St. Louis University
Center for Health Law Studies
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Bioethics Seminar

The assignment for the first day of class is available from Mrs. Mattler in Room 111.

The registration materials involved a brief and general description of this seminar. What follows is a more specific description.

**Syllabus**

**Class I:** Systematic Introduction to Fundamental Ethical Principles in Bioethics

**Class II:** Systematic Introduction to the "Law of Death and Dying"

**Classes III & IV:** Illustration of Ethical and Legal Analysis: Claire Conroy I, II and III. (New Jersey case on termination of nutrition and hydration.)

**Class V:** Institutional Response to Legal and Ethical Principles: Policy-making and Institutional Ethics Committees

**Class VI:** Health Care Professionals: "Protecting the Integrity of the Medical Profession"

**Class VII & VIII:** No Class*

**Class IX:** Consensus Conference. First draft of paper due.

**Class X:** Consensus Conference continued if necessary.

**Class XI:** Consensus Paper and Approval.

**Classes XII, XIII & XIV:** Presentations (final draft of paper due on Class XII).

*Class VII through XIV refer to the paper requirement for the seminar.

**Paper Requirement:** As with all seminars at the School of Law, a publishable paper is required of students in this seminar. No exam is required.

The papers for this course will have the following structure:

**Group I: Competent Patients**

A. The Legal and Ethical Issues in the Refusal of Medical Treatment by Competent Patients (including refusal of clearly life-saving treatments, such as blood transfusions, possibly life-saving or life-prolonging
treatments, and "useless" or "futile" treatments) and a Proposal for Resolution of the Issues.

1) From an "Aggressive Treatment" perspective.

2) From a "Minimal Treatment" perspective.

B. Legal and Ethical Issues in Requests for Assistance in Terminating Life by Competent Patients and a Proposal for Resolution of the Issues.

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Group II: Termination of Treatment for Incompetent Patients

A. Legal and Ethical Issues in the Refusal/Withdrawal of Treatment from/by Incompetent Patients Based on a Personal Choice Model and a Proposal for Resolution of the Issues.

1) From an "Autonomy" perspective.

2) From a "Beneficence" perspective.

B. Legal and Ethical Issues in the Allocation of Health Care Resources to Terminally Ill Patients and a Proposal for Resolution of the Issues.

1) From a "Maximization of Health Care Resources" perspective.

2) From a "Reduction of Health Care Resources" perspective.

Each group will involve five students. Each student will be assigned to prepare a "position paper" on one of the positions listed in the group (i.e., one student will write a paper on the topic of "Refusal of Medical Treatment by a Competent Patient: Aggressive Treatment Perspective"). The groups will meet at a Consensus Conference to develop a consensus position paper which each group might adopt as a standard for resolving the issues. The fifth student in each group will submit to the group prior to the Consensus Conference a background paper on the cases and statutes or other relevant legal material appropriate to the group’s topic. This student will also draft the consensus paper after the consensus conference.

Three students will work on papers concerning bioethical issues in the reproductive area. The topics offered are Legal and Ethical Issues in Forced Caesarean Sections, Legal and Ethical Issues in Organ Transplants from Anencephalic Infants, and Legal and Ethical Issues in the Use and Development of Fetal Brain Tissue.

Finally, each student will present his or her paper to the seminar in the final classes of the seminar.