BIOETHICS (BIOE)

BIOE 282 Lying, Cheating, Stealing, and Killing: How to Think About Professional Ethic
Professionals - in business, medicine, law, and politics - face myriad ethical dilemmas in their daily work life that challenge, and sometimes conflict with, the moral commitments that guide their everyday life. This course systematically examines the ethical dimensions of these four professional roles, asking questions such as: Are there limits to what we should sell? How far should competitors go to ‘win’? Who should get ventilators in a flu pandemic? Is it morally permissible for physicians to assist in suicide? Should lawyers represent terrorists or child killers? How far does attorney-client privilege go? Is it morally justifiable to torture enemy combatants? Should politicians lie?
Taught by: Allen/Emanuel/Hirschmann/Strudler
Also Offered As: PSCI 282
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

BIOE 401 Introduction to Bioethics
Course usually offered in fall term
Also Offered As: BIOE 601
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

BIOE 402 Foundations of Bioethics
This course examines the various theoretical approaches to bioethics and critically assesses their underpinnings. Topics to be covered include an examination of various versions of deontological theories, utilitarianism, virtue ethics, principlism, casuistry, feminist ethics, narrative theory, and pragmatism.
Also Offered As: BIOE 602
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

BIOE 505 Sex and Bioethics
While the topics of sex and sexuality have a long and storied history in medical culture, they have been especially complex and problematic in the past century. With the creation of distinct sexually-minded medical fields since the late 19th-century including sexology, psychiatry, and hormonal studies, medicine has also occasioned the very categories and labels of the homosexual, the hermaphrodite, the invert, and the nymphomaniac, to name a few. While medical historians and queer theorists have paid almost obsessive attention to these subjects, bioethicists have intervened to a lesser degree and on only a handful of relevant subjects. In this course, we will address the range of historical and theoretical matters that speak to this intersection of bioethics and sex, paying special attention to the health concerns of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, and intersex (LGBTQI) persons. Who has sex with whom? What does it mean to pathologize or diagnose such desires? How do we raise the stakes when considering persons who question their sex or who are in sexual transition? And how do such questions reveal the dilemmas of bioethicists at large, not just those related to matters of sex and sexuality? Accordingly, this course will consider a range of historical and contemporary topics which speak to the bioethical dilemmas of the intersection of medicine, sex, and sexuality, including: the gay adolescent, the intersex person, gay-conversion therapies, the prospect of gay gene studies, sex addiction, and blood/organ donation policies in wake of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Specifically, we will focus on literary sources (poetry, memoirs, diaries, and films) as well as on non-literary accounts (medical texts, bioethical scholarship, legal cases, and historical records) that explore the emotional and somatic aspects of matters related to sex and bioethics.
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

BIOE 540 Challenging Clinical Ethics: Managing patient/caregiver conflicts through mediation.
The contemporary healthcare system in which patients, families, institutions and a multiplicity of caregivers interact over matters of life and death with legal, ethical, emotional and scientific complexities inherently gives rise to a variety of disputes. Such disputes are frequently highly charged and are often emergent in nature. In recent years, mediation has grown exponentially as a dispute resolution mechanism of choice. Not surprisingly, the success of mediation and a wider understanding of the process, has led to its application in the realm of healthcare disputes with encouraging results. This course will initially provide an overview of classical mediation theory and practice. Students will be introduced to negotiation fundamentals critical to the practice of mediation. Similarities and differences between mediation in the healthcare field, as distinct from other contexts, will be examined. All class members will participate in mediation role-plays designed to simulate disputes of the kind prevalent in healthcare landscape
Taught by: Bergman
Course not offered every year
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit
BIOE 545 Mediation Intensive I
Students will be placed in a variety of clinical situations in which they will play the roles of disputants and mediators, with ongoing discussions and critiques of mediator performance. Each student will be videotaped during their mediation to elicit feedback from the group and to catalyze self-criticism. As distinct from the course, BIOE 540: Challenging Clinical Ethics, in which negotiation and mediation theory are taught as a prelude to clinical simulations, this course references the literature solely in relation to problems encountered in the hands-on mediation of specific cases. Students may take the mediation intensives in any order; they do not need to be taken from I to IV. Students may take all 4 intensive courses, as the material will not be repeated.
Taught by: Edward J. Bergman, Autumn Fiester, Lance Wahlert
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

BIOE 546 Mediation Intensive II
Students will have an immersion experience, learning mediation through role-playing simulations. Note that the format is similar to Mediation Intensive I, but the Mediation Intensive II will NOT duplicate simulations. Students in this course will: learn to effectively manage clinical disputes among and between caregivers, patients, and surrogates through mediation; discover how to define problems and assess underlying interests to generate mutually acceptable options; role play in a variety of clinical situations as both disputants and mediators; practice mediation with professional actors; and receive constructive feedback in a supportive environment. Students will also be required to complete a written research paper. Students may take the mediation intensives in any order; they do not need to be taken from I to IV. Students may take all 4 intensive courses as the material will not be repeated.
Taught by: Edward J. Bergman, Autumn Fiester, Lance Wahlert
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

BIOE 547 Mediation Intensive III
Students will have an immersion experience, learning mediation through role-playing simulations. Note that the format is similar to Mediation Intensive I and II, but the Mediation Intensive III will NOT duplicate simulations. Students in this course will: learn to effectively manage clinical disputes among and between caregivers, patients, and surrogates through mediation; discover how to define problems and assess underlying interests to generate mutually acceptable options; role play in a variety of clinical situations as both disputants and mediators; practice mediation with professional actors; and receive constructive feedback in a supportive environment. Students will also be required to complete a written research paper. Students may take the mediation intensives in any order; they do not need to be taken from I to IV. Students may take all 4 intensive courses as the material will not be repeated.
Taught by: Edward J. Bergman, Autumn Fiester, Lance Wahlert
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

BIOE 548 Mediation Intensive IV
Students will have an immersion experience, learning mediation through role-playing simulations. Note that the format is similar to earlier mediation intensives but the mediation intensive IV will NOT duplicate simulations. Students in this course will: learn to effectively manage clinical disputes among and between caregivers, patients, and surrogates through mediation; discover how to define problems and assess underlying interests to generate mutually acceptable options; role play in a variety of clinical situations as both disputants and mediators; practice mediation with professional actors; and use video-tapes of simulations to improve mediation techniques and strengthen interpersonal skills; receive constructive feedback in a supportive environment. Students may take the mediation intensives in any order; they do not need to be taken from I to IV. Students may take all 4 intensive courses, as the material will not be repeated.
Taught by: Edward J. Bergman, Autumn Fiester, Lance Wahlert
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

BIOE 550 Bioethics and Society
This set of courses will deal with bioethical issues in popular culture addressed from a social science perspective. Courses to be offered include: 'Sociology of Bioethics,' and 'Media and the Doctor-Patient Relationship.' This is a topics course - for information on the topic currently being offered, please go to the course listing on the Bioethics website: http://www.med.upenn.edu/mbe.
Taught by: MERZ, JON
Course not offered every year
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

BIOE 551 Sociological Topics in Bioethics
This set of courses provides a rigorous introduction to the use of sociological methods and perspective to address bioethical topics and issues. Past courses have included the ‘Sociology of Medicine,’ Medical Errors,’ and ‘Sociology of Jewish Bioethics.’ This is a topics course - for information on the topic currently being offered, please go to the course listing on the Bioethics website: http://www.med.upenn.edu/mbe.
Course not offered every year
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

BIOE 552 Anthropological Topics in Bioethics
This set of courses provides an introduction to the use of anthropological methods and approaches to address bioethical issues. Courses might include cross-cultural studies of medicine and doctoring, diversity and the culture of medicine, cross-cultural bioethics. This is a topics course - for information on the topics currently being offered, please go to the course listing on the Bioethics website: https://www.med.upenn.edu/mbe.
Course not offered every year
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

BIOE 553 Historical Topics in Bioethics
This set of courses provides a historical perspective on the field of bioethics and/or key issues or areas within the field. Courses that might be offered include the history of medicine and the history of science. This is a topics course - for information on the topics currently being offered, please go to the course listing on the Bioethics website: http://www.med.upenn.edu/mbe.
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
BIOE 554 Religious Topics in Bioethics
This set of courses examine the role of spirituality in the field of bioethics. Courses might be taught from a single religious perspective or provide an overview of many different perspectives. Past courses have included ‘Spirituality and Bioethics.’ This is a topics course - for information on the topics currently being offered, please go to the course on the Bioethics website: http://www.med.upenn.edu/mbe.
Course not offered every year
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

BIOE 555 Bioethics and Technology
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

BIOE 556 Evidence in Bioethics and Health Policy
The ability to critically appraise scholarly work is a necessary skill to effectively contribute to bioethics and health policy debates, and for development and implementation of health interventions. The object of this course is to provide students with the skills needed to become fluent in reading and assessment of empirical bioethics and health service research. The course will review and evaluate a wide range of qualitative and quantitative methods utilized in bioethics, health policy, and medical research. Specifically, students will learn the conceptual rational for standard qualitative and quantitative methods, their strengths and weakness. At course completion, students should be able to critically evaluate empirical research published in top bioethics, health policy, and medical journals.
Taught by: Maclean
Course usually offered in fall term
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

BIOE 557 Disability Bioethics
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

BIOE 558 Reproductive Health
Whether dealing with personal decisions or public policy, reproductive health matters are almost always controversial and often intractable. It is almost 50 years since the Supreme Court decision Griswold v Connecticut ‘settled’ the right to contraceptives yet the last several years have been marked by increasing legislative action and judicial review of this right. This course will explore the ethical dimensions of reproductive health controversies including: 1) the moral and legal status of the human embryo and fetus in the context of assisted reproduction, embryonic stem cell research and abortion; 2) contraception, including over-the-counter provision of emergency contraception and contraceptives and legislation challenges to contraceptive insurance coverage in the Affordable Care Act; 3) attempts to restrict access to abortion by restricting later term abortion, mandating informed consent and waiting periods, and regulating abortion clinics; 4) maternal-fetal relationship including prenatal testing and the regulation of women's behavior while pregnant; 5) assisted reproduction and 6) global concerns such as sex selective abortion, forced abortion and sterilization and reproductive rights in relation to population dynamics and environmental concerns.
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

BIOE 559 Speaking For Patients: Ethical Issues in Patient Advocacy
This course examines the role that activism and advocacy play in shaping health care in the United States and abroad. The course combines in-depth exploration of particular case studies—AIDS activism in the 1980s, the billion-dollar breast cancer movement, the anti-vaccine movement—with an analysis of cross-cutting questions and themes. We consider how health advocates contribute to forming personal identities around certain illnesses and conditions, how they mobilize constituents and recruit allies, and how they influence decisions about health policy, research, and practice. We also consider the implications of an increasingly professionalized health advocacy industry and ask how corporate sponsorship has changed the landscape of health activism. In addition, we examine the ethical issues involved in speaking on behalf of others, particularly those (e.g., young children, persons with intellectual disabilities) who cannot speak for themselves.
Taught by: Matthew McCoy
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

BIOE 560 Clinical Approaches to Bioethics
This set of courses examines issues in bioethics from the perspective of the practicing clinician, physician, nurse, or other health care professional. These courses will often use case studies or clinical experience to analyze or understand contemporary problems in bioethics. An example of such a course is ‘Clinical Dilemmas Through the Life Cycle.’ This is a topics course - for information on the topics currently being offered, please go to the course listing on the Bioethics website: http://www.med.upenn.edu/mbe.
Course not offered every year
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

BIOE 561 Ethics of Science
This Bioethics course will examine ethics as it relates to science.
Taught by: Steve Joffe
Course not offered every year
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

BIOE 562 Propaganda
A Bioethics examination of truth and persuasion in health and pandemics.
Taught by: Jon Merz
Course not offered every year
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

BIOE 564 Social Media, Healthcare, and Medical Ethics
In this course, students will examine the conceptual and ethical challenges posed by the use of artificial intelligence, social media, and the ‘internet of things’ in healthcare contexts. The course will combine both didactics and discussion to engage students on these issues.
Taught by: Dominic Sisti
Course not offered every year
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit
1.0 Course Unit
Activity: Lecture

BIOE 565 Rationing
You have one liver but three patients awaiting a liver transplant. Who should get the liver? What criteria should be used to select the recipient? Is it fair to give it to an alcoholic? These are some of the questions that arise in the context of rationing and allocating scarce health care resources among particular individuals, what is called micro-allocation decisions. There are also macro-allocation decisions that focus on how health care systems distributes resources across populations. Using the cases of organs for transplantation, the rationing for vaccines in a flu pandemic, and oncology drug shortages, the course will critically examine alternative theories for allocating scarce resources among individuals. Using both the need to establish priorities for global health aid and to define an essential benefit package for health insurance, the course will critically examine diverse theories for macro-allocation from cost-effectiveness analysis to age-based rationing to accountability for reasonableness.
Taught by: Ezekiel Emanuel, Harald Schmidt
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

BIOE 566 Personal Responsibility
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

BIOE 570 Bioethics and Policy
This set of courses will look at bioethical topics from either a legal or public policy perspective. Past courses have included: Ethics of Managed Care, Law, Medicine and Policy, and Legal Aspects of Healthcare in America. This is a topics course - for information on the topic currently being offered, please go to the course listing on the Bioethics website: http://www.med.upenn.edu/mbc. Course not offered every year
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

BIOE 571 Global Health Policy
This course considers various theoretical approaches to global justice and global governance and analyzes their implications for global health. The course includes two parts. The first part examines accounts of cosmopolitanism, nationalism and other theories of global justice, critically assessing duties ascribed by each that may be owed universally to all persons or confined within associative boundaries of communities or nations. The second part explores applications to global health governance encompassing consideration of human rights and the operation and accountability of global institutions such as the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the World Health Organization. The course scrutinizes the relevance of global justice for governing the global health realm, evaluating the current global health system and proposals for reforming it.
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

BIOE 572 Global Bioethics
According to the WHO, around 30 million people with HIV/AIDS should receive anti-retroviral treatment. But only 10 million do. Drugs containing tenofovir—the standard of care in developed countries are expensive. Stavudine-based treatments are much cheaper but have worse side-effects. Is it ethical to use stavudine-based rather than tenofovir-based treatments in sub-Saharan Africa? Smoking rates have decreased drastically in most developed countries. But they are increasing in many developing countries. Established public health measures are not implemented, and the tobacco industry pursues a range of marketing activities that would be unacceptable in developed countries. As a consequence, global deaths from smoking are expected to increase to 1bn by the end of the 21st century, with 80% of deaths in developing countries. Is industry s behavior immoral or normal in a global market? ARDS is a disease of premature newborns. Is it ethical to test a new ARDS drug in Bolivia if the drug–if proven to be effective–will be very expensive and accessible only to the richest people in Bolivia and other developing countries? An overarching question that these different cases raise is whether there are universal ethical standards that should apply to all people, or whether regional variations should be acceptable. Universalists typically argue that there must be no double standards, and that people should be treated the same regardless of where they live. Pragmatists raise concerns about moral imperialism, neo-colonialism, or insufficient respect for cultural or other differences. Increasing globalization fuels debates about which of competing sets of moral standards is the right one. Looking at a range of diverse cases including healthcare research, health policy, flu pandemics, family planning, smoking and obesity policy, and genetically modified crops, this course explores controversies in the cross winds of market forces, politics and ethics, and examines the roles and responsibilities of key actors and international policy guidance.
Course usually offered in fall term
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

BIOE 575 Health Care Reform and the Future of the American Health Care System
Under stress from COVID-19, this course provides students with a rigorous understanding of the current American health care system and how it is likely to evolve over the next decade. The course will focus on six topics: 1) the development of the current health care system; 2) challenges of health care costs, quality, and access; 3) lessons of previous attempts to reform the system including the Affordable Care Act (ACA); 4) analysis of current policies regarding provider payment, technology, and electronic health records and how various sectors (e.g. public health and hospitals) are evolving in the current system; 5) impact of COVID-19 on health care delivery and finance, and 6) future megatrends in American health care system. Throughout the course, lessons will integrate basic health economics, history, health policy, and politics to elucidate key principles for understanding the health care system. The course will also examine at least one other country’s health system for comparison. The course will end with a consideration of the long-term outlook for the structure of the US health system and potential reforms.
Taught by: Emanuel, Schwartz
Course usually offered in fall term
Also Offered As: HCMG 250, HCMG 850
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

BIOE 578 Bioethics and Human Rights
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit
BIOE 580 Research Ethics
This class is intended to give students a broad overview of research ethics and regulation. The students will come out of the class with an understanding of the moral bases of scientific ethics and the historical evolution of biomedical research ethics. Students will be fully conversant with the development, implementation, and limitation of US human subjects regulation. The course will include reading assignments and lectures addressing the following topics: ethics and morality in science, science in society, scientific integrity, misconduct: from FFP to MIM; conflicts of interest; collegiality, publication, and authorship; ethics codes and regulation; research with human subjects; historical review of human experimentation; human subjects regulation (HHS, FDA), Institutional Review Boards; informed consent, waivers, vulnerable populations, privacy and the confidentiality of records; and research on animals.
Taught by: Merz
Course not offered every year
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

BIOE 590 Philosophical Topics in Bioethics
This set of courses provides a philosophical perspective on bioethical topics and issues. This can include courses that integrate ethical theory with concern for particular applications of theory or conceptual issues in medicine, health care, and the life sciences. Past courses have included Philosophy of Death and Dying, Genetics and Ethics, Philosophy of Medicine, Pragmatic Bioethics, and Feminism and Bioethics. This is a topics course - for information on the topics currently being offered, please go to the course listing on the Bioethics website: http://www.med.upenn.edu/mbe.
Course not offered every year
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

BIOE 601 Introduction to Clinical Bioethics
This course is intended to serve as a broad introduction to the field of bioethics. The course will focus on three of the most important areas in bioethics: Genetics & Reproduction, Human Experimentation, and End-of-Life. Each module of the course will cover essential bioethics concepts, relevant legal cases, and classical readings of that theme. Each module will include one guest lecture from our distinguished bioethics faculty.
Taught by: Fiester
Course usually offered in fall term
Also Offered As: BIOE 401
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

BIOE 602 Conceptual Foundations in Bioethics
This course examines the various theoretical approaches to bioethics and critically assesses their underpinnings. Topics to be covered include an examination of various versions of deontological theories, utilitarianism, virtue ethics, principlism, casuistry, feminist ethics, narrative theory, and pragmatism.
Course usually offered in spring term
Also Offered As: BIOE 402
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

BIOE 603 Clinical Ethics
This course will familiarize participants with the basic modes and styles of ethics in clinical medical settings. Participants will read the major philosophical and sociological discussions on the scope and meaning of clinical ethics. Issues of particular concern will include, but are not limited to, the meaning of professional moral expertise and its professional roots, the range of possible kinds of moral intervention in clinical settings, the meaning of responsibility for the clinical ethicist, the arguments against formalized or certified clinical consultation, and significant concepts in clinical ethics, including end-of-life issues. Students will be required to complete an introductory clinical experience, rounding in units of HUP or CHOP. This seminar is open to graduate students in the Master of Bioethics program and in the health care professions. Please contact the Department of Medical Ethics for permission to register.
Course not offered every year
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

BIOE 605 Mentored Research I
Activity: Masters Thesis
1.0 Course Unit

BIOE 606 Mentored Research II
Activity: Masters Thesis
1.0 Course Unit

BIOE 607 Mentored Research III
Activity: Masters Thesis
1.0 Course Unit

BIOE 608 Mentored Research IV
Activity: Masters Thesis
1.0 Course Unit

BIOE 996 Master of Bioethics Capstone
This course serves the final MBE project. This course requires students to work with faculty to produce original research that is of publishable quality. Past students have published in Nature, Science, and other prominent journals. This course is only open to students in the Master of Bioethics program.
Taught by: Lance Wahlert
Course offered summer, fall and spring terms
Activity: Masters Thesis
1.0 Course Unit

BIOE 999 Independent Study
This course is only open to students in the Master of Bioethics program. One-term course offered either term
Activity: Independent Study
1.0 Course Unit