

**Department of Epidemiology and Public Health
University of Miami Miller School of Medicine**

EPH 525

**Ethical Issues in Public Health (3 credit hours)
Tuesdays, 1:00 pm – 3:30 pm, CRB Room # 995
Spring 2011**

Course Coordinator:

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Office: Clinical Research Building, Room 913

Office Hours: Tuesdays: 11:00 am - 12:00 noon

Others by appointment via email.

Course Description:

This course introduces important ethical issues in public health and public health research. This is the core PhD in epidemiology course. This course assumes basic concepts, terminology, and methods relating to epidemiology in order to comprehend the significance of research related ethical issues. It examines a range of ethical issues in public health research and practice. In addition, it considers several topics traditionally covered in bioethics and medicine such as human research subjects, informed consent, rights of privacy, and limits of confidentiality.

Course Learning Objectives:

Upon completion of this course the student should be able to:

1. recognize the general ethical theories and principles.
2. apply ethical principles and theories as they relate to public health issues and public health or epidemiologic research.
3. describe the nature of and issues involved in some of the well known cases in the history of public health and research ethics.
4. understand elements of informed consent for research and the Institutional Review Board (IRB) process for research studies.
5. distinguish between privacy and confidentiality and understand moral and legal basis for confidentiality.
6. reflect critically on his/her personal values and on the professional obligations of public health research and demonstrate the ability to judge research that are scientifically and ethically sound.

7. understand controversial/ ethical issues in some condition-specific public health and/or epidemiologic issues (e.g., HIV reporting and testing, organ transplantation, environmental health, genetic screening etc).
8. be familiar with the existing code of ethics for public health professionals, specifically for epidemiologists.

Course Requirements:

Class Participation: There is no way for any student to “make up” participation in class activities or discussions. Registered students must come to class on time and must actively participate in class activities and discussions. Assigned readings must be completed before each scheduled class. Materials and class notices may be sent to students via UM email. It’s students’ responsibility to check your e-mail address or forward it to the e-mail address you are most likely to check daily.

Students will be assigned to lead discussion on topics relevant to the course.

Discussion topics may come from a textbook chapter (e.g., The Ethics of Epidemiologic Research with older population), a specific historical or current case study (e.g., The Tuskegee Syphilis Study), or a journal article (e.g., Ong EK and Glantz A. Constructing “Sound Science” and “Good Epidemiology”: Tobacco, Lawyers and Public Relations Firms. *American Journal of Public Health* 2001, 91(11):1749-1757)

Lead discussion topics will be assigned by the instructor.

Project (written/oral): Students will be required to critically review and evaluate the Code of Ethics published by the major epidemiology associations and organizations [e.g., American College of Epidemiology (ACE), Epidemiology section of the American Public Health Association (APHA) etc]. The existing code of ethics relating to the project will be provided to the students. Specific guideline for the project will be provided.

Students will be responsible for preparing the written project in MS Word. Electronic and hard copies of the written project should be made available to the instructor on the due date. The written project should be no more than 6 typed, double-spaced pages using 12 point fonts. For bibliography, please use one consistent style (e.g., Uniform Requirements for Biomedical Journals, American Psychological Association or APA etc.).

Students will also be required to present a summary of the written project in a presentation. Electronic and hard copies of the presentation (PowerPoint) should also be made available to the instructor and students on the day of the presentation. Presentation guideline will be provided.

Presentation (Ethics and Research): Students will be required to present on ethical issues relating to a specific methodology (e.g., randomized controlled clinical trial), or an issue (e.g., corporate influences on epidemiology) or a specific-health condition (e.g., HIV/AIDS) relating to public health or epidemiologic research. Students will make a class presentation on a topic of their choice in ethics and epidemiology. However, topics should be discussed with and approved by the instructor.

Students will make a 20 minute presentation and field questions (5 minute) from classmates and the instructor (depending on the number of students enrolled, presentation time may be modified). Additionally, oral presentations must be accompanied by a power-point file and it should include a typed abstract of no more than 500 words and a bibliography. Students may choose a consistent style of citation (e.g., Uniform Requirements for Biomedical Journals, American Psychological Association style etc.). As appropriate, a case study should and can be used to illustrate the points being made.

Electronic and hard copies of the presentation (PowerPoint) and abstract and bibliography (MS Word or PowerPoint) should be made available to the instructor and students on the day of the presentation. Presentation topics/dates will be determined by week 3.

Exam: There will be no exams in this course.

Late/Missed Assignment Policy: Students are responsible for completing all assigned materials (reading and others as relevant) prior to class. Attendance is expected for all classes. Classes may only be missed with prior permission of instructor. Students should inform the instructor via e-mail of any absence as soon as possible. Students are responsible for obtaining any class materials, notes, etc. associated with their absences.

A late assignment shall be graded as follows: 10% shall be deducted from the total earned for each day that the assignment is late. Therefore, if you had a perfect score (100 out of 100 possible points) and your assignment was one day late, your final score will be 90 points.

Missed assignments because of legitimate absences (i.e., illness, family emergency, or court-imposed legal obligations) have to be made up. Written documentation that indicates evidence of an emergency must be provided.

Courtesy and respect for the opinions of others will be expected in class. **Cell phones and pagers must be turned off during class; computers can only be used in class for taking class notes and other class-related activities.**

Course Material:

Required References

Steven S. Coughlin, Tom L. Beauchamp, Douglas L. Weed. *Ethics and Epidemiology* (2nd edition). (New York: Oxford University Press) 2009.

Recommended References

Steven S. Coughlin (Ed.). *Ethics in Epidemiology and Clinical Research (Annotated Readings)*. Newton, Massachusetts: Epidemiology Resources Inc. 1995.

Recommended Journals

- Hastings Center Report
- Health and Human Rights: An International Journal
- Journal of Law, Medicine, and Ethics
- Milbank Quarterly
- Public Health Ethics
- American Journal of Epidemiology (AJE)
- American Journal of Public Health (AJPH)
- Annals of Epidemiology
- Journal of Clinical Epidemiology
- Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)
- New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM)
- Science

Others: TBA

Grading/Evaluation:

Students will be evaluated on the basis of *informed* participation in classroom discussions, lead-discussion on specific topics, project, and presentations. The course grade will be determined by the student's performance on the following:

	%
Class Participation/Discussion	30
Code of Ethics Project: Written	30
Code of Ethics Project: Oral	10
Ethics and Research Presentation	30
Total	100

Grade Range

4.00	A	= 92.6 % - 100.0 %	2.00	C	= 72.6 % - 76.5 %
3.67	A-	= 89.6 % - 92.5 %	1.67	C-	= 69.6 % - 72.5 %
3.33	B+	= 86.6 % - 89.5 %	1.33	D+	= 66.6 % - 69.5 %
3.00	B	= 82.6 % - 86.5 %	1.00	D	= 62.6 % - 66.5 %
2.67	B-	= 79.6 % - 82.5 %	0.67	D-	= 59.6 % - 62.5 %
2.33	C+	= 76.6 % - 79.5 %	0.00	F	= 0.00 % - 59.5 %

Class Format:

The class will be conducted as a seminar. The class format will be a combination of course-coordinator-, guest-speaker- and student-led discussions, debate, and presentations. Resource or guest speakers will be scheduled based on their availability during class time. Students will be assigned to lead the discussion on specific topics.

Student Conduct:

Students are responsible for knowing and complying with all University of Miami and Graduate School Policies and Regulations which appear in the University of Miami Graduate Bulletin/Student Handbook (Graduate School Honor Code). This includes policies on cheating and plagiarism. If cheating and plagiarism, immediate action will be taken place. Such action may include dismissal of the student from the graduate program.

Course Schedule:

Week	Date	Topic	Text	Due
	Tuesdays			
	1:00 - 3:30 pm			
1	1/18/2011	Introduction/Overview		
2	1/25/2011	Ethical Foundations and Frameworks	1, 2	Discussion Topic
3	2/1/2011	Public Health Informatics, Computational Epidemiology, and Ethics	TBA	Ethics and Research Topic
4	2/8/2011	Protecting Human Subjects: Institutional Oversight and Informed Consent	4,5,7,12	
5	2/15/2011	Ethics and PH/Epidemiology	3, 8	
6	2/22/2011	Special Issues: Police powers and Epidemic	TBA	
7	3/1/2011	Ethical issues in Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR)	6	
8	3/8/2011	Special Issues: Ethics in organ donations	TBA	
9	3/15/2011	Spring Recess: No class		
10	3/22/2011	HIPAA and health information privacy	TBA	
11	3/29/2011	Ethics and Epidemiology in the age of AIDS	10	
12	4/5/2011	Bioethics Conference / Class		
13	4/12/2011	Ethics and NIH	TBA	
14	4/19/2011	Ethical issues in International Health Research	11	Code of Ethics Project: Written
15	4/26/2011	Special Topics /Students' Presentations	TBA	Code of Ethics Project: Oral

Syllabus may be subject to change.