

Florida International University

Robert R. Stempel College of Public Health and Social Work

PHC 6443: Ethical Issues in Public Health

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Course Description

This course introduces important ethical issues in public health. It systematically explores the values and ethical principles underlying decision making in public health. It examines a range of ethical issues in public health research, policy development, and practice. In addition, it considers several topics traditionally covered in bioethics and medicine. Included are: experimentation with human research subjects and laboratory animals, informed consent, rights of privacy, and limits of confidentiality.

Course Justification

Public Health raises a number of moral problems that extend beyond the boundaries of bioethics. Our field encompasses issues that often require their own form of ethical analysis. In February 2002, the governing board of the American Public Health Association (APHA) adopted its first code of ethics. With this historic achievement, Public Health adopted ethical principles and guidelines distinct from the field of biomedical ethics.

Just as public health is broad in its scope, the range of ethical issues in our field is wide and continuously expanding. Nevertheless, four general categories of issues are recognized: (1) health promotion and disease prevention, (2) risk reduction, (3) epidemiologic and other forms of public health research, (4) social and structural disparities in health status.

The Public Health Workforce Development Group convened by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has identified the need to build on the code by identifying core competencies in public health ethics. The Public Health Leadership Society, in consultation with public health ethicists and representatives from national public health organizations, has taken the lead in developing the core competencies. A draft of competencies in public

health ethics was presented during the APHA meeting in San Francisco in November 2003. In addition, a recent symposium hosted by the University of Toronto outlined a research agenda for public health ethics. The symposium was organized into four major areas of ethical concern: (1) individual rights and the common good, (2) risk and precaution, (3) surveillance and regulation, and (4) social justice and global health.

A joint project of the Association of Schools of Public Health (ASPH) and the Hastings Center has developed ten modules to be used in school-based and in-service professional education settings to examine a range of ethical issues in public health research, policy, and practice. These modules include: (1) tradition, profession, and values in public health, (2) the legacy and lessons of the Tuskegee Syphilis Study, (3) research ethics in public health, (4) community-based practice and research, (5) ethics and infectious disease control, (6) public health research and practice in international settings, (7) ethical issues in health promotion and disease prevention, (8) ethical issues in environmental and occupational health, (9) public health genetics, and (10) public health and health system reform.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of the course the student will be able to:

1. Identify important beliefs and values underlying public health practice and research.
2. Describe the principles of decision making in public health practice and research.
3. Identify ethical issues, problems, and conflicts in epidemiology and public health and provide a decision-making procedure for approaching these ethical issues, problems and conflicts.
4. Discuss the relationships that have developed between epidemiological studies and the need for a public health ethics
5. Describe how public health ethics differs from medical ethics, and bioethics.
6. Examine the ways in which ethical issues in public health are either similar or unlike ethical issues in other health related professions.
7. Discuss what makes a public health intervention morally acceptable.
8. Comprehend the most important ethical issues involved in infectious disease control, epidemiology, environmental and occupational health, public health research and practice in international settings, and health promotion and disease prevention.
9. Discuss some of the important ethical issues generated by the AIDS pandemic.
10. Comprehend some of the major bioethical issues public health workers will encounter in the future.
11. Make the connection between good science and research and ethically and socially responsible science and research.

Course Expectations

1. **Preparation and Participation:** 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. There is no way for any student to “make up” participation in class activities or discussions. Accessing the assigned readings in books, journals, and Internet web sites is the responsibility of the student. Items will be posted on Blackboard or placed on Reserve at the Green Library. Class notices and materials may be sent to students via FIU email or Blackboard, so check your student e-mail address or forward it to the e-mail address you are most likely to check daily.

2. **Excuses:** Class assignments and exams missed because of legitimate absences (i.e., illness, family emergency, military obligation, court-imposed legal obligations, or participation in university athletic or scholastic activities) have to be made up and handed in within ONE week of the scheduled due date. Written documentation from an appropriate authority is required for all absences.
3. **Examinations:** There will be a midterm examination and a final examination. Exam questions will be drawn from lectures, class activities, the required text book, and assigned readings. Tests will be given in class under the supervision of the instructor.
4. **Term Paper:** A term paper which describes and critiques an ethical issue in public health must be typed with 12-point font, double spaced, and properly documented. Students must support their arguments with bibliographic references that include at least one book, one journal article, and other sources. You may choose to follow *Uniform Requirements for Biomedical Journals* or *American Psychological Association* style, but you must be consistent. The narrative can be no longer than 10 pages. It must apply an ethics framework that includes: (1) the identification and clarification of an ethical dilemma, (2) an analysis in terms of alternative courses of action and their consequences, and (3) a resolution—a course of action that best incorporates and balances the guiding principles and values.
5. **Special Needs:** If you have a learning disability or need special assistance, please notify me or consult with Student Disabilities Services

Required Readings:

- Coughlin SS, Soskolne CL. and Goodman KW. *Case Studies in Public Health Ethics*, Washington, DC: American Public Health Association, 1997 (ISBN 0-87553-232-2).
- Jennings B, Kahn J, Mastroianni A, Parker LS, Eds. *Ethics & Public Health: Model Curriculum*. Available at: <http://www.asph.org/document.cfm?page=777>.
- Other materials that will be distributed in class or posted on the Blackboard website.

Recommended Journals

1. *American Journal of Epidemiology*
2. *American Journal of Public Health*
3. *Hastings Center Report*
4. *Health and Human Rights: An International Journal*
5. *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)*
6. *Journal of Law, Medicine, and Ethics*
7. *Milbank Quarterly*
8. *New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM)*
9. *Public Health Ethics*
10. *Science*

Course Evaluation

Students will be evaluated on the following basis:

Class Participation	15 %
Midterm Examination	20 %
Final Examination	30 %
Term Paper	35 %
Total	100 %

Course Grading:

- | | |
|---------------|----------------|
| A 92.6- 100 | C 72.6 – 76.5 |
| A- 89.6- 92.5 | C- 69.6 – 72.5 |
| B+ 86.6- 89.5 | D+ 66.6 – 69.5 |
| B 82.6- 86.5 | D 62.6 – 66.5 |
| B- 79.6- 82.5 | D- 59.6 - 62.5 |
| C+ 76.6- 79.6 | F 00.0 – 59.5 |

Academic Misconduct

All students in this class are expected to abide by the university’s **Code of Academic Integrity**. Florida International University is a community dedicated to generating and imparting knowledge through excellent teaching and research, the rigorous and respectful exchange of ideas, and community service. All students should respect the right of others to have an equitable opportunity to learn and honestly demonstrate the quality of their learning. Therefore, all students are expected to adhere to a standard of academic conduct, which demonstrates respect for themselves, their fellow students, and the educational mission of Florida International University

As a student of this university:

- I will be honest in my academic endeavors
- I will not represent someone else’s work as my own
- I will not cheat, nor will I aid in another’s cheating

All students are deemed by the University to understand that if they are found responsible for academic misconduct, they will be subject to the Academic Misconduct procedures and sanctions, as outlined in the Student Handbook.

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Misconduct includes Cheating – The unauthorized use of books, notes, aids, electronic sources; or assistance from another person with respect to examinations, course assignments, field service reports, class recitations; or the unauthorized possession of examination papers or course materials, whether originally authorized or not.

Plagiarism – The use and appropriation of another’s work without any indication of the source and the representation of such work as the student’s own. Any student who fails to give credit for ideas, expressions or materials taken from another source, including Internet sources, is responsible for plagiarism.

Course Outline and Readings

Session	Date	Topic or Activity	Required Readings
1	8/23/2010	<p>Introduction to the Course A Code of Ethics for Public Health and the Health Education Profession</p> <p>“And the Band Played On” (DVD)</p>	<p>Thomas JC, et al. A code of ethics for public health. <i>Am J Public Health</i> 2002;92(7):1057-1059.</p> <p><i>Principles of the Ethical Practice of Public Health.</i> http://www.apha.org/NR/rdonlyres/1ced3cea-287e-4185-9cbd-bd405fc60856/0/ethicsbrochure.pdf</p> <p>SOPHE Code of Ethics. Available at: http://www.sophe.org/ethics.ctm</p>

2	8/30/2010	<p>Mapping the Issues: Public Health Law, Ethics, and Human Rights</p> <p>“The Bathhouse Controversy”</p>	<p>ASPH. <i>Ethics & Public Health. Module 1</i> (Gosten LO) http://www.asph.org/document.cfm?page=782</p> <p>www.publichealthlaw.net/Reader/ch1/ch1.htm</p> <p>Bayer, R. Sex and the Bathhouses. Ch. 2 in <i>Private Acts, Social Consequences</i>. NY: Free Press, 1989.</p>
3	9/13/2010	<p>Moral Considerations: Consequentialism, non-consequentialism, and political philosophy</p> <p>“Just Say No”</p>	<p>Case analysis and moral reasoning. Chapter 1 in Coughlin, et al., <i>Case Studies in Public Health Ethics</i></p> <p>Introduction: Ethical theory and public health. Pp. 3-24 in Bayer, et al., <i>Public Health Ethics</i> (2007).</p>
4	9/20/2010	<p>The Protection of Privacy and Assurances of Confidentiality</p> <p>“Test and Treat”</p>	<p>Protection of privacy and confidentiality. Chapter 2 in Coughlin, <i>Case Studies in Public Health Ethics</i></p> <p>“Fighting H.I.V., A Community At a Time” (Okie S, <i>New York Times</i>, October 27, 2009, Pp. D1, D4).</p>
5	9/27/2010	<p>Experiments with Human Research Subjects: A Chronology</p> <p>“The Tuskegee Study of Untreated Syphilis”</p> <p>(Jones, <i>Bad Blood</i>, 1993)</p>	<p>ASPH. <i>Ethics and Public Health. Module 2</i> (Parker) http://www.asph.org/document.cfm?page=782</p> <p>Informed Consent. Chapter 3 in Coughlin, et al., <i>Case Studies in Public Health Ethics</i></p> <p><i>A Guide to Understanding Informed Consent.</i> www.cancer.gov/clinicaltrials/conducting/informed-consent-guide</p>
6	10/4/2010	<p>Research Ethics in Public Health: IRBs and Informed Consent</p> <p>FIU ORI IRB website: http://ori.fiu.edu/IRB.html</p> <p>“We can do things in Africa we can’t do here” J. Curran</p>	<p>ASPH. <i>Ethics and Public Health</i>—Introduction to Modules 2 & 3 (Thomas) and Module 3 (Marshall) http://www.asph.org/document.cfm?page=782</p> <p>RCTs and IRBs. Chapters 4 and 5 in Coughlin, et al., <i>Case Studies in Public Health Ethics</i></p> <p>Varmus H, Satcher D. Ethical Complexities. <i>NEJM</i>. Epstein H. <i>The Invisible Cure</i>. NY: Farrar, 2007.</p>
Midterm	Examination	10/11/2010	

7	10/18/10	<p>Community-Based Research and Practice: Partnerships, Collaboration, and Power Sharing</p> <p>Guest Lecturer: Elena M. Bastida, Ph.D.</p> <p>Research Involving Vulnerable Populations</p>	<p>ASPH. Ethics and Public Health: Module 4 (Heitman) http://www.asph.org/document.cfm?page=782</p> <p>Bastida et al., <i>Health Promotion Practice</i>, pp 16-20.</p> <p>Studies of Vulnerable Populations. Chapter 12 in Coughlin, et al., <i>Case Studies in Public Health Ethics</i></p>
8	10/25/10	<p>STDs, HIV, & TB “Miss Evers’ Boys” (DVD)</p> <p>Conflicts of Interest, Research Sponsorship, and Disclosures “Eunice Rivers, RN”</p>	<p>ASPH. Ethics and Public Health: Module 5 (Bayer) HIV/AIDS Prevention and Treatment. http://www.asph.org/document.cfm?page=782</p> <p>Chapter 15 in <i>Case Studies in Public Health Ethics</i> “In Florida, Olympic Medalist Charged with Felony” (<i>New York Times</i>, April 20, 2010, A12, A18). Conflicting Interests. Chapter 7 in Coughlin, et al., <i>Case Studies in Public Health Ethics</i></p>
9	11/1/2010	<p>Ethics of Health Promotion: Interventions</p> <p>Scientific Misconduct PowerPoint Presentation: “The Best Talk I Ever Heard: The Nobel Laureate and The Pedophile”</p>	<p>ASPH. Ethics and Public Health: Module 6 (Bayer) http://www.asph.org/document.cfm?page=782</p> <p>Scientific Misconduct. Chapter 6 in Coughlin, et al., <i>Case Studies in Public Health Ethics</i> Crewdson, <i>Science Fictions</i>. Boston: Little, 1992.</p> <p>Ellis FJ, Daniel Carleton Gajdusek. <i>Neurology Today</i></p>
10	11/8/2010	<p>Intellectual Property and Data Sharing</p> <p>“Henrietta Lack’s legacy: Who ‘owns’ the (HeLa) cell line? Who ‘owns’ the data?”</p>	<p>Intellectual Property and Data Sharing. Chapter 8 in Coughlin, et al., <i>Case Studies in Public Health Ethics</i></p> <p>Skloot R, <i>The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks</i>. NY: Random House, 2010.</p>
11	11/15/10	<p>Authorship, Publication, and Interpretation of Findings</p> <p>Communication Responsibilities</p>	<p>Publication and Interpretation. Chapter 9 in Coughlin, et al., <i>Case Studies in Public Health Ethics</i></p> <p>Communication Responsibilities. Chapter 10 in Coughlin, et al., <i>Case Studies in Public Health Ethics</i></p>
12	11/22/10	<p>Health Disparities, Allocation of Scarce Resources, and Health Care Reform</p> <p>Term Paper Due: 11/22/10</p>	<p>ASPH. Ethics and Public Health: Module 9 (Garland) http://www.asph.org/document.cfm?page=782</p> <p>Allocation of Resources and Health Care Reform. Chapter 16 in Coughlin, et al., <i>Case Studies in Public Health Ethics</i></p>
Final	Examination	11/29/2010	

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