Overview

The Master of Science in Bioethics and Medical Humanities is a special track within the Biomedical Sciences (BMS) Graduate Program at Tulane School of Medicine. As healthcare becomes increasingly complex with both technological advances as well as social decisions that must be faced, this master's degree program will assist any learner who wishes to pursue healthcare ethics and humanities in their future. Our M.S. is a two-year, 33 credit hour program leading to a Master of Science in Bioethics and Medical Humanities, consisting of seven required core courses and four electives. This program accommodates Dual Degree MD-MS students (see below) and those students interested in pursuing the M.S. degree (independently from Tulane's M.D. program) by post-baccalaureates progressing eventually toward a terminal degree (e.g., an MD, JD, etc.) and by mid-career professionals who wish to expand their potential in medical ethics and humanities. This program will allow for live synchronous teleconferencing by our students for core and elective courses offered by our program, allowing participation from virtually anywhere. Students select either the Bioethics Track or Medical Humanities Track to center their efforts. This Bioethics and Medical Humanities M.S. at the Tulane University School of Medicine is the only Bioethics and Medical Humanities master’s-level program in Louisiana (as well as the entire central Gulf Coast). Tulane is positioned uniquely to provide the student a bioethics and medical humanities education with an interdisciplinary faculty in medical ethics and medical humanities that have been brought together in the Program in Medical Ethics and Human Values (PMEHV). The Executive Director of the M.S. Program is David John Doukas, M.D., James A. Knight Chair in Humanities and Ethics and Medicine, Director of PMEHV, Tulane School of Medicine. Core program faculty are drawn from Philosophy, Medical Humanities, Public Health, and Clinical Ethics and boast a distinguished publication record in Bioethics and Medical Humanities staffing the core courses.

MD-MS Dual Degree Program (https://catalog.tulane.edu/medicine/combined-degrees/md-ms-bioethics/)

Importantly, this M.S. degree can be also achieved by incoming students at the Tulane School of Medicine as a Dual Degree (MD-MS) program, completed within 4 years. MD-MS dual degree students will complete the curriculum in the first two years at Tulane School of Medicine. M.S. coursework is done on Wednesday and Friday afternoons — reserved specifically for all of our dual degree program students and for medical student electives — and through elective coursework offered in the summer before and after Year 1

Requirements

Core Courses (https://medicine.tulane.edu/bioethics/ms/curriculum-details/)

Foundations of Bioethics
This course surveys the variety of bioethical theories that ground contemporary arguments within the bioethics literature and in healthcare. Attention will be paid to methodologies of decision-making within the context of sound ethical argument utilizing principles, casuistry, care, narrative, and virtues.

Current Controversies in Bioethics
This course will examine contemporaneous topics in healthcare ethics. Issues to be covered will include those that are of notoriety as well as many that are ethically important but not widely recognized by the public. Theoretical knowledge of ethics will then be drawn upon to facilitate discussion of dilemmas that are intrinsic within these topics.

Fundamentals in Medical Humanities
This course is an examination of how the humanities and social sciences bring contextual fullness to understanding the healing profession. A particular emphasis will be placed on how the arts can bring humanism to the sciences.

Capstone Project
This capstone seminar for Bioethics graduate students will be a collaborative project. In this project, students will focus their energies on a major issue facing the Tulane-New Orleans community, with an end product that is either policy-based or education-based to help facilitate discussion and/or resolution of the issue at hand.

Plus, One of The Two Tracks Below:

BIOETHICS TRACK

Ethical Theory
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.

Clinical Ethics
This course is a comprehensive seminar on the theory and practice of clinical ethics consultation. 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 and will consider methods of mediation, as well as the arguments regarding certification in clinical consultation.
Research Ethics
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.

MEDICAL HUMANITIES TRACK

Literature and Film in Medicine
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 to gain a richer understanding of lived experiences of health and illness.

History of Medicine
This course explores health maintenance, disease, and therapeutics 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, with special topics discussion on 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.

Narrative in Medicine
This course is a comprehensive seminar on the importance of narrative in the practice of medicine. 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.