PH200A is a foundational course for developing the methods of ethical reasoning necessary for influencing policy and for writing compelling academic papers and grant applications. We examine the ethical challenges inherent in public health practice, research and policy. The syllabus covers a range of topics in ethics through cases representative of different public health dilemmas. The cases considered include treating homeless people with TB, rationing medical care in the United States, conducting HIV studies of maternal-fetal transmission in Africa, managed care policies and setting priorities, the pharmaceutical and direct-to-consumer genetics industries, the deaf community and cochlear implants, bioterrorism and public responses to threat, and public health obligations in response to war/mass trauma. The goal is to enable students to develop an analytical approach and methodologies that have practical applications for their future work.

The major ethical theories examined include: utilitarianism, autonomy-centered theories, human rights, theories of distributive justice, social justice and communitarianism. Readings will present distinct, often conflicting ethical approaches to each case. During each session, students will combine these approaches to analyze cases. Each week will also include some didactic component addressing the ethical foundations of the conflicts. The course is designed to systematically build skills of ethical analysis, each week building on previous weeks. The last several meetings of the course are devoted to student paper presentations and discussion.

Requirements:

- Participation in class discussion
- Weekly readings
- Discussion board participation: use the discussion questions to write a comment or thought about each week’s readings and topics. Your post may be a response to a classmate.
- 1-page proposal for term paper by week 9
- 10-12 page term paper on an ethical issue in public health
- Presentation of paper to class
Required Readings & Deadlines

Week 1 (1/18) - Overview of Ethical Frameworks

Required:

1. Watch Video: “Overview of Ethical Frameworks”


Week 2 (1/25) - Value Pluralism: Fundamental Challenge to Ethical Reasoning

Required:


3. Watch Sound and Fury Film, PBS.

Week 3 (2/1) - What we owe individuals: Balancing Autonomy and Beneficence/Paternalism

Required:

1. Watch video: “Public Health Interventions: Autonomy vs Paternalism”

2. Read the *Dollar-a-day case*

**Week 4 (2/8) - Ethical Theories: Utilitarianism/Consequentialism and Deontology**

Required:


**Week 5 (2/15) - Coercion and Treating Infectious Disease: Utilitarianism vs. Human Rights (taught by Jen Karlin)**

Required:

1. Bayer, Ronald, “*Ethics and Infections Disease Control: STD’s, HIV, TB*”


**Week 6 (2/22) - Health Care Rationing: Distributive Justice vs Utilitarianism, the role of fairness and social disparities**

Required:


Week 7 (3/1) - Ethical Obligations in International Research: Vulnerable Communities and Human Rights

Required:


8. Read Case Study: *International AZT Trials*
Week 8 (3/8) - Promissory Technology and Ethics: The Precautionary Principle and its Limits

Required:


Week 9 (3/15) Social Justice: Inclusion and Exclusion

Required:

3. Paper outline due this week: bring with you to class

Week 10 (3/22) - Dehumanizing “the other”: fear in war, bioterrorism, pandemics

Required:


Week 11 (3/29) - Spring Break

Week 12 (4/5) - OPEN

Week 13, 14, 15 (4/12-19-26) - Student Paper Presentations

Week 16 (5/4) – FINAL PAPER DUE, SUBMIT ON BCOURSES