HS 3093G Special Topics
Clinical Ethics 2025
University of Western Ontario
School of Health Studies

Location: in-person

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Office Hours: Over Zoom by appointment
Sign up via email
Teaching Assistant: TBD
Office: Via Zoom

COURSE OBJECTIVES
This course will allow students to explore the foundational aspects of clinical ethics. Students will identify how different elements of healthcare are informed by personal, professional, and organizational values, and how this can impact clinical care and decisions across various domains of healthcare. Offering students an opportunity to apply theories of ethics to various areas of clinical practice will develop their skills regarding ethical decision making and enhance their understanding of the implications that clinical practitioners have on the life and death of patients. This course will leverage anonymized real-world cases from the practice of local ethicists working in clinical settings to provide students exposure to ethical issues. Reflective exercises and assignments that are designed to facilitate the identification of ethical tensions and mitigation of moral distress will be explored.

At the end of the course, students will be able to:
1. Identify ethical issues, frame ethical question(s), and respond to complex tensions within healthcare environments in a way that is sensitive to involved parties.
2. Apply theory, legislation, and professional standards as to formulate a response for clinical ethics consultations.

3. Examine contrasting values from various stakeholders and identify relevant values as they pertain to complex healthcare decision making processes.

**PREREQUISITES**

Health sciences 2610G is strongly recommended but not required.

**REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS**

*There is no required textbook.* Required readings and resources will be posted on OWL on a weekly basis. These resources may include relevant peer-reviewed articles, reports, government documents, book chapters, media reports, websites, and videos. Students can expect 2-4 readings, and/or additional website/links to explore each week. Students are responsible for all assigned readings.

**LECTURES & TIMETABLE**

The lectures for this course will be primarily led by the instructor, but group discussions are also central to the class. Attendance and participation in lectures are required. The following is a tentative timetable of class topics, which is subject to modification; each week we will explore nuances of the topic and apply a new ethical theory to a clinical case study. Students are expected to have read all assigned materials in advance of each week.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>January 7th</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>January 14th</td>
<td>Clinical Ethics Consultation</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>January 21st</td>
<td>Consent, Capacity, &amp; Substitute Decision Making</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>January 28th</td>
<td>Privacy, Confidentiality, Truth Telling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>February 4th</td>
<td>Moral Distress: DNR’s &amp; ACP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>February 11th</td>
<td>Midterm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>February 18th</td>
<td>Reading Week – NO LECTURE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>February 25th</td>
<td>Ethics in Pediatric Settings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>March 4th</td>
<td>Resource allocation and treatment implications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>March 11th</td>
<td>Death and Dying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>March 18th</td>
<td>Mental Health: Involuntary detention &amp; treatments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>March 25th</td>
<td>Discharge from Hospital – Long Term Care &amp; Home and Community Care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>April 1st</td>
<td>MAID: New Developments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values Reflection</td>
<td>Jan 23</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Arguments</td>
<td>Jan 28, Mar 4, Apr 1</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>Feb 13</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>April 13</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A note on participation and attendance:

Attendance will inform on participation however, in class participation through dialogue in group discussions and classroom conversation is imperative to the learning of ethics. Students are encouraged to challenge one and other and the instructor respectfully and in a constructive manner.

Optional participation marks will also be available via the “pager”. Students will be paged for an urgent ethics consult 3 times over the course of the semester where you will need to provide an ethical recommendation to a clinical issue. You will have 48 hours to respond to the page – this will count towards bonus participation marks. Responding to the ‘pager’ is optional and you can receive full participation marks even if you do not respond to the page. I recognize that life can get in the way, however there is an element of unpredictability in the practice of ethics and this optional exercise will mirror this. As such, if you have missed a class or participation exercise this will be a way to make up for those lost marks. Anyone who receives full participation marks and responds to all pages will receive a bonus 3% on their final paper (1%/page). Further details will be provided on OWL.

Persistent absenteeism may have serious repercussions and may result in you failing this course. In this course, the equivalent of 3 weeks of unexcused absences, per term, will be considered to be persistent absenteeism. Persistent absenteeism may result in you being contacted by the instructor, who may request a meeting. Continued absence after this point may be reported to the Undergraduate Chair and may result in debarment from submitting the final course paper. In such a case, you would receive a grade of zero on the evaluations from which you were debarred.

Values Reflection:

Students will be invited to cultivate critical self-awareness, identifying their values and subjective lived experiences in order to explore how values can influence one’s perspective and impact decisions made. Students will be encouraged to reflect on their implicit biases and how these could influence their ethical recommendations and/or judgments in clinical practice. Further details will be provided on OWL.

Group Discussions:

Students will be assigned into groups during class to discuss and decide how to best navigate a case study or ethical issue. Students will be required to write out an ethics recommendation and
describe the deliberative process that led to such recommendations. It will be expected that students document the arguments made, alternative options, and how decisions were made from an ethics lens. If students miss a group discussion, they must contact the instructor such that an alternative written assignment can be provided.

Midterm:
The midterm will be in class and consist of multiple choice, short, and long answer questions designed to test your knowledge from the information provided from the first half of the course.

Final paper:
Students will write an argumentative essay (Approximately 2500 words) to respond to a topic of their choice (that has come up in the course). This paper will require you to examine the ethical tensions associated with the issue, explore arguments and counter arguments, and articulate a conclusion using deliberative and reasoned thinking. Students wishing to write on a topic other than those provided by the instructor must obtain approval in advance. Further instructions and a rubric for evaluation are available under ‘Resouces’ on OWL.

GRADING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>90-100</td>
<td>One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>80-89</td>
<td>Superior work that is clearly above average.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>70-79</td>
<td>Good work, meeting all requirements and eminently satisfactory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>Competent work, meeting requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>Fair work, minimally acceptable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>below 50</td>
<td>Fail</td>
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It is anticipated that the course averages in years 1 through 4 grades will vary and this is the normative breakdown of average grades/year:

- Year 1:  68-72
- Year 2:  70-74 (core) and 72-76 (elective)
- Year 3:  72-76 (core) and 74-78 (elective)
- Year 4:  74-80

POLICIES

Prerequisites

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course, and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Covid -19 Contingency Plan for in-person class pivoting to 100% online learning

In the event of a COVID-19 resurgence during the course that necessitates the course delivery moving away...
from face-to-face interaction, all remaining course content will be delivered entirely online, either synchronously (i.e., at the times indicated in the timetable) or asynchronously (e.g., posted on OWL for students to view at their convenience). The grading scheme will not change. Any remaining assessments will also be conducted online as determined by the course instructor.

**In the event of a COVID-19 resurgence during the course that necessitates the course delivery moving away from face-to-face interaction,** tests and examinations in this course will be conducted using a remote proctoring service. By taking this course, you are consenting to the use of this software and acknowledge that you will be required to provide personal information (including some biometric data) and the session will be recorded. Completion of this course will require you to have a reliable internet connection and a device that meets the technical requirements for this service. More information about this remote proctoring service, including technical requirements, is available on Western’s Remote Proctoring website at: [https://remoteproctoring.uwo.ca](https://remoteproctoring.uwo.ca).

**Late assignments**

Assignments must not be missed unless there is a medical condition, family emergency, or other unforeseen circumstances. A note from your Physician indicating the nature of your condition must be submitted to the School of Health Studies Main Office, and only upon receipt of such a letter will instructors consider a new due date for an assignment. Late assignments without academic accommodations will be docked by 3% per day.

**Attendance and Classroom Behaviour (online and/or in-person)**

In the School of Health Studies, each course instructor sets specific expectations for attendance and participation that are specific to the course, teaching objectives, and learning outcomes. Regular attendance is expected and essential for all courses, but particularly those that include participation grades in their evaluation schemes. Participation means not only attendance, but active engagement in the class, including (for example) contribution to small and large group discussions, a demonstrated effort to prepare for class by completing assigned readings before class, and following the instructor's guidelines for use of electronic devices during class time. **Students who miss classes, or parts of classes, are responsible for the material they have missed. Instructors are not obliged to review the contents of missed lectures.**

**Use of Recording Devices and Course Content**

**During Exams:** Unless you have medical accommodations that require you to do so, or explicit permission from the instructor of the course, you may not use any electronic devices during ANY tests, quizzes, midterms, examinations, or other in-class evaluations.

**During Lectures and Tutorials:** Although you are welcome to use a computer during lecture and tutorial periods, you are expected to use the computer for scholastic purposes only, and refrain from engaging in any activities that may distract other students from learning. From time to time, your professor may ask the class to turn off all computers, to facilitate learning or discussion of the material presented in a particular class. **Unless explicitly noted otherwise, you may not make audio or video recordings of lectures – nor may you edit, re-use, distribute, or re-broadcast any of the material posted to the course website.**

**Use of Plagiarism Checking Software**

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism
detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (http://www.turnitin.com).

Student Code of Conduct

Code of Student Conduct defines the standard of conduct expected of students registered at The University of Western Ontario, provides examples of behaviour that constitutes a breach of this conduct, provides examples of sanctions that may be imposed, and sets out the disciplinary procedures that the University follows. Scholastic offences are taken seriously, and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: Academic Calendar - Western University (uwo.ca).

Academic Consideration

The University recognizes that a student’s ability to meet their academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by extenuating circumstances, including short-term illness or injury. Reasonable academic consideration is a cooperative process between the University, the student, and academic staff. All participants in the process must act in good faith, and fulfil their respective obligations, if it is to succeed.

Students who experience an extenuating circumstance (illness, injury, or other extenuating circumstance) sufficiently significant as to temporarily render them unable to meet academic requirements, may submit a request for academic consideration through the following routes:

(i) For medical absences, submitting a Student Medical Certificate (SMC) signed by a licensed medical or mental health practitioner, in order to be eligible for Academic Consideration; or
(ii) For non-medical absences, submitting appropriate documentation (e.g., obituary, police report, accident report, court order, etc.) to academic advising office in their Faculty of registration, in order to be eligible for academic consideration.

Students seeking academic consideration

- Are advised to consider carefully the implications of postponing tests or midterm exams or delaying handing in work;
- Are encouraged to make appropriate decisions, based on their specific circumstances, recognizing that minor ailments (e.g., upset stomach) or upsets (e.g., argument with a friend) are not normally an appropriate basis;
- Must communicate with their instructors no later than 24 hours after the end of the period covered by SMC, or immediately upon their return following a documented absence;
- Are advised that all necessary documentation, forms, etc. are to be submitted to academic advising office within two business days after the date specified for resuming responsibilities

Support Services

There are various support services around campus and these include, but are not limited to:

1. Student Development Centre http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/
2. Student Health -- https://www.uwo.ca/health/
3. Registrar’s Office -- http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/
4. Ombudsperson Office -- http://www.uwo.ca/ombuds/
Health and Wellness

The undergraduate experience is rewarding and challenging socially, emotionally, and intellectually. Finding ways to balance scholarly life with our personal lives can be tough, but it’s important to learn how to manage stress. Western provides several health and wellness-related services to students, which may be found at [http://www.health.uwo.ca/](http://www.health.uwo.ca/). You can also check out the Campus Recreation Centre or the McIntosh Gallery ([http://www.mcintoshgallery.ca/](http://www.mcintoshgallery.ca/)), for alternative spaces to reconnect with your bodies and restore your spirit. You may also want to access local resources that are closer to where you are living during the school year. Recalibrating ourselves emotionally begins with slowing down, reminding ourselves that we are ok, and taking a few deep, slow breaths. This remarkably effective strategy brings the body from stress mode into a more relaxed state.

If you are in emotional or mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western [Mental Health Support - Health & Wellness - Western University (uwo.ca)](https://www.uwo.ca/) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help or Thames Valley Family Services ([https://www.familyservicethamesvalley.com/](https://www.familyservicethamesvalley.com/)), a trusted provider within the community. To help you learn more about mental health, Western has developed an interactive mental health learning module, found here: [Health & Wellness - Western University (uwo.ca)](https://www.uwo.ca/). It’s also advisable to have a wellness safety plan if you don’t want to reach out to formal services. Having the numbers of a few trusted individuals is another strategy.

Common Concerns Guidelines
The table below summarizes a list of common student concerns and how they are to be resolved. If you have a concern that is not listed here, then please email your instructor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concern</th>
<th>How to address concern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course administrative matters</td>
<td>Read through the course outline or email instructor if question cannot be answered from information in the course outline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course content questions</td>
<td>Refer to the OWL Resources (notes, calendar, etc). Email the instructor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade disputes and requests for appeals</td>
<td>A student requesting an appeal to a specific course with respect to a grade for an assignment or examination much first contact their instructor to discuss such manners. Visit the following website for guide on submitting an appeal: <a href="https://uwo.ca/fhs/policies/appeals.html">https://uwo.ca/fhs/policies/appeals.html</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>