Ethical Dilemmas in Health for Social Work and Other Health Professions

Fall 2012
Tuesday evenings 6pm-9pm
SSWB, Room 3816
Edith C. Kieffer, MPH, PhD
Office hours: by appointment, SSW Room 3770
Email: ekieffer@umich.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION: From a beginning in efforts to protect human rights in biomedical research, the field of health-related ethics, sometimes called “bioethics” has grown rapidly. It now encompasses such major areas as equity of access to, and delivery of, health care services, and the impact of the rapid proliferation of technologies (e.g. genetic and advanced diagnostic testing, prenatal, mind-altering and life-prolonging treatments) on how human life is defined, and on health care decisions and quality of life. While many of these issues, and the dilemmas they create, focus on the rights and burdens of individuals and families, ethical dilemmas in health have increasingly far-reaching implications for communities and societies. These dilemmas pose challenges to social workers, social service and health care practitioners, administrators, policy makers and social and health scientists. Issues that have traditionally been private concerns are increasingly played out in the public arena, with passionate constituencies and extensive, and often inflammatory, media attention. The key roles and importance of well-trained and practiced social workers and other health care providers, administrators, planners and policy makers, in assuring equitable treatment and protecting individuals, communities and societies, provide the central rationale for this course.

This course uses a case-study approach. It will use ethical frameworks from social work, medicine, public health, nursing, psychology and others health-related fields for decision-making, both generally and as applied to specific dilemmas. The course also discusses conflicts between professional ethics codes and federal, state and local laws, regulations and codes (e.g. penal, mental health).

COURSE CONTENT: The scope of the intersection between health and ethics is huge. This course cannot cover all issues, topics and dilemmas in one semester. A partial list of potential topics includes: content and application of social and health professional ethics codes and frameworks to health-related decisions and policies; ethical issues in health care resource distribution and allocation; conflicts between autonomy and beneficence in public health interventions; the role of social and health professionals and ethics consultants in hospital ethics review committees; competence assessment and health care decisions; informed consent, confidentiality and human subjects protection in health care and health research; access to, and the impact of genetic, fertility and reproductive technologies; advanced care planning, advanced directives and end-of life decisions, including neonatal and intensive care later in life or in “futile” situations; maternal/fetal conflicts of interest such as drug treatment or child abuse prosecution, coerced or forced maternal and fetal drug and surgical treatment; cross-cultural issues in
bioethical decisions; the role of the internet and the media in framing bioethics and health care policy decisions. Additional issues and topics may be explored by seminar participants during assignments and class discussions.

COURSE DESIGN: This course will be conducted as a seminar. This design assumes that all participants are adult learners who are responsible for, and actively engaged in, the learning process. You are the primary actor in developing your knowledge, understanding and skills through class activities, presentations (instructor, guests and your own), reading, listening, discussion and from your developing experiences and insights. My role, as class instructor, is facilitator and guide. My “teaching” is less about lecturing than about planning class activities and identifying and providing many, but not all learning resources that you will use throughout the semester and beyond. However, you are responsible for your own learning and much of the quality of your class experience. By University/School policy, I also evaluate your immediate classroom-related learning, and provide “grades”. This is a “hands-on” course. Beginning with an introduction of ethical principles and frameworks used to guide health-related practice and research, a case-study approach will be used to examine common dilemmas faced in practice from the perspective of policy-makers, health and social service agency directors and practitioners, communities, families and individuals. As course participants, you will learn and practice methods for analyzing ethical dilemmas from a variety of perspectives, including the professional and personal. You will develop, present and participate in analyses of ethical issues and participate in decision-making meetings. The course methods and resources include readings, presentations by the instructor, guests and class participants, small and whole class discussions, analyses of ethical issue case studies, debates in short and more in-depth analysis papers and in “mock” case presentations, meetings and public hearings. In keeping with its interdisciplinary approach, students from different disciplines and areas of study and practice will be expected to draw upon and share their previous learning and work experience in the context of the course content.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: Upon completion of the course, participants will be able to:

1. Describe the key principles of social work and other health professional ethics codes that guide ethical decision-making and apply them in the context of social justice, human rights, autonomy, resource allocation and responsibility.

2. Identify how similarities and differences in principles and decision-making methods, across professional codes, may contradict and/or complement one another in health-related practice, and in relation to local, state, national and/or international law, codes and regulations.

3. Assess how your personal values may differ from, or are similar to the values of your profession in several health-related ethical dilemmas.

4. Demonstrate how individual, family and community resources, educational level, gender, ethnicity, religion or spirituality, age, sexual orientation, marital status and other characteristics (of decision-makers and those affected by their decisions) may affect ethical decision-making.

5. Analyze and discuss the role of media in framing discussions and decisions related to ethics and health, as it affects the general public and specific population groups.

6. Demonstrate their ability to apply ethical frameworks and critical thinking to selected ethical dilemmas that arise in health care settings, and in health policy development and implementation, through written analyses and through their assigned roles during case study/case conference meetings and public hearings.
7. Use an interdisciplinary case study/case conference approach to practice decision-making applied to several contemporary health policy and health care issues including genetics, maternal/fetal conflict, fertility and reproduction, beginning and end-of-life decisions (care, quality and length of life) and allocation of health-related resources.
RELATIONSHIP OF THE COURSE TO FOUR CURRICULAR THEMES

1. Multiculturalism and Diversity: Attention to multiculturalism and diversity, and understanding the impact of these, is imperative to the ethical conduct of practice and research in social work and other health-related professions, and in the context of families, communities and society. Course participants will identify ways in which ability, age, sex, class, resource availability, color, culture, ethnicity, family structure, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, race, religion or spirituality influence the distribution of health-related resources, how they influence, and are influenced by, ethical frameworks in various related fields and circumstances.

2. Social Justice and Social Change: Social justice is one guiding framework of ethical decision-making. Conversely, achieving social justice in health requires ethical decision-making processes. This course will address how ethical frameworks for decision making contribute to creating a system where the benefits of health promoting environments and resources, including health care, are distributed equally across populations. Course participants will analyze and discuss how ethical decision-making processes influence, and are influenced by scientific, socio-cultural, and social justice issues.

3. Promotion, Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation: Course participants will review and analyze a variety of case studies that illustrate how ethical issues and dilemmas affect individual, family, organizational, community and societal well being across the spectrum from promotion to rehabilitation, in a variety of settings and populations.

4. Social and Behavioral Science Research: While the course is practice-based, successful practice must be based on ethically conducted research. Course participants will review and apply research from social work and other health professional, behavioral and social science fields in group discussion, case studies presentations and papers. The evolving place of bioethics in biomedical, social and behavioral science research initiatives of the federal government and foundations will be discussed. The evolution, function and impact of human subjects review boards will be studied.

RELATIONSHIP OF THE COURSE TO SOCIAL WORK ETHICS AND VALUES: The Social Work Code of Ethics underlies the framing and implementation of the course. For example, in exploring the history and application of ethical frameworks, this course begins with an explicit overview of NASW’S Code of Ethics and compares and contrasts it to ethics codes in other disciplines. Students will explore social work ethics and values in a variety of contexts and practice settings that affect health and well-being through their readings, class discussions and assignments. Every effort will be made to encourage students from a variety of social and health professions to take the course in order to make it correspond to the “real world” of interdisciplinary decision-making during case conferences, legislative processes, and other formal and informal means of interdisciplinary communication.

INTENSIVE FOCUS ON PODS: Biomedicine has been guilty of some of the greatest violations of human rights in history including forced sterilizations of developmentally disabled and ethnic minority group members, selective abortion of female fetuses, Nazi and Tuskegee human experimentation, and withholding medical treatment of prisoners and other oppressed groups. Historically, presently and, likely in the future, many of the greatest health-related dilemmas arise from inequitable access to, or discriminatory application or withholding of health-related research and treatment based on race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, ability, access to resources, and other individual and population-based characteristics. This course addresses these in readings, case examples and student papers and presentations. The key roles and importance of well-trained and practiced social workers and other health providers, administrators, planners and policy makers in assuring equitable treatment and protecting individuals, communities and societies, provide the central rationale for this course.

LEARNING RESOURCES: READINGS/CTOOLS WEBSITE AND MORE
We will not have a textbook for this class. You will be using a variety of materials, including chapters from several books, journal articles, newspaper and magazine articles (professional journals and popular print media, along with shows broadcast by PBS, NPR and other media. I will make many of these available through our CTOOLS website. You will find, use and share others through your research, individually and with other members of the class.

Multiple resources are available on CTools, all in the Resources folder. It is organized with general materials first, e.g. the course syllabus and readings folder, and a General Resources and Links folder that contains ethics codes, decision making frameworks, bioethics-focused databases, organizations, and journals. Additionally, there are links to multiple organizations’ codes of ethics. You may also access University of Michigan ethics resources through this folder. The University houses several centers for ethics research which provide a wealth of resources and experts. This General Resources and Links folder will grow as the semester proceeds. It will provide you with ample material for your work in this course, and into the future, but do not limit yourself to what you find here.

Knowledge and increasing understanding of the meanings and applications of the concepts and terms discussed in the week 1 readings will be assumed for all in-class discussions, group and individual assignments. Other readings are organized on your reading list and in CTOOLS in required materials and supplemental materials categories. Required materials are those that are expected to provide the background you need to fully participate in class activities, both inside and outside of the classroom. Required materials listed on the reading list and in its corresponding CTOOLS folder should be the same. Supplemental materials provide further resources. Some, but not all of the supplemental materials on the reading list will be found in the corresponding CTOOLS folder. Conversely, I will add materials to the CTOOLS supplemental readings folder during the semester based on things that I, you and your colleagues find.

Be advised that there may be some changes in the class schedule or reading lists if opportunities present themselves. Assignment due dates and most if not all of the assigned readings will not change, unless otherwise discussed and agreed upon.

CLASS REQUIREMENTS

Attendance and participation: Because of the participatory nature of this course, class attendance is required. Please notify me at the beginning of the semester if religious observances will conflict with class or due dates for assignments so we can make appropriate arrangements. With my approval, up to two absences may be “made up” by completing a summary of the key points of each of the seminar readings and any additional activity that I assign related to the topic/activities of the day. You must contact me within 24 hours of the missed class to arrange for this option. Any assignment due on a missed class day must be emailed to me before 6:10 pm on the day of the class. Students with 2 absences that are not “made up” will receive a one level (e.g. A to A-) reduction in your final grade. Each additional absence will reduce your final grade an additional level. Class will begin promptly at 6:10 pm. Be cognizant of the disruptive nature of coming to class late. Coming to class more than 10 minutes late more than once, or leaving early, unless you have received prior authorization, will be considered an absence. If you arrive after the class has begun, please enter the classroom as quietly as possible and wait until break to catch up with what is going on. It is your responsibility to get materials, handouts, or class notes from one of your classmates if you are unable to be in class. All class members are expected to be attentive to speakers and discussants and extend courtesy and respect to others, even if their values, opinions and attitudes differ from yours.

Discussions/Group Activities: Discussions and group activities are a critical aspect of active learning at the graduate level. Therefore, well-prepared participation is required. The following
expectations will be taken into account when I am considering your participation grade. As an
adult learner, you are expected to prepare for class by reading and thinking about the topic of
the day, preparing analytical materials, class discussion notes and other written work, and
actively contributing to small and large group discussions. Your contributions must show
evidence of reflection on the content and meaning of readings/class materials, and participation
in classroom presentations, activities and discussion.

Professional Behavior: As a professional/professional-in-training, you are expected to
demonstrate courtesy, attention to, and respect for the instructor, fellow students as individuals,
and the class itself, in non-verbal and verbal communications and other behavior. Failure to
behave professionally will result in a reduction in the participation portion of your grade.

Special considerations and use of electronic devices: Please notify me immediately if you
require special classroom or other considerations for instruction. All electronic devices, including
but not limited to cellular phones, pagers and laptop computers will be turned off at all times
during class, unless you have made prior arrangements with me, for cause.

Deadline expectations: All reading, written and other assignments must be completed and
ready for use by the start of class on the specified due date (see schedule). Please note that
some assignments may be completed in-class. Assignments submitted late will be graded
down one full grade. Assignments submitted more than two days late will not be accepted.
Exceptions require permission of the instructor. Incomplete grades are assigned only through
negotiation with me before the due date.

Format of written assignments: All papers must be typewritten in Arial, 11 point font and one
inch margins. Each assignment will indicate whether single or double spacing is required. Clear
topic headings and properly formatted citations must be included, using either APA format or
ordered numeric referencing common to medical/health journals (see published article
examples). Style guide resources are:

* APA citation style: The SSW librarian guide
  is: http://guides.lib.umich.edu/content.php?pid=119622&sid=1030292 .
  Purdue University's online writing lab also has a great guide to using APA style, available here -
  http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/

Examples of a book and journal chapter citation using APA format:

Kieffer, E. C., Salabarria-Pena, Y., Odoms-Young, A. M., Willis, S. K., Baber, K. E., & Guzman, J. R.
(2005). The Application of Focus Group methodologies to Community-Based Participatory Research. In
B. A. Israel, E. Eng, A. J. Schulz & E. A. Parker (Eds.), Methods for Conducting Community-Based

Latino women on diabetes, physical activity, and health. Health Education & Behavior, 29(5), 542-556.

* AMA citation style Here is the guide to AMA Manual of Style,
  You can search and browse it free. Review the section on References.

Examples of a book and journal chapter citation using AMA format:

Kieffer EC, Salabarria-Peña Y, Odoms-Young AM, Willis SK, Baber KE, Guzmán JR. The
Application of Focus Group Methodologies to Community-Based Participatory Research. In:
Israel BA, Eng E, Schulz AJ, Parker EA, eds. Methods for Conducting Community-Based
EVALUATION AND GRADES Your class grade will be based on my evaluation of the following:

Class participation (25%)  
News media analysis (article/show) (15%: 10% written summary; 5% discussion facilitation)  
Brief issue analyses: 3 analyses (30%; 10% each)  
  Genetic technologies, maternal-fetal conflict, neonatal intensive care  
Final paper – Analysis of ethical issue of your choice* (30%)  
TOTAL  100 points  

Separate handouts will be provided for each assignment.

Final grades will be assigned using the following point scale:

- A+ = 99 - 100
- A  = 95 - 98
- A– = 90 - 94
- B+ = 86 - 89
- B  = 82 - 85
- B– = 78 - 81
- C+ = 74 - 77
- C  = 70 - 73
- C– = 66 – 69

Both content and format will be considered in assigning grades. Lower grades will result from late submission of assignments, failure to follow assignment and formatting guidelines, sloppiness, inappropriate grammar and misspellings.

The criteria for letter grades are:

**A+, A or A-** Mastery of subject content, demonstration of critical analysis, creativity and/or complexity in completion of assignment. A+ will be a very rare grade. The difference between A and A- is based on the degree to which these skills are demonstrated.

**B+** Mastery of subject content beyond expected competency, but has not demonstrated additional critical analysis, creativity or complexity in the completion of the assignment.

**B** Mastery of subject content at level of expected competency – meets course expectations

**B-** Less than adequate competency, but demonstrates student learning and potential for mastery of subject content.

**C or C-** Demonstrates a minimal understanding of subject content. Significant areas need improvement in order to meet course requirements.

**E** Student has failed to demonstrate minimal understanding of subject content.

General Expectations and Format for Written Work:

- You must use scholarly literature to support your presentation of material. You need to use multiple sources and synthesize them. Do not rely on direct quotations from your sources; instead summarize them in your own words.
- Written work should incorporate the standards of critical thinking, analysis and writing (described below). In evaluating your written work, I will apply these standards.
- You may find it useful to have someone who is unfamiliar with your subject read your paper before you turn it in. An outside reader can tell you if your writing is not clear, if you omitted a word or phrase, or if you used the wrong word. Spell checkers and grammar checkers are useful tools, but not as reliable as a human reader.
• **Sweetland Writing Center.** One of the benefits of being a student at the University of Michigan is the range and depth of resources to which you have access. The Sweetland Writing Center (SWC) is one such resource. For help with the final paper, please free to consult them for writing support. They can help you develop your argument, improve your paper organization, correct grammar mistakes, and craft effective prose. SWC is located at 1139 Angell Hall. Tel: 764-0429 (to schedule an appointment). Website: [http://www.lsa.umich.edu/swc/forgrads](http://www.lsa.umich.edu/swc/forgrads)

• For assistance with writing, contact The Sweetland Writing Center, 1139 Angell Hall, (734) 764-0429; [http://www.lsa.umich.edu/swc/contact.html](http://www.lsa.umich.edu/swc/contact.html)

All written work must adhere to the National Association of Social Workers editorial policy:

*In the interest of accurate and unbiased communication, the NASW publications program subscribe to a belief in the importance of avoiding language that might imply sexual, ethnic, or other kinds of discrimination, stereotyping, or bias. NASW is committed to the fair and equal treatment of individuals and groups. Material submitted should not promote stereotypic or discriminatory attitudes and assumptions about people. (Health and Social Work, 11:3, Summer 1986).*

**Standards for Critical Thinking, Analysis and Writing:**
(Adapted from M. Scriven & R. Paul for the National Council for Excellence in Critical Thinking Instruction):

**Critical thinking** is the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action. In its exemplary form, it is based on universal intellectual values that transcend subject matter divisions: clarity, accuracy, precision, consistency, relevance, sound evidence, good reasons, depth, breadth, and fairness. All written work will be evaluated in accordance with the standards of critical analysis and thinking and should strive to meet the following intellectual standards:

- **CLARITY:** Could you elaborate further on that point? Could you express that point in another way? Could you give an illustration? Could you give an example?

- **ACCURACY:** Is that really true? How could we check that? How could we find out if that is true?

- **PRECISION:** Could you give more details? Could you be more specific?

- **RELEVANCE:** How is that connected to the question? How does that bear on the issue?

- **DEPTH:** How does your answer address the complexities in the question? How are you taking into account the problems in the question? Is that dealing with the most significant factors?

- **BREADTH:** Do we need to consider another point of view? Is there another way to look at this question? What would this look like from a conservative standpoint? What would this look like from the point of view?

- **LOGIC:** Does this really make sense? Does that follow from what you said? How does that follow? Before you implied this and now you are saying that; how can both be true?

**Academic Conduct and Integrity:**
The conduct of a student enrolled in courses offered by the School of Social Work should be consistent with that of a professional person. Courtesy, honesty, and respect should be shown by students toward faculty members, guest lecturers, administrative support staff, and fellow students. Similarly, students should expect faculty to treat them fairly, showing respect for their ideas and opinions and striving to help them achieve maximum benefits from their experience. Student academic misconduct refers to behavior that may include plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, falsification of records or official documents, intentional misuse of equipment or materials (including library materials), and aiding and abetting the perpetration of such acts. The preparation of reports, papers, and examinations, assigned on an individual basis, must represent each student’s own effort. Reference sources should be indicated clearly. The use of assistance from other students or aids of any kind during a written examination, except when the use of aids such as electronic devices, books or notes has been approved by an instructor, is a violation of the standard of academic conduct. Plagiarism – not referencing another’s words or ideas – is a violation of academic integrity and will be grounds for failure on an assignment. In addition, papers that are completed for another course are not acceptable and will be assigned 0 points. Additional resources for discussions of academic conduct and integrity include the School of Social Work and the Center for Research on Learning and Teaching (CRLT). Please refer to the Student Guide to the Master’s in Social Work Degree Program 2006-2007 for further discussion of appropriate academic conduct.

- **SSW Student Code of Academic and Professional Conduct**

- **MLibrary Resources for Students on Academic Integrity**
  [http://www.lib.umich.edu/shapiro-undergraduate-library/academic-integrity-resources-students](http://www.lib.umich.edu/shapiro-undergraduate-library/academic-integrity-resources-students)
Key Codes of Ethics Relevant to Health Ethics (this is not an exclusive list; see also CTOOLS)


American Counseling Association —

American Medical Association —

American Nurses Association —


National Association of Black Social Workers —
http://www.nabsw.org/mserver/CodeofEthics.aspx
SW 705 SCHEDULE FALL 2012

September

4    Class and health ethics overview; Introduction to health ethics concepts and frameworks
11   Health ethics decision making: frameworks and influences
18   Public health ethics principles and frameworks
25   Ethical dilemmas in mental health

October

2    Genetics
   Issue analysis paper due
9    Health resource allocation and
16   Fall study break
23   HospProcess/Maternal-Fetal and parent-child conflict
   Issue analysis paper due
30   Disability

November

6    Fertility and Reproduction
   Introduction paragraph for final paper due
13   NICU
   Issue analysis paper due
20   Chronic disease; Organ transplantation
27   Aging: caregiving, quality of life, treatment decisions, care management

December

4    Palliative and End-of-Life Care
11   Research ethics
   Final paper due