HEALTH CARE ETHICS (HCE)

HCE 2010 - Foundations in Clinical Health Care Ethics
Credit(s): 3 Credits
This course introduces students to the ethical dimensions of clinical medicine and offers them the basic language and methodology with which to critically examine these dimensions. The course format integrates lecture and active case discussion to provide both the necessary theoretical grounding and the real-world skills sought by students.

HCE 2050 - Patients as Persons
Credit(s): 3 Credits
This course will introduce students to the philosophical and theological foundations of various debates and positions in bioethics, all of which concern how patients in the clinical care or research context ought to be regarded and treated as persons. Students will explore the way that philosophical and theological concepts of personhood have shaped debates concerning major issues in bioethics, including abortion, genetic testing and treatment, euthanasia and end-of-life care, brain death, organ transplantation, disability, biomedical research, as well as the practice of medicine and the healthcare provider-patient relationship. (Offered annually)

HCE 2070 - Health Care Across Difference
Credit(s): 3 Credits
Delivering health care to a diverse patient population is complex. This course examines the clinical and ethical dilemmas posed by diversity in health care. Through a series of case studies we will explore how the delivery of care can be impacted by race, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, culture, and religion. We will conclude with an examination of the intersection of various forms of diversity in Anne Fadiman’s book The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down. Students will gain experience working collaboratively on bioethical research, and exploring how their own identity shapes their engagement with health care. (Offered as needed)

Prerequisite(s): HCE 2010
* Concurrent enrollment allowed.

HCE 2090 - Bioethics in an Interdisciplinary Perspective
Credit(s): 3 Credits
This course will consider bioethics from an interdisciplinary perspective: one that draws on research across the university to answer questions of applied ethics in health care. We will begin by discussing why bioethics is interdisciplinary, and consider examples of research that integrates scholarship in the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. Then we will conduct an extended case study of how different academic disciplines approach the same topic: the “right to die.” Students will write several short papers designed to develop their skills at synthesizing research from diverse academic disciplines, as well as one individual interdisciplinary research paper. (Offered as needed)

Prerequisite(s): HCE 2010
* Concurrent enrollment allowed.

HCE 2930 - Special Topics
Credit(s): 3 Credits (Repeatable for credit)

HCE 2980 - Independent Study
Credit(s): 1-3 Credits (Repeatable for credit)

HCE 3010 - Ethics in Clinical Medicine
Credit(s): 3 Credits
This course examines ethical issues encountered medicine, specifically by physicians and residents. It employs a case-based approach with supplementary readings on the general principles of biomedical ethics. Clinical problems related to the practice of medicine will be examined contextually, with attention to institutional, cultural, and moral issues that undergird controversies in clinical ethics.

HCE 3020 - Catholic Theological Bioethics
Credit(s): 3 Credits
Examine ethical issues in health care & medicine through the lens of Catholic theological bioethics. Engage specific teachings of Catholic moral tradition and the magisterium that bear directly on issues of HCE & medicine, including reproductive-technologies, contraception, abortion, genetics, allocation of resources, organ-transplantation, end-of-life decision making, euthanasia, and physician-assisted-suicide. Attention to differing or opposing viewpoints, approaches of issues from Catholic theological bioethicists. Narratives by theologians with first-hand experiences will be included. Course format integrating lecture, videos & active case discussions will provide an understanding of principles and give opportunity to develop practical dilemma-solving skills.

HCE 3030 - Disability Studies: Medicine, Ethics, and Policy
Credit(s): 3 Credits
This course will introduce undergraduates to disability studies. We will begin by detailing studies as an outgrowth of disability rights. We will then discuss contemporary topics in the field. We will conclude by analyzing disability in bioethics. Students will learn to apply disability studies in medicine, ethics, and policy. Offered fall and spring.

HCE 3040 - Mindfulness & the Ethics of Healthcare
Credit(s): 3 Credits
This course will introduce undergraduates to the philosophical and theological foundations of various debates and positions in bioethics, all of which concern how patients in the clinical care or research context ought to be regarded and treated as persons. Students will explore the way that philosophical and theological concepts of personhood have shaped debates concerning major issues in bioethics, including abortion, genetic testing and treatment, euthanasia and end-of-life care, brain death, organ transplantation, disability, biomedical research, as well as the practice of medicine and the healthcare provider-patient relationship. (Offered annually)

HCE 3050 - Bioethics in Popular Culture
Credit(s): 3 Credits
This course covers bioethical topics as depicted in various pop culture media, including abortion, genetic testing, cloning, stem cell research, euthanasia, and end-of-life care, biomedical research, public health, and the healthcare provider-patient relationship. Pop culture media utilized include documentaries, sci-fi television shows, medical dramas, literature, and music.

Prerequisite(s): HCE 2010
HCE 3060 - Plague Ethics: from the Black Death to COVID-19
Credit(s): 3 Credits
When plagues happen, they seem to change everything, including our sense of what is right. This course examines the challenge plagues pose to ethics. We begin with a study of how the “black death” transformed morality in medieval and early modern Europe. Then, we examine the ethical questions plague raises through a series of historical case studies. We conclude by exploring how bioethics has confronted plague, with a focus on the recent case of COVID-19. Throughout the semester, brief “literary interludes” will emphasize the seemingly paradoxical opportunities that plague brings to reexamine what it means to live ethically. (Offered occasionally)
Prerequisite(s): HCE 2010

HCE 3100 - Public Health & Social Justice
Credit(s): 3 Credits
Health has special moral importance for the well being of individuals and populations. We will discuss ethical issues associated with economic measures, resource allocation, priority setting, and human rights. The course is designed to evoke thoughts on personal and institutional responses to the questions of social justice and health.

HCE 3200 - Freaks and the Medical Body
Credit(s): 3 Credits
This course has two parts. The first part examines the spectacles of the “freak shows” of the late 19th and early 20th Centuries and how medical science participated in and legitimated the use of deformed and malformed people as both oddity of nature and object of medical and scientific interest. “Freaks” were showcased and used to expand medical knowledge. We will explore the way in which medical libraries gathered “specimens” of deformed persons for the purposes of expanding medical scientific knowledge. The second part of the course will begin with recent and contemporary “freak shows” as seen in programs like TLC’s Little People, Big World, NBC’s The Biggest Loser, and ABC News’ medical mystery series. These programs highlight various medical oddities and showcase their transformation. Yet, there is also something slightly different at work, because medicine not only showcases the oddities, but participates in their construction and creation as seen in programs like ABC’s Extreme Makeover, Fox’s The Swan, and E’s Bridalplasty, in the cases of Octomom and the Ashley Treatment, and in art exhibitions like Orlan and Alba the bunny. This course will explore the themes of power and knowledge and the way in which certain forbidden spectacles gain respectability through the legitimating power of medicine and science, but also how medicine and science deploy that power/knowledge to create those very spectacles, along with our aesthetic and ethical sensibilities.

HCE 3220 - The Desire to Dissect: Philosophical History of Anatomical Dissection
Credit(s): 3 Credits
This course explores the historical and philosophical underpinnings of anatomical dissection in Western medicine. It begins with a comparative history of ancient Greek and Chinese medicine, proceeds to examine the medical and cultural development of anatomical dissection, and concludes with anatomical thinking as the root of modern medical knowing.
Prerequisite(s): HCE 2010

HCE 3230 - Race, Gender, and Health Care
Credit(s): 3 Credits
This course uses a multidisciplinary perspective to examine unequal access to and treatment by the health care system in the U.S. Without discounting other social identities, we will focus on race/ethnicity and gender as major determinants of people’s disparate experiences with health care. The course will analyze aspects of the health care system that routinely give rise to these experiences, and examine how they help produce and perpetuate racial and gender inequality. The course will also raise questions about what counts as justice and individual rights, and discuss current policies and conditions through an ethical lens. (Offered occasionally)

HCE 3250 - God in the Clinic? Exploring the Tension Between Spirituality and Health Care
Credit(s): 3 Credits
Is spirituality integral to health care or should spirituality be excluded from modern medicine? This course explores the historical, ethical, and practical dimensions of spirituality in health care. It begins with the history of the relationship between religion and medicine, critically examines differing frameworks of spirituality in health care, and ends with students learning how to address issues such as: approaching the suffering patient, navigating miracle language, and doing whole person care at the end of life. Required is a site visit to a religious ceremony.
Prerequisite(s): HCE 2010

HCE 3300 - Bioethics + Human Nature Film
Credit(s): 3 Credits
This interactive course uses the medium of film to explore how medicine and biotechnology challenge definitions and conceptualizations of being human. The course will examine the social and cultural dynamics that influence approaches to bioethics in Spain and the United States. Students will consider the ethical dilemmas posed by such diverse practices as abortion, euthanasia, cognitive enhancement/manipulation, and genetic enhancement. The course includes field experiences in Madrid, Spain.

HCE 3390 - Special Topics
Credit(s): 3 Credits (Repeatable for credit)

HCE 3980 - Independent Study
Credit(s): 1-3 Credits (Repeatable for credit)

HCE 4200 - Warriors and Medics
Credit(s): 3 Credits
The course studies the thought and lives of warriors and medics in order to understand their values, virtues, and wisdom - not only as these pertain to the struggle with mortality, but also to the human condition generally. This course has a Pre/Corequisite of a 2000-level HCE course OR Junior or Senior standing.
Prerequisite(s): HCE 2010
* Concurrent enrollment allowed.

HCE 4210 - Controversies in Death and Dying
Credit(s): 3 Credits
This course examines different approaches and attitudes to death (including medical, philosophical, psychological and religious) and then deals with particular ethical controversies in death and dying, including physician-assisted suicide, the definition of death, advance directives, futility and adolescent decision-making, engaging arguments on both sides of debates.
Prerequisite(s): HCE 2010
* Concurrent enrollment allowed.
HCE 4220 - Controversies in Reproductive and Pediatric Ethics
Credit(s): 3 Credits
This course is comprised by two units. (1) Reproductive unit examines controversial ethical issues surrounding use of reproductive technology and medicine. Pros and cons are critically discussed. Topics include: the moral status of the human-embryo, maternal-fetal conflicts, contraception, sterilization, in vitro fertilization, surrogate motherhood, prenatal screening, and use of human embryos for research purposes. (2) Pediatric unit examines foundational issues in pediatric clinical ethics and a number of controversial issues in the field. Both sides of each controversy are critically discussed. Topics include: treatment of extremely premature infants, vaccine refusal, parental authority, adolescent autonomy, enhancement technologies, and disorders of sexual development.
Prerequisite(s): HCE 2010
* Concurrent enrollment allowed.

HCE 4240 - Ethics and Geriatric Care
Credit(s): 3 Credits
This course is designed to introduce undergraduate students to the ethics and practice of geriatric medicine and the spiritual dimensions of end-of-life care. In addition to weekly seminar discussions, students will spend three hours each week volunteering, shadowing and engaging with residents at Beaumont Manor on the Park.
Prerequisite(s): HCE 2010
* Concurrent enrollment allowed.
Attributes: Medical Humanities

HCE 4250 - Law and Bioethics
Credit(s): 3 Credits
This course will examine the ethical and jurisprudential issues related to areas of health care typically included in the field of bioethics. The course will introduce students to the leading ethico-legal approaches in analyzing cases and examining the judicial history and politics that gave rise to these. This course has a Pre/Corequisite of a 2000-level HCE course OR Junior or Senior standing.
Prerequisite(s): HCE 2010
* Concurrent enrollment allowed.
Attributes: Medical Humanities

HCE 4260 - Race and Research Ethics
Credit(s): 3 Credits
Prerequisite(s): HCE 2010
* Concurrent enrollment allowed.
Attributes: Medical Humanities, Diversity in the US (A&S)

HCE 4270 - Controversies in Organ Donation
Credit(s): 3 Credits
This course will examine controversies surrounding organ donation and transplantation. Topics will include: the significance (or insignificance) of ensuring donors of vital organs are dead; appropriate criteria for determining death; the significance (or insignificance) of explicit authorization of donors for donation after death; the appropriateness (or inappropriateness) of incentives for living donation and for donation after death; the ethical character of organ marketing; appropriate treatment of potential donors who are minors or who lack decision-making capacity; and appropriate allocation of organs. This course has a Pre/Corequisite of a 2000-level HCE course OR Junior or Senior standing.
Prerequisite(s): HCE 2010
* Concurrent enrollment allowed.

HCE 4280 - Controversies in Neuroethics
Credit(s): 3 Credits
Neuroethics was born of necessity to grapple with the ethical dimensions of advances in neuroscience. This course takes an interdisciplinary approach to diverse topics within Neuroethics, providing students with a forum for discussion. The field can be divided into the ethics of neuroscience and the neuroscience of ethics. Ethics of neuroscience examines moral concerns around developments in neuroscience. Neuroscience of ethics examines how advances in neuroscience bear on traditional questions in philosophy. The course will explore both domains and work toward student ability to discuss these controversial questions with respect for different opinions.

HCE 4500 - Ethics in Nursing & Health Care
Credit(s): 3 Credits
This course offers an overview of ethical theory, principles, and norms which should inform professional nursing practice. The meaning of nursing as a profession is studied as a source of ethical obligation for the nurse. Cases which arise in the practice of nursing are analyzed and evaluated in light of the identified ethical theory, principles, and norms.
Prerequisite(s): HCE 2010
* Concurrent enrollment allowed.
Restrictions:
Enrollment limited to students with a classification of Senior.
Enrollment limited to students in the Valentine School of Nursing college.

HCE 4520 - Ethics and Practice of Community Mental Health Care
Credit(s): 3 Credits
This course will examine the ethics and practice of community mental health. It is given in collaboration with the Independence Center, a community-based rehabilitation program for adults with severe and persistent mental illnesses. Each week, students will volunteer at the center and meet for two class sessions: one on SLU's campus, and another at the center in the company of program participants. These classes and volunteering will give students an opportunity to understand the center's functioning while in conversation with its members. Readings explore the community mental health movement, the "clubhouse" model, and their implications for bioethics. (Offered occasionally)
Prerequisite(s): HCE 2010

HCE 4930 - Special Topics
Credit(s): 3 Credits (Repeatable for credit)

HCE 4960 - Bioethics and Health Studies Capstone
Credit(s): 3 Credits
This course will guide students in the creation of a capstone paper, the topic of which will be determined via consultation between the student and the instructor. The course itself will begin with two weeks of introductory readings on interdisciplinary methodologies in bioethics. Students will then begin writing their papers. They will do so in stages, sharing their work in weekly "writing workshops" with the instructor and each other. In addition to the paper, students will complete a series of assignments—a public defense, mock job talk, and "transition paper"—designed to assist them in transitioning from undergraduates to professionals.

HCE 4980 - Independent Study
Credit(s): 3 Credits (Repeatable for credit)
Prerequisite(s): HCE 2010
* Concurrent enrollment allowed.
HCE 5020 - Ethical Issues in Public Health
Credit(s): 1 or 2 Credits
Through readings, lectures, discussions, and case studies, students develop: (1) the knowledge of basic ethical concepts operative in medical and public health ethics; (2) understanding of current ethical challenges facing those engaged in health promotion, disease prevention, and epidemiologic research; and (3) the ability to articulate ethical challenges and to make critical and informed ethical decisions. (Offered annually.)

HCE 5330 - Research Ethics for Health Outcomes
Credit(s): 1 Credit
This course provides students with an understanding of the principles of ethics in scientific research. Students will gain an understanding of responsible conduct of research including the importance of ethical decision-making and identification of rules, responsibilities, and resources for responsible conduct. Topics include informed consent, research misconduct, policies in human subjects research, data management and data sharing, and dealing with conflicts of interest.

HCE 5500 - Ethics in Nursing & Health Care
Credit(s): 2 Credits
This course offers an overview of ethical theory, principles, and norms that should inform professional nursing practice. It explores ethical issues and challenges commonly faced by nurses. Cases that arise in the practice of nursing are systematically analyzed.

HCE 5930 - Special Topics
Credit(s): 1-3 Credits (Repeatable for credit)

HCE 5960 - Masters Capstone Project
Credit(s): 0 Credits (Repeatable for credit)
This course is a highly individualized normative research project, culminating in master’s-level paper in health care ethics.

HCE 5970 - Graduate Reading
Credit(s): 1-3 Credits

HCE 6010 - Methods in Philosophical Ethics
Credit(s): 3 Credits
A study of the methodological issues in philosophy concerning the nature and justification of fundamental ethical norms, including: philosophical ethics and non-philosophical disciplines; philosophical methods of justifying ethical norms; Kantian ethics; contractarian ethics; virtue ethics; ethics and psychobiology; different methods of justification; epistemological status of ethics.

HCE 6020 - Methods in Religious Ethics
Credit(s): 3 Credits
A study of the hermeneutical significance of different methods in religious ethics and a critical analysis of the hermeneutical implications of these methods for the development of ethical theory.

HCE 6040 - Interdisciplinary Research in Health Care Ethics
Credit(s): 3 Credits
A study of the scope, concerns, and methods of interdisciplinary research in Health Care Ethics, including: interdisciplinary research methods with associated competencies; cross-cultural paradigms of person, community, and health; epistemological processes for interdisciplinary research; criteria for persuasion and ethical justification in interdisciplinary research.

HCE 6050 - Philosophical Foundations
Credit(s): 3 Credits

HCE 6070 - Foundations of Catholic Morality
Credit(s): 3 Credits
This course explores basic themes of the Catholic moral tradition such as the human person as a moral agent, human freedom, the role and rights of conscience, the importance of virtue in the moral life, natural law, the use of Scripture in moral theology and the importance of human experience in the moral life. Particular attention will be given to the development of the moral tradition.

HCE 6100 - Intro-Medicine for Ethicists
Credit(s): 1 Credit
A study of the principles and practice of medicine as a framework for ethical discourse, including: the classification and etiology of diseases (e.g. genetic diseases); their clinical manifestations and complications (e.g. the use of imaging techniques); and principles of medical and surgical treatment (e.g. life support systems).

HCE 6110 - Bioethics and the Law
Credit(s): 2 Credits
This course examines legal issues in health care decision making in areas typically considered a part of bioethics, such as organ transplantation, genetic medicine, end-of-life care, determination of death, and experimentation with human subjects. While the course focuses on cases, statutes and regulations applicable to these issues, the course also studies the leading approaches in ethics as they are applied in these situations. The course includes consideration of the primary processes used for dispute resolution in bioethics, including litigation, institutional ethics committees, and institutional review boards.

HCE 6120 - Bioethics and the Law
Credit(s): 1 Credit
This course introduces students to a range of topics in research ethics. The focus of the course is academic human subjects research ethics, though issues of regulation and compliance will be discussed throughout. For each topic selected, there will be four main study elements: (1) identify the ethical issues that emerge; (2) identify the major ethical arguments concerning these issues; (3) assess the major arguments; (4) examine the relevance of these issues and arguments to particular instances of human subjects research.

HCE 6130 - Clinical Ethics
Credit(s): 3 Credits
A study of fundamental skills and core areas of knowledge essential for ethics consultation, integrating process and outcomes, to identify, analyze, and resolve ethical dilemmas, cases and issues, that emerge in the context of patient care.

HCE 6140 - Research Ethics
Credit(s): 3 Credits
This course introduces students to a range of topics in research ethics. The focus of the course is academic human subjects research ethics, though issues of regulation and compliance will be discussed throughout. For each topic selected, there will be four main study elements: (1) identify the ethical issues that emerge; (2) identify the major ethical arguments concerning these issues; (3) assess the major arguments; (4) examine the relevance of these issues and arguments to particular instances of human subjects research.

HCE 6150 - Practicum, Health Care Ethics
Credit(s): 1-3 Credits (Repeatable for credit)
This practicum engages students in medical care settings with these goals: to experience a wide range of acute clinical care; to observe the patient-family/caregiver dynamics involved in clinical care; to reflect critically on the ethical challenges and principles involved in these patient care settings.

HCE 6310 - Health Care Ethics: Catholic Tradition
Credit(s): 3 Credits
This course will examine moral methodology and critical issues in Catholic bioethics, primarily through the lens of four contemporary moral theologians who present differing, sometimes opposing, viewpoints on the subject matter.
HCE 6350 - Pediatric Ethics
Credit(s): 3 Credits
This course is a study of the ethical and legal issues that arise in the care of children and adolescents. The course will begin by examining functional issues related to medical decision-making for children, including standards of decision-making and the roles of the parent and the state. Special attention will be given to feminist perspectives on bioethics. The course will then explore particular topics of interest in pediatric ethics, including: issues in perinatology and neonatology, vaccinations, pediatric organ donation and pediatric research ethics. Offered in spring.

HCE 6520 - Quantitative Research in Descriptive Ethics
Credit(s): 3 Credits
Prerequisites: Enrollment in the quantitative track of the certificate program and RMET650 Multivariate Statistical Analysis. This course provides the opportunity to design and carry out directed, quantitative research in descriptive ethics. The course fosters the development of skills necessary to secure grant funding, to gain Institutional Review Board approval, and to do empirical research that can be integrated into the doctoral dissertation in health care ethics.

HCE 6540 - Advanced Clinical Ethics Practicum
Credit(s): 3 Credits
This course provides an extended and immersive clinical ethics experience during which students will obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for ethics consultation. The course consists of two primary components: extended experiential learning within an institutional clinical ethics service and (2) the development of a clinical ethics portfolio, both of which are overseen by an on-site clinical ethics mentor and a faculty member. This course typically takes place over a summer at a pre-arranged internship site.

HCE 6930 - Special Topics
Credit(s): 1-3 Credits (Repeatable for credit)

HCE 6980 - Graduate Reading Course
Credit(s): 1-3 Credits (Repeatable for credit)

HCE 6990 - Dissertation Research
Credit(s): 0-9 Credits (Repeatable for credit)

School of Medicine
HCE 0101 - Foundations in Health Care Ethics
Credit(s): 1-10 Credits
The purpose of the health care ethics course for first year medical students is threefold. First, this foundational course is the first in a longitudinal approach to ethics instruction designed to teach students that ethics is not merely a set of rules nor an ancillary part of the medical curriculum that can be set aside when the ethics course is over. Rather, ethics is a central part of medical practice, including how one understands the goals and ends of medicine, how one sees a patient, how one interviews a patient, what are the ethical norms that govern the practice of medicine, and how to work through a clinical ethics dilemma. Second, the core ethics sessions instruct students the practical ethical standards (and some legal standards as well) that govern the practice of medicine. Emphasis will be placed on covering standards that are well entrenched and supported by wide consensus in the medical community. These standards are basic aspects of medical practice, reflecting values that each physician is expected (by colleagues, patients, legal authorities, and others) to uphold. However, certain realms of medical practice currently exhibit high levels of ethical controversy and flux. These more controversial areas may be visited in discussion, but emphasis will be placed on delineating the current scope of established ethical and legal norms. Third, the course will introduce a basic ethical framework for evaluating clinical cases. This framework will be applied in lecture and case discussion sessions.

HCE 0201 - Clinical Reasoning in Health Care Ethics
Credit(s): 1-10 Credits (Repeatable for credit)
This course is designed to familiarize students with ethical problems they will encounter during their medical careers. Whereas HCE 0101 provides the “grammar” of clinical ethics, introducing students to general principles, this course is an introduction to the “logic” of ethics, giving students the chance to apply such principles to clinical cases, just as they do in learning the principles of pathophysiology. The course is longitudinal and integrated into the other courses of the second year. The purpose of this design is to avoid allowing students to think of ethics as something external to clinical practice. Rather, ethical practice lies at the heart of medicine, and students must learn to think of themselves as moral agents even as they learn how to diagnose and treat patients.

HCE 0401 - Directed Readings in Bioethics
Credit(s): 2-12 Credits (Repeatable for credit)
This independent study course allows the student to investigate particular issues in ethics that appeal to the student, building where appropriate on previous courses in philosophy, healthcare ethics or medical humanities. The student is encouraged to examine an issue which has already been encountered in study or is anticipated to be encountered in future practice.