

BIOETHICS AND MEDICAL HUMANITIES (BEMH)

BEMH 4000 Philosophy of Medicine (3)

This course provides an in-depth treatment of the philosophical foundations of medicine. It considers problems relating to the nature of health and illness, the basis of medical knowledge, the nature of the physician/patient relationship, and more. Junior or Senior standing required.

Prerequisite(s): PHIL 1010, 1030, 3050 or 3550.

BEMH 4001 Neuroethics: The Ethics of Neuroscience and the Neuroscience of Ethics (3)

Neuroethics, as an area of study, can be divided into two sub-fields: the neuroscience of ethics and the ethics of neuroscience (Roskies 2002). The neuroscience of ethics deals with our growing understanding of the underlying mechanism of social behavior relevant to morality – for instance, the origins and nature of empathy, altruism, aggression, self-control, reasoning, and the role of our emotions and intuitions in moral decision making. The ethics of neuroscience is a branch of applied ethics or bioethics. It focuses on ethical issues that originate in new advances and possibilities in neuroscience. Especially relevant here is the fact that advances in neuroscience not only extend our understanding of the brain, but also raise the possibility of interventions to modify our brain. This course is designed to give students a philosophical overview of these topics, and opportunities to think critically about ethical implications related to neuroscience and advances in medicine. We will explore fundamental topics in both branches of Neuroethics. Drawing from a variety of fields—neuroscience, philosophy, social psychology, cognitive psychology, developmental psychology, and evolutionary theory—we will investigate and discuss questions like: What are the evolutionary origins of moral judgment? Does evolutionary theory shed light on normative moral questions? Do our moral motivations derive from reason or pre-reflective intuition? Do psychopaths have moral responsibility? Do we have free will? Is there an obligation to enhance ourselves? Should drugs be used to enhance mental functioning? Junior or Senior standing required.

Prerequisite(s): PHIL 1030, 3050, 3510, 3550, 3580 or 6050.

BEMH 4002 Foundations in Bioethics (3)

This course examines the theoretical foundations of bioethics. It begins by considering foundational questions regarding the nature of medicine, illness, and the physician/patient relationship. It then turns to discussion of the various ethical frameworks that guide decision-making in medicine. Finally, it closes by bringing these frameworks to bear on theoretical issues relating to social justice.

BEMH 4003 Medical Humanities (3)

Medical humanities draws on many disciplines and fields—including history, literature, art history, media studies, philosophy, law, ethics, religion, theology, anthropology, psychology, sociology, and other arts and sciences—to study the context of medicine, the experience of medicine, the goals of medicine, and concepts in and of medicine. A common goal of medical humanities is to make clinicians, at all levels of their training, more “humane” or “compassionate.” Another common goal includes making clinicians more “well-rounded.” Still another goal includes promoting teaching and learning in medical humanities simply for its own sake. But what is “medical humanities”? While there is no single answer to this question, this much is clear: Medical humanities draws from many disciplines and fields to examine issues related to the development and the practice of medicine. In this sense, medical humanities is similar to other fields such as religious studies or gender studies—fields that use various disciplines and methods to study a subject such as religion or gender. What is different, however, is that medical humanities, unlike many other academic fields, seems to require or to imply an essential practical component because all medical humanities knowledge has some relationship to (1) the care of patients and/or populations or (2) the care of physicians themselves. This course will explore a vast array of topics in medical humanities, including the boundaries and the goals of medicine (philosophy); the relationship between narrative and medicine (literature); contemporary health issues (policy); human rights and human rights abuses (ethics); and death and dying (religion). It is my hope that we will come away with an increased understanding of ourselves and our relation to the world of medicine—that, in other words, we will examine our own lives, learning how to love and to work with all the fullness that life affords.

BEMH 4004 Environmental Ethics (3)

This course examines the theoretical foundations, assumptions, and practical implications of environmental ethics. It begins by considering foundational questions regarding the moral value of nature. It then turns to discussion of the various frameworks within which theorists and activists have analyzed and evaluated humanity’s obligation to the environment. Finally, it closes by considering the significance of the environment to issues of social justice.

BEMH 4005 Studies in Bioethics through Film (3)

This elective will provide students with a method for analyzing bioethical issues using films and short videos as case studies. This course will provide students a method for identifying conflicts productively, theoretical models to understand and address such conflicts, and an opportunity to reflect on the edges of ethics and what to do there. Topics covered will include: The Edges of Sickness, Defining Sick and Well, What is Medicine, The Health Care System, Justice and Responsibility, Medical History and History of Medicine—Who Should Tell the Story of Medicine, and When Rights Collide—Right to Die and Right to Kill.

BEMH 4006 The Doctor As Author (3)

This course explores some of the many doctor-writers who have reflected on the practice of medicine and the qualities of a good doctor. Beginning with a discussion of the merged scientific and humanistic sensibilities of these writers, it will examine the work of prominent figures like Atul Gawande, Anton Chekhov, Mona Hanna-Attisha, Paul Kalanithi, and Damon Tweedy. Then, with a focus on their pleas that we attend to the patient's illness and life-world as well as to the patient's ailing body, it will consider how their work helps us to think about what it means to practice purposefully.

BEMH 4007 Ethical Theory (3)

This course provides an in-depth treatment of the theoretical foundations of ethics. It introduces students to foundational problems and theories in metaethics, moral psychology, and normative theory.

BEMH 4008 History of Medicine (3)

During this course, health maintenance, disease, and therapeutics will be explored from antiquity until the mid-20th century. This course will relate care of the sick and methods of treatment to the patients' and healers' social, political, religious, and cultural contexts. Additionally, we will also discuss special topics pertaining to the history of women's reproductive health; military medicine; native American, Meso-American, Pacific Island, and Afro-Caribbean medical practices; the history of mental healthcare; and the formalization of medical education and the rise of the medical marketplace.

BEMH 4009 Current Controversies in Bioethics (3)

This course examines a wide variety of controversial issues that arise within bioethics. Part I of the course focuses on conceptual controversies relating to disease, illness, and death. Part II of the course looks at particular issues relating to death and dying, such as euthanasia and abortion. Part III examines problems that challenge principles of human dignity. Finally, Part IV concerns problems relating to social justice.

BEMH 4010 Research Ethics (3)

This course is a comprehensive seminar on the theory, history, and practical application of ethics to the conduct of research with humans. This course will examine ethics in research in light of scientific, moral, and political considerations. These include autonomy, individual rights, coercion, justice, community and the common good, the norms of research and the community of researchers, and multi-cultural values. The learner will acquire a working knowledge of the professional life of the clinical researcher and the application of ethics to their practice. The application of ethics over a range of issues in clinical research will be addressed through case studies and dialogue among all seminar participants. All participants will have the opportunity to serve as discussion facilitator for one session.

BEMH 4011 Clinical Ethics (3)

This course is a comprehensive seminar on the theory and practice of clinical ethics consultation, examining bioethics from the perspective of a practicing clinician, Integrated Ethics Program Officer of the Southeast Louisiana Veterans Health Care System (SLVHCS), and former chair of three Hospital Ethics Committees (UofL Health Care Ethics Committee, University of Michigan Health System Ethics Committee, and Chelsea Community Hospital Ethics Committee [Michigan]). This course will familiarize learners with the basic modes and styles of ethics consultation in clinical settings. Learners will also study policy development and educational aspects of hospital ethics committees. Participants will apply philosophical and sociological concepts to cases and policy in clinical settings, will consider methods of mediation, as well as the arguments regarding certification in clinical consultation. Clinical ethics topics of particular emphasis will include informed consent, refusal of treatment, reproductive health, and end-of-life issues.

BEMH 4012 The End of Life in Film & Lit. (3)

This course examines representations of dying and death in literature and film. The focus of the course will be on discussing and analyzing these representations for the purpose of gaining a richer understanding of lived experiences of health, illness, and death. Topics to be discussed include the following: illness and suffering, definitions of health, politics of suffering and death, definitions of death, narratives of death and dying.

BEMH 4013 Medicine and Identity (3)

After a one-week introduction, the course will cover three modules—Race (weeks 2-5), Gender (weeks 6-9), and Ability (weeks 10-13)—followed by a final project in week 14. Each module will contain four parts: (1) Historical Context and Framing; (2) First-person and third-person perspectives; (3) Fiction and nonfiction; and (4) Contemporary voices

BEMH 4014 Pandemic Ethics (3)

This course is split into three Units. Unit I discusses issues relating to the duty of physicians to care for patients during times of pandemic. Are physicians obligated to care for patients with highly infectious disease? How much personal risks are physicians morally required to take on? In Unit II students will consider questions relating to the just distribution of scarce resources in the context of pandemic medicine. How can we ethically decide which patients will receive life-sustaining resources and which will not? Should younger patients receive higher priority than older patients? How should we go about distributing vaccines or other preventive measures throughout the general population? Finally, Unit III focuses on problems relating to social justice in times of pandemic. How do we ensure that the burdens of a pandemic are equitably distributed between social groups? How far may the government go in constraining individual rights for the sake of public health? How should we understand the obligations of the average citizen to promote the public good? The overall goal of the course will be to help students think carefully and constructively about the ethical issues raised by the current public health crisis.

BEMH 4015 Pro-Natalism, Anti-Natalism and the Ethics of Human Reproduction (3)

This course will explore in-depth the ethical and philosophical issues arising from views that encourage procreation and those that claim that procreation is morally bad, and the practice of artificial reproductive services and technologies. We will investigate and discuss questions such as: Is there a duty to have children? Do we cause harm by having children? Can it be wrong to reproduce? Is it better never to have come into existence? Is abortion morally permissible? Do pregnant women have a duty to aid the fetus by allowing it the use of their body? Is there a moral difference between killing someone and letting her die? Is it wrong to reproduce through cloning? With the assistance of surrogate mothers and donated eggs? Should we avoid having children with disabilities? Should we use genetic screening or genetic engineering to have the “best” kids we possibly can? Is it wrong to have a child if there are known genetic risk factors? Should parents be permitted to select for disability? How much autonomy are children entitled to? Are transgender people entitled to the same access to assisted reproductive treatments as everyone else?

BEMH 4910 Independent Study (1-3)

Maximum Hours: 99

BEMH 6000 Philosophy of Medicine (3)

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BEMH 6005 Medicine in Literature & Film (3)

This course examines representations of medicine, sickness, and death in literature and film. The focus of the course will be on discussing and analyzing these representations for the purpose of gaining a richer understanding of lived experiences health and illness. Topics to be discussed may include the following: death, illness and suffering, the physician/patient relationship, poverty, AIDS, racism, and war.

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BEMH 6016 Narrative in Medicine (3)

This course is a comprehensive seminar on the importance of narrative in the practice of medicine. In it, students will examine uncertainty in clinical medicine—its sources and ineradicability—and seek to understand the role of narrative in coping with the difficulties that clinical uncertainty presents. Students will familiarize themselves with the uses of narrative in the culture of medicine and of medical education, clinical ethics, public health policy, and, especially, clinical reasoning and everyday practice.

BEMH 6018 Feminist Theory and Practice in Medicine (3)

This course introduces students to the history of feminist activity and the development of the discrete discipline known as feminism today. Students will hear a panoply of feminist voices. The course will trace carefully the intersection of queerness, race, and gender, with special attention paid to the ways in which identities unfold uniquely with respect to intersectionality. Students will be able to analyze and apply feminist theory to their own clinical experiences to deepen their understanding of their own practice of medicine.

BEMH 6020 Capstone (3)

This course is a capstone seminar for Bioethics MS program in the form of a collaborative seminar. Students produce a culminating project, whose development and final formal presentation they share with others in seminar format. This course seeks to integrate the knowledge gained through Bioethics MS program courses to inform previous, current, and expected future health ethics and humanities decision-making. Students use critical thinking skills through self-reflection toward a collaborative project in education or policy in order to serve others in health care, whether as providers, patients or family members. Students use their skills, insights to collaborate and challenge the status quo.

Prerequisite(s): BEMH 6002 and 6003.

BEMH 6521 History of Medicine in the US (3)

Students in this course will study the social dimensions of medicine, disease, and health in U.S. history. We will examine how ordinary people were affected by pandemics, advances in medical technologies, and changing ideas about health care. Students will consider how ideas about medicine have been shaped by economic, military, political, and social transformations in U.S. history.

BEMH 6530 Race, Nature, and Disaster (3)

This interdisciplinary course examines the intersections of race, politics, and environmental and biological disaster. We will look at how ideas about race in the U.S. have shaped and been shaped by social policy, global politics and economics, and U.S. foreign policy, and investigate how certain populations within and outside the U.S. become disproportionately vulnerable to wide-scale disaster. Readings and discussions focus on the human-made dimensions of biological disasters, such as typhus, the bubonic plague, HIV/AIDS, the cholera outbreak in Haiti after the 2010 earthquake, and the current COVID-19 crisis. In thinking about how vulnerability is created and maintained according to a racial logic, we will interrogate the following questions: How is the construct of “nature” framed in opposition to “humanity”? How do claims to objective knowledge about nature operate in political realms? In what ways has the nature/humanity binary informed the construction of racial categories and racism? How do ideas of nature serve to obscure the complex intersections of environmental and social factors in our daily realities? How do discussions of crisis and disaster (in other words, exceptional situations) serve to authorize extreme measures? How do certain versions of international humanitarianism deny the global interconnectedness of nation-states and the culpability of those giving aid in the dire circumstances of those receiving it?

BEMH 6535 Contagious Surveillance (3)

This seminar examines the historical and contemporary relationships between contagions and practices of surveillance. This course will introduce students to the interdisciplinary theories of surveillance studies using historical frameworks such as discipline, control, capitalism, media, and privacy during times of crisis, as it relates to race, gender, and class. Seminar discussions will include cases where patriarchal power and racialized systems were used to promote perceptions of security, fear, exposure, and control, while constructing medical knowledge. As praxis, students will use historical research strategies to design and produce a digital history project that uses technology tools such as maps, visualizations, textual analysis, and/or audio-visual production. All digital history skills will be taught in this course. All technical skill-levels are welcome.

BEMH 6590 Disability Justice and Health Care (3)

This interdisciplinary course examines the disability politics of medicine, health, and care. We will approach disability as a social category, culture, civil rights issue, and diverse lived experience that is inclusive of physical and intellectual disability, neurodiversity, chronic illness, and mental health. Students will be introduced to critical disability studies and Disability Justice frameworks to investigate disability's intersection with sexuality, class, race, and gender in ongoing histories of pathologization and contemporary debates. We will study the nuanced critiques of medicalization advanced by disabled, chronically ill, neurodiverse, and mad scholars, activists, and culture workers. We will also explore disability-related movements and creative projects for reimagining health, care, and justice. Students will engage with academic scholarship, public-facing literature, memoir, commercial and independent media, and guest speakers in this remote, 4-week course.

BEMH 6810 Special Topics (1-3)

Maximum Hours: 99

BEMH 6811 Special Topics (1-3)

Course Limit: 99

BEMH 6812 Special Topics (1-3)

Special Topics Course.

Course Limit: 99

BEMH 6813 Special Topics (1-3)

Special Topics Course.

Course Limit: 99

BEMH 6910 Independent Study (1-3)

Independent Study Course

Maximum Hours: 99

BEMH 6940 Transfer Coursework (0-20)

Transfer Coursework at the 6000 level.

Maximum Hours: 99