

**PBPL 26830: Medical Ethics**

Summer 2019, Monday - Friday 9am - 3pm  
Regenstein 523

**Sorcha A. Brophy, PhD**

sorchabrophy@uchicago.edu  
Office: Keller 3026

*“Now I have to tell you, it’s an unbelievably complex subject. Nobody knew that health care could be so complicated.” – Donald Trump, 45<sup>th</sup> President of the United States.*

In this course we will tackle some of the complex ethical challenges faced in health care. We will discuss the broad philosophical frameworks used in health care settings to make decisions around hot-button issues like: abortion, organ donation, and the right to die. We will also investigate how legal and cultural factors complicate decision-making around these topics. Class time will be divided between debates over real case studies, class guests, and field trips.

**Grading**

- 25% Attendance/participation
- 25% Weekly Responses
- 25% Ethics Controversy Paper
- 25% Ethics Controversy Presentation

**Attendance/Participation:** Students are required to attend all class meetings and to arrive on time. This is an interactive class and I expect you to participate in discussion! In order to assure that the class remains interactive, I am instituting a ban on laptops, phones, tablets, etc.

**Weekly Responses:** These are short weekly assignments (2-3 paragraphs) in which you will debate the merits of the readings. You must submit your responses to Canvas by Sunday at 11:59 PM (Note: the first weekly response will be due on Monday at 11:59 PM).

**Ethics Controversy Paper (5-7 pages, double-spaced):** In this paper, you will examine both (or multiple!) sides of a medical ethics controversy. You will be assessed for your ability to both develop a compelling argument and provide a balanced treatment of a complex issue.

**Ethics Controversy Presentation:** This in-class presentation is an opportunity for you to synthesize your thoughts about your paper and to get feedback from your classmates. You will prepare a PowerPoint and any other material that will help us understand the various perspectives. Be creative in how you present your material!

**Required course book**

Orentlicher, David, Mary Anne Bobinski & Mark A. Hall. *Bioethics and Public Health Law* (Aspen Casebook), 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition.\*

The additional readings on the syllabus are required, and will be available on Canvas.

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\* Referred to as *BPHL*. **Make sure to obtain the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition.** You should be able to find a well priced copy online.

## Tentative Course Schedule

### Week 1: Foundations of Medical Ethics

- Readings: The Belmont Report  
*The AMA Code of Medical Ethics* selection
- July 15 Introduction to Medical Ethics  
**Weekly Response #1 due by 11:59 PM**
- July 16 Field trip to International Museum of Surgical Science  
**Homework: Read *BPHL* pp. 98-100, 110-122, 377-381**
- July 17 Interview with Dr. Erin Kane, emergency physician and assistant professor at George Washington University School of Medicine  
**Homework: Read *BPHL* pp. 239-255**
- July 18 Justice in Research
- July 19 Justice in Health Care  
Interview with Dr. Stella Safo, Premier Consulting

### Week 2: The Ethics of Decision-Making

- Readings: Engber. "The Strange Case of Anna Stubblefield." *New York Times*  
Rosenbaum. "Angel of Death: The Trial of the Suicide Doctor." *Vanity Fair*  
Gann. "Fighting for My Son With Cystic Fibrosis." *New York Magazine*  
*BPHL* pp. 269-295.
- July 21 **Weekly Response #2 due by 11:59PM**
- July 22 Withholding and Withdrawing Care  
**Homework: Read *BPHL* pp. 348-358**
- July 23 The Right to Die.  
Interview with Dr. Kaija-Leena Romero, palliative care specialist  
**Homework: Read *BPHL* pp. 400-406**
- July 24 Surrogate Decision-Making  
**Homework: Read *BPHL* pp. 663-668**
- July 25 Disability Rights

July 26 Pediatric Decision-Making

**Week 3: The Body – Commodification, Values, and Rights**

Readings: Almeling. Sex Cells. “Introduction.”  
*BPHL* pp. 217-223, 610-614, 622-625, 715-729.  
Listen to: “Here’s Looking at You, Kidney.” *This American Life*. Episode 580 (16 minutes)

July 28 **Weekly Response #3 due by 11:59PM**

July 29 Bodily Rights  
Interview with Graciela Guzmán, Protect Our Care Illinois  
**Homework: Read BPHL pp. 475-478, 482-497**

July 30 Reproductive Rights and Abortion

July 31 Field trip to the Museum of Science and Industry  
**Homework: Read BPHL pp. 570-581**

August 1 Commodification of the Body

August 2 Ethics Controversy Presentations

August 5 **Ethics Controversy Paper due by 11:59PM**

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**Disability Statement**

If you have any kind of disability, please talk to the instructor or TA immediately. We are more than happy to provide any kind of accommodation that will help you succeed in this class.

If you require any accommodations for this course, as soon as possible please provide us with a copy of your Accommodation Determination Letter (provided to you by the Student Disability Services office) so that you may discuss with us how your accommodations may be implemented in this course.

The University of Chicago is committed to ensuring the full participation of all students in its programs. If you have a documented disability and, as a result, need a reasonable accommodation to participate in class, complete course requirements, or benefit from the University's programs or services, you are encouraged to contact Student Disability Services as soon as possible. To receive reasonable accommodation, you must be appropriately registered with Student Disability Services.

Please contact the office at 773-702-6000 or email: [disabilities@uchicago.edu](mailto:disabilities@uchicago.edu) or visit the website at [disabilities.uchicago.edu](http://disabilities.uchicago.edu).