PENN STATE COLLEGE OF MEDICINE
MEDICAL ETHICS AND PROFESSIONALISM (MEP 721)
2013 COURSE OBJECTIVES, RESOURCES AND REQUIREMENTS

The Ethics and Professionalism course is administered and taught by faculty from the Department of Humanities, with assistance from faculty in several clinical departments. The course meets for 12 sessions, and specific meeting times can be found in your course schedule. Questions about any aspects of this course should be directed to your discussion section instructor. The course directors are Dr. Michael Green (mjg15@psu.edu) and Dr. Benjamin Levi (BHLevi@psu.edu) Department of Humanities H134, Room C1743. Phone: 531-8778.

As the curriculum is updated, it can be found at the ABLE website: https://cms.psu.edu.

Goals for Students

The main goals of this course are to introduce you to a variety of issues involving ethics and professionalism that arise in the practice of medicine, and to help prepare you to deal effectively with such issues. At the conclusion of the course, students will be able to:

- Identify common ethical issues they are likely to face in medicine
- Recognize ethical norms (and their parameters) within medicine
- Use their knowledge and skills to anticipate and avoid ethical problems
- Deal effectively with ethical problems, including identifying relevant available resources
- Articulate the complexity of end-of-life issues
- Explain the scope of medical students’ and physicians’ professional responsibilities

By the end of this course, students should be more proficient in three domains as they apply to ethical issues -- KNOW, CAN, and DO.

1. **Know** – The factual basis for understanding your responsibilities -- in particular, relevant ethical principles, laws, history etc. that will enable you to “do the right thing”
2. **Can** – The skills (and attitudes) needed to be able to act ethically after having determined what you “ought” to do
3. **Do** – The demonstration of your ability to apply your knowledge and skills appropriately in a given situation

Required Readings:

- The course readings are available to all students on ABLE.
- **Please note that you have required readings in preparation for the first class session**

Additional Resources:

- *Hastings Center Report* (the first established journal specific to bioethics)
- *American Journal of Bioethics* (topical issues with target articles and peer commentaries)
• *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy* (theoretical, academically rigorous journal)
• *Kennedy Institute of Bioethics Journal* (good reviews of issues)

**Websites:**
• Bioethics.net: [http://www.bioethics.net](http://www.bioethics.net)
• University of Toronto Joint Centre for Bioethics: [http://www.jointcentreforbioethics.ca/index.shtml](http://www.jointcentreforbioethics.ca/index.shtml)
• Center for Practical Bioethics: [http://practicalbioethics.org](http://practicalbioethics.org)

**Course Requirements:**
• Attend all class sessions (plenary and small group)
• Actively participate in discussions and class exercises
• Complete all assigned readings
• In the case of a legitimate absence from a particular session, provide advance notice to the instructor
• Complete the advance directive exercise. This involves:
  • Identifying an individual 50 years or older with whom to have a discussion about advance care planning
  • Completing a written advance directive with that person, using either the online advance care planning tool [https://www.makingyourwishesknown.com](https://www.makingyourwishesknown.com) or the paper tool provided in your reading
  • Turning in a 2-page essay describing your experience (due November 13, 2012)
• Complete all written assignments

**Grading:**

This is a Pass/Fail course, and a passing grade will require satisfactory completion of ALL elements of the course, including:

• Engaged and active participation in all Small Group discussions
• Thoughtful, critical, well-written essays in response to writing assignments
• 1-2 page critical reflection on the readings for each missed class (excused or unexcused)

**NOTE:**
• Failing ANY of these components will result in a failing grade for the course
• **Attendance in lectures and small group sessions is mandatory.** If you have a scheduling conflict, contact your discussion leader to resolve the conflict
• **2 or more unexcused absences results in a designation of Does Not Meet Expectations—Targeted Remediation Required** (For further questions about absence requests, contact Susan Hall,shall3@hmc.psu.edu, in the Office of Medical Education.)
Course Description

This course is taught using a combination of large group and small group sessions. Each class begins with an hour-long large group plenary session (involving all second year medical students), which may include a film or special guest speaker. Following the plenary session, students break into small groups (approximately 13 students/group) for a discussion centered around the particular theme of the day. These discussions are informed by: 1) a set of required readings drawn from the scholarly literature; 2) the lecture material (including powerpoint slides or films where relevant); and 3) case discussions.

The purpose of the small group discussions is to help students understand the complexities of ethical issues in medicine and to develop a systematic process for addressing such issues. It is not intended as an “editorial” session for the airing of personal opinions. Rather small group discussion should be used by students to 1) work through challenging ethical issues to identify appropriate responses; and 2) develop behaviors consistent with the highest standards of medical professionalism.

Small group facilitators are faculty with background and skills in teaching ethics and professionalism. Facilitators work together to identify consistent goals and expectations for each session, and to ensure that fair standards exist among different small groups.