

Title HCO 670 Social and Ethical Issues in Public Health. Fall 2010

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Number of Credit Hours: 3

### Introduction

This class examines ethical issues related to public health research and practice, and explores the social issues that complicate ethical decision making. There are no prerequisites. This class is open to all students with graduate standing. It is a required course for the MPH in Health Policy, the MPH in Public Health Preparedness, the MSPH in Outcomes Research and the DrPH in Public Health Management.

### Course Description

All professional decision making in the health arena involves two components: (1) a technical decision requiring the application of scientific knowledge to health problems and (2) an ethical decision requiring that choices for action reflect the values and interests held by those involved with the health problem. While all decisions reflect some value system, we are sometimes unaware of which guiding values are involved in different choices and what the consequences of the choices are for different stakeholders. Other times, professionals face the need to make choices that conflict with values held by some stakeholders involved in the health problem. In addition, it is frequently the case that social and political circumstances make it difficult to carry out a decision that is in accord with the values of participants. Such social issues can also obscure the ethical consequences of decisions.

### Course Objectives

Upon completing this course, students should:

1. Be able to identify ethical issues, points of ethical conflict, consequences of professional decisions and the social issues involved in public health research and practice.  
*This learning objective addresses the HCOP2 Competency: Describe the legal and ethical basis for public health and health services.*
2. Be familiar with central concepts in ethical decision making in these areas, e.g., informed consent, conflict of interest, human rights, autonomy, utilitarianism.

3. Be able to reflect critically on their personal values and on the professional obligations of public health researchers and practitioners.
4. Be able to apply moral reasoning skills to resolve ethical dilemmas in concrete public health cases.

### Course Reading Material

Reading material will be available online using Blackboard Vista

### Course Evaluation

This is a seminar course. **It is expected that students will prepare for each session, attend each session and participate in the discussion in each class period.** We will discuss four specific ethical dilemmas over the semester. Students will select one of these dilemmas to lead a class discussion on identifying open ended problems, another dilemma to lead a discussion on framing open ended problems, and a third dilemma to lead a discussion on resolving open ended problems.

On the day before the discussion begins, students who will be leading one of the components of the discussion will post a short (1-2 page) paper to the assignment box for the problem on Blackboard Vista. These papers will be “published” so that class members can read the papers during the week that the problem is being discussed. Papers will be graded numerically and be worth 15 points. Thus 45 points of the total grade for the course will be based on the papers. In addition, there will be a take home midterm worth 30 points and a take home final worth 25 points. The grade scale for this course is: 90%-100% = A, 80%-89% = B, 70%-79% = C, 60%-69% = D, below 60% = F.

A discussion board will be open on Blackboard Vista to post comments on the papers or class discussions.

**Accessibility** – Any student with a disability that may need accommodations in order to successfully complete all requirements of this course should visit the Office of Disability Support Services, located in Room 516 of the Hill University Center, extension 4-4205 or at [dss@uab.edu](mailto:dss@uab.edu) . This office is responsible for registering students and ensuring the University’s compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the American with Disabilities Act. Once registered, this office will then inform faculty members of all courses in which the student is enrolled of the students status and the specific nature of any accommodations required. Any student requiring such accommodation should discuss this with the course master and assure that the appropriate correspondence is sent from the Office of Disability Support Services.

**Honor Code** – As a student in the School of Public Health, you are subject to the SOPH Student Honor Code which can be found in its entirety at <http://www.soph.uab.edu/default.aspx?id=844>. You are responsible to understand the contents of the Honor Code and to abide by it. Academic dishonesty: Cheating includes but is not limited to the unauthorized use of notes, books or other sources of information; copying the work of another or allowing someone to copy the work of another student during a formal academic exercise (e.g. take home examination, homework assignment or written essay). Plagiarism is the undocumented use of other authors' words, texts, images, and ideas that don't come from your own head. Making up sources, altering numbers, statistics, or just a few words of a document is considered plagiarism. Poor documentation or paraphrasing of a source is also considered plagiarism. Unauthorized collaboration is working with others without the specific permission of the instructor on assignments that will be submitted for a grade. This rule applies to in-class or take-home tests, papers, labs, or homework assignments. Students may not collaborate without faculty authorization

Any violations of the Honor Code will be punished to the full extent allowable under the SOPH Honor Code.

## **Course Schedule**

### **Introduction**

- 1. August 18 : What are ethics, what constitutes an ethical dilemma, what is meant by moral reasoning?**
- 2. August 23: Identifying open ended problems**

**Readings:** Etzioni, A. "HIV Testing of Infants: Privacy and Public Health" Health Affairs 1998;17:170-183

Wolcott, S.K. "A Brief Discussion of Moral Reasoning as Open-Ended Problem Solving" from Lynch, C.L., Wolcott, S.K., Huber, G.E. (January 2000). Tutorial for Optimizing and Documenting Open-Ended Problem Solving Skills.  
[http://www.wolcottlynch.com/Downloadable\\_Files/Moral%20Reasoning\\_000820.pdf](http://www.wolcottlynch.com/Downloadable_Files/Moral%20Reasoning_000820.pdf)

- 3. August 25: Framing open ended problems**

**Readings:** Sack, K. "Battle Lines Drawn over Newborn H.I.V. Disclosure" New York Times, June 26, 1994, Sec 1 p.23.

Brown, MT Chapter 3, "The Logic of the Ethical Process." In The Ethical Process, an Approach to Controversial Issues New Jersey:

Prentice Hall, 1999

#### 4. August 30: Resolving open ended problems

**Readings:** Sontag, D. "H.I.V. Testing for Newborns Debated Anew" New York Times online, Women's Health, February 10, 1997.

Brown, MT Chapter 4, "Evaluating Arguments from Different Ethical Approaches." In The Ethical Process, an Approach to Controversial Issues New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1999

*If you would like more practice on moral reasoning, complete the tutorial on open-ended problem solving, found at <http://www.wolcottlynch.com/Tutorial.html>*

#### Research Ethics

#### 5. September 1: What is research and what are research ethics?

**Readings:** Pimple, K.D. "Six Domains of Research Ethics, A Heuristic Framework for the Responsible Conduct of Research" Science and Engineering Ethics 2002, 8:191-205.

*No class Sept 6 – Labor Day*

#### 6. September 8: Data Integrity

**Readings:** Clinic Tools Inc. Guidelines for Responsible Data management in Scientific Research. DHHS, PHS: Office of Research Integrity [http://ori.hhs.gov/education/products/rcr\\_data.shtml](http://ori.hhs.gov/education/products/rcr_data.shtml)

Titus et al "Repairing Research Integrity" Nature 2008;453:980-982

#### 7. September 13: Publication Practices

Graf, C. et al. "Best Practice Guidelines on Publication Ethics: A Publisher's Perspective" International J Clin Pract 2007; 61(suppl.152) 1-26.

The Lancet (editorial) "Depressing research" The Lancet 2004;363:1335

Enserink, M. "As H5N1 Keeps Spreading, A Call to Release More Data." Science 2006;311:1224

### 8. September 15: Conflict of Interest

**Readings:** Palmer, J. "Science Ethics Rules Leave Room for Scandals, Critics Fear" Chronicle of Higher Education, July 20, 2009

Steinbrook, R. "Online disclosure of physician-industry relationships" New Eng J Med 2009;360(4):325-327

Raines, B. "BP Seeks Scientists for Gulf Legal Team" Birmingham News, 7/16/10

Review Conflict of Interest Review Board web page  
<http://main.uab.edu/show.asp?durki=30255>

### 9. September 20: Dimensions of Informed Consent

**Readings:** Parker, L., Alvarez, H.K., Thomas, S. "The Legacy of the Tuskegee Syphilis Study" in Ethics and Public Health: Model Curriculum Association of Schools of Public Health, 2003

Taylor, T. "The Nuremberg Doctor's Trial" in Mann et al (eds) Health and Human Rights, A Reader 1999 Routledge,

National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research. The Belmont Report: Ethical Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research DHEW, April 18, 1979

**September 21, 5:00 PM – written assignments due for Sept 22 discussion**

### 10. September 22: "Should parental consent be required for research on archived state newborn blood spot data?" – part 1

**Readings:** Couzin-Frankel, J. "Science Goldmine, Ethical Minefield". Science 2009;324:166-168.

**September 26, 5:00 PM – written assignments due for Sept 27 discussion**

**11. September 27: “Should consent be required for research on state newborn blood spot data?” – part 2**

**12. September 29: What are the personal and community benefits of research?**

**Readings:** Coughlin, S. “Ethically Optimized Study Designs in Epidemiology” in Coughlin and Beauchamp, eds. *Ethics and Epidemiology* Oxford U Press 1996.

***October 3, 5:00 PM- written assignments due for October 4 discussion***

**13. October 4: “Should the Kennedy-Krieger Lead Abatement Study Have been done as designed?” – part 1**

**Readings:** Parker, L.S., Alvarez, H.K. and Thomas, S. “Case 2: Kennedy Krieger Institute Lead Abatement Study” in *Ethics and Public Health: Model Curriculum* Association of Schools of Public Health, 2003.

Buchanan D.R., And Miller, F.G. Justice and Fairness in the Kennedy Krieger Institute Lead Paint Study: the Ethics of Public Health Research on Less Expensive, Less Effective Interventions *Am J Public Health* 2006; 96(5):781-787

***October 5, 5:00 PM- written assignments due for October 6 discussion***

**14. October 6: “Should the Kennedy-Krieger Lead Abatement Study Have been done as designed?” – part 2**

**15. October 11: Public Health and Clinical Research in Developing Countries.**

**Readings:** Marshall, P.A., “Public Health Research and Practice in International Settings: Special Ethical Concerns” in *Ethics and Public Health: Model Curriculum* Association of Schools of Public Health, 2003.

Glantz, L.H., Annas, G.J., Grodin, M.A., Mariner W.K. “Research in Developing Countries: Taking ‘Benefit’ Seriously” *Hastings Center Report* 1998, 28(6):85-89.

**16. October 13: Politics and Research**

- Readings:** Ong, E.K. 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
- Blumenstyk G. "Taking Cash from Tobacco will Cost Researchers" Chronicle of Higher Education 2/20/2004.
- Smith, M.F. Political Science? Academe July-August 2004.
- Schmidt, P. "Big Tobacco Stikes Back at Historian in Court" Chronicle of Higher Education 11-13-09

**Midterm Take home exam – Due October 20,            *No class October 18***

**Public Health Practice Ethics**

**17. October 20: What ethical theories and values apply to public health issues?**

- Readings:** Bayer, R. and Fairchild, A. "The Genesis of Public Health Ethics" Bioethics 2004;18(6):473-92
- Gostin, L and Powers, M. "What Does Social Justice Require for the Public's Health? Public Health Ethics and Policy Imperatives" Health Affairs 2006;25(4):1053-60.
- Bernheim, R.G. Public Health Ethics: The Voice of Practitioners. Journal of Law, Medicine and Ethics 2003;31(4):104-9

**18. October 25: Autonomy vs. Paternalism in Public Health – the case of health promotion**

- Readings:** Bayer, R. "Ethics of Health Promotion and Disease Prevention" in Ethics and Public Health: Model Curriculum Association of Schools of Public Health, 2003.
- Jones, M.M. and Bayer, R. "Paternalism and its discontents: Motorcycle Helmet Laws, Libertarian Values and Public Health" American Journal of Public Health 2007;97(2):208-217.

**19. October 27: Reciprocal duties in public health disasters**

**Readings:** Fairchild, A.L., J.Colgrove, M.M.Jones, “The Challenge of Mandatory Evacuation: Providing For and Deciding For.” Health Affairs 2006;25(4):958-967

**20. November 1: The Harm Principle, Civil Rights and Human Rights View of Infectious Disease Control**

**Readings:** Gostin, L.O., Bayer, R, Fairchild, A.L. “Ethical and legal challenges posed by Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, Implications for the control of severe infectious disease threats” JAMA 2003; 290(24):3229-3237

Mann, J. “Human Rights and AIDS: The Future of the Pandemic” In Mann et al (eds) Health and Human Rights, A Reader 1999 Routledge, and Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Fee, E. and Parry M. “Jonathan Mann, HIV/AIDS and Human Rights” J Public Health Policy 2008:29;54-71

**November 2, 5:00 PM – written assignments due for Nov 3 discussion**

**21. November 3: “Should public health authorities have preemptively detained Andrew Speaker? Should they have provided transportation for him to return and enter isolation?” – pt 1**

**Readings:** Summary of New York Times articles about the Andrew Speaker MDR TB incident

**November 7, 5:00 PM – written assignments due for Nov 8 discussion**

**22. November 8: “Should public health authorities have preemptively detained Andrew Speaker? Should they have provided transportation for him to return and enter isolation?” — pt 2**

**Readings:** Singer et al “Ethics and SARS: Lessons from Toronto” BMJ 2003;327:1342-44

**23. November 10: Resource Allocation and Concepts of Justice: The case of health care as a common good**

**Readings:** Garland, M. and Stull, J. “Public Health and Health System Reform: Access, Priority Setting, and Allocation of Resources” in Ethics and Public Health: Model Curriculum Association of Schools of Public Health, 2003.

Daniels, N. Saloner, B., Gelpi, A.H. "Access, Cost, and Financing: Achieving An Ethical Health Reform". Health Affairs 2009;28(5):W909-16

**24. November 15: The Oregon Reform**

**Readings** Hadorn, D. "Setting Health Care Priorities in Oregon: Cost Effectiveness Meets the Rule of Rescue" JAMA 1991;265:2218-25

Oberlander, J. "Health Reform Interrupted: The Unraveling of the Oregon Health Plan" Health Affairs 2006;10.1337 w96-w105

**November 16, 5:00 PM – written assignments due for November 17  
discussion**

**25. November 17: "Should the state be the sole purchaser and distributor of seasonal flu vaccines? Pt 1.**

**Readings:** Arras, J.D. "Rationing Vaccine during an Avian Influenza Pandemic: Why it Won't Be Easy." Yale J Biology and Med 2005;78:283-296

Smith, S. "Cases of swine flu higher among city blacks, Hispanics" Boston Globe 8/18/09

Poland, GA and Marcuse EK "Vaccine availability in the US: problems and solutions. Nature Immunology 2004;5(12)1195-1199

Schoch-Spana M, Fitzgerald, J, Kramer, BR, et al "Influenza Vaccine Scarcity 2004-2005: Implications for Biosecurity and Public Health Preparedness" Biosecurity and Bioterrorism: Biodefense Strategy, Practice, and Science 2005;3(3):224

**November 21, 5:00 PM – written assignments due for November 22  
discussion**

**26. November 22: : "Should the state be the sole purchaser and distributor of seasonal flu vaccines? " – pt 2**

**No class November 24 – Thanksgiving holiday**

**27. November 29: Professional Codes of Ethics in Public Health**

**Readings:** Public Health Leadership Society, "Principles of the Practice of Public Health" 2002

Thomas, J.C., Sage, M., Dillenberg, J., Guillory, V.J. "A Code of Ethics for Public Health" American J Public Health 2002;92(7):1057-1059

Cribb, A. and Duncan P. "Chapter 7: Codes and Guidelines- Can They Help Health Promoters?" in Health Promotion and Professional Ethics Oxford UK: Blackwell Science 2002

**28. December 1: Public Health Ethical Standards in Risk Communication**

**Readings:** Glick, D. C. "Risk Communication for Public Health Emergencies" Annual Review of Public Health 2007, 28:33-54

Brodie, M, Weitzien E., Altman D et al "Experiences of Hurricane Katrina Evacuees in Houston Shelters: Implications for Future Planning" Am J Public Health 2006; 96(5):1402-1408

**29. December 6: Wrap-up discussion**

Take Home Final due December 13.