985 by 5:00 p.m. in the Human Values Office, Rm. 1007, Lewis Hall