

HEALTH CARE ETHICS (MHE)

Program Director: Amy M. Haddad
Program Office: Center for Health Policy and Ethics

GRADUATE STUDY IN HEALTH CARE ETHICS

The M.S. in Health Care Ethics degree program is designed for students who are seeking a deeper understanding of the impact of relevant historical, cultural, philosophical, political, economic and legal issues in health care practices and policies, especially regarding their impact on vulnerable populations. The maxim of the Center for Health Policy & Ethics is “Anchored in ethics, reflecting Jesuit values.” Pursuant to promoting the Jesuit value of concern for the poor and marginalized, students will be encouraged to critically reflect on their own attitudes, actions, and personal development during the program. Faculty will draw strongly upon a variety of disciplines to form and educate agents of change through intellectual and humanistic engagement with the enterprises of health care.

Program Goals

Students who complete the M.S. in Health Care Ethics degree will be able to:

1. Discern the ethical problems, ambiguities, controversies, and assumptions in health care practices, systems, policies, and laws.
2. Discuss how the general concerns of ethics, particularly regarding vulnerability and marginalization, apply to health care practices, systems, policies, and laws.
3. Critically reflect on personal and professional attitudes, actions, and development in response to reading, discussions, clinical cases, or simulations.
4. Draw upon the humanities and liberal arts in the process of ethical reflection about the structures of health care.
5. Compare and contrast the following from an ethical perspective: health care practices, systems, and cultures at national and international levels.
6. When presented with an issue of ethical concern, orally and in writing apply ethical principles, norms, and theories; provide justification for a particular response or course of action in a persuasive manner; anticipate counter arguments; and offer suitable rebuttals.
7. Design sound instructional approaches to improve the ethical quality of health care.
8. Design ethical policy documents to improve the ethical quality of health care.
9. Facilitate open discussion among multiple stakeholders in ethically complex situations.
10. Synthesize and publicly communicate findings from research and critical reflection on a selected topic of ethical concern.

Faculty

Professors: A. Haddad, J. Welie; University Professor: R. O’Brien; Professor Emerita: W. Pinch
Associate Professor: Furlong, E.;
Assistant Professor: C. Rentmeester;
Adjunct Professor: J. Stone; Resident Faculty, H. Chapple.

Admission Requirements

Applicants for admission to the Master of Science (M.S.) program in Health Care Ethics must have a baccalaureate or higher degree. Applicants who do not hold a post-baccalaureate degree must have an undergraduate GPA of at least 3.0 in the last 60 hours of undergraduate study.

Applicants must submit the following documents:

1. Application: a completed application form and non-refundable application fee.
2. Curriculum Vitae including relevant education and any employment history, certifications and licensures, teaching and research experience, publications, presentations, awards, honors, affiliations, professional associations, experience and background in health care ethics.
3. Essay: Using 500 words or less per question, please respond to the following:
 - a. List three “big” questions in contemporary health care ethics then choose one of the questions to answer or write a commentary on why you think this particular issue is so important.
 - b. Explain how successful completion of this program will assist you in achieving your professional goals.

4. Recommendation Forms: Three recommendation forms are required. The recommendations should be completed and submitted by persons other than family members who are capable of assessing an applicant's performance in an academic or work setting.
5. Transcripts: Official transcripts must be submitted from all colleges and universities attended. Transcripts must be sent directly from the issuing institution.
6. Graduate Record Examination (GRE): All applicants who do not hold a post-baccalaureate degree must submit an official score report on the Graduate Record Examination or show evidence of success in graduate-level course work through successful completion of at least two graduate-level courses.
7. Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL): All international applicants from countries in which English is not the primary language must demonstrate proficiency in the English language by submitting a minimum TOEFL score of 80 iBT (213 CBT/550 PBT). International applicants who received their baccalaureate or higher degree from an accredited institution in the U.S., United Kingdom, Ireland, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, or Africa (English-speaking only) are not required to submit a TOEFL score report.

Master of Science (M.S.) with a Major in Health Care Ethics

General Requirements

The M.S. in Health Care Ethics consists of thirty credit hours. All students complete the twenty-seven hours of Core Courses and select a minimum of one three-hour elective. The program is offered in an online format with no required residency. Each course will be offered as an eight-week module. Since the program will target working professionals, it is anticipated that most students will be part-time and take only one course per eight-week term. Students who take one course each term will complete the program in less than two years. Near the end of their coursework, students will tailor a practicum experience to analyze a particular group, population, policy, or structure that raises significant concerns about vulnerability and develop a practical plan for responding to the identified ethical issue or problem in a constructive manner. The capstone course will allow students to integrate insights gained and competencies acquired throughout the program.

Master of Science (M.S.) in Health Care Ethics (30 credits)

Core Courses

(All of the following:)

MHE 601	Health Policy	3 credits
MHE 602	Research Ethics	3 credits
MHE 603	Law and Health Care Ethics	3 credits
MHE 604	Social and Cultural Contexts of Health Care	3 credits
MHE 605	Philosophical Bioethics	3 credits
MHE 606	Theories of Justice	3 credits
MHE 607	Practical Ethics in Health Care Settings	3 credits
MHE 608	Practicum	3 credits
MHE 609	Capstone Project	3 credits

Electives

(One of the following:)

MHE 611	Advanced Bioethical Theory	3 credits
MHE 612	Philosophical and Theological Perspectives	3 credits
MHE 613	Professional Ethics and the Vocation of Health Care	3 credits
MHE 614	Demeanors and Dispositions Health Care Professionals	3 credits
MHE 615	Ethics and Cultural Construction	3 credits
MHE 616	Quality Improvement and Institutional Ethics	3 credits
MHE 617	Mental Health and Medical Humanities	3 credits
MHE 618	Teaching and Learning Strategies in Ethics	3 credits
MHE 619	Dying and Organ Transplantation in American Hospital	3 credits

- MHE 601 Health Policy (3)**
An exploration of health policy and its development, emphasizing social justice and human rights as providing the moral and ethical bases of policy. The course considers and compares institutional, local, regional, national, and international approaches to public health, health systems, and determination of research and development priorities. American health systems, their operations, processes, successes, and failures are extensively analyzed. The processes and challenges for making policy at institutional, state, and federal levels are described, and past and current attempts at health systems reform, and why they succeed or fail, are analyzed.
- MHE 602 Research Ethics (3)**
This course will enhance students' understanding of core ethical issues in research ethics. Vulnerable populations will be a primary organizing theme. Study of historically pivotal cases will lead into examination of ethical and policy responses. Examples are the Belmont Report, the Helsinki Declaration, IRBs (Institutional Review Boards), and roles of ethical theories, principles, and human rights. Among issues related to vulnerable populations will be research on prisoners, women, children, the poor, and residents of developing countries. A focus will be ethical issues in the emerging area of Community-Based Participatory Research. Topics in scientific research will include design (e.g., randomized or placebo-controlled trials), elements of good science, critical reflection about science (such as critiques of objectivity), and conflicts of interest. A section will address informed consent. Special topics will include collaborative and intersectoral research, cross-cultural aspects of research, social responsibility of scientists, genetics, and stem cell research. USA and global research will be considered.
- MHE 603 Law and Health Care Ethics (3)**
This course explores the crucial connection between health law and health care ethics. The course focuses on major ethical themes that have emerged in the law and highlights specific interconnections of doctrines that have come out of landmark cases. The course will also examine the significant and fundamental differences between health care ethics and health law.
- MHE 604 Social & Cultural Contexts of Health Care (3)**
This class introduces the student to the various contexts of personal and social experience that construct and interpret bioethics. Participants consider identity and autonomy as embedded in social matrices ranging from the body itself to global configurations. Various power dynamics of class, legitimacy, and ideology are considered. Participants analyze the culture of the biomedical project and the challenge of finding one's voice within it.
- MHE 605 Philosophical Bioethics (3)**
This course reviews the nature of ethical reasoning, including various epistemological challenges to moral judgment. Second, major theories of ethics will be introduced, including virtue ethics, natural law, deontology, utilitarianism, casuistry and principlism, discourse ethics, and care ethics. Third, signature texts by protagonists of these historical theories will be compared and contrasted with contemporary critics, with specific reference to issues of vulnerability. **P: MHE 601 or MHE 602.**
- MHE 606 Theories of Justice (3)**
This course builds on the "Philosophical Bioethics" course by advancing students' competence in ethical reasoning and familiarizing students with social justice theories in particular. This course will introduce students to theory formation in the area of social justice, drawing on political philosophy, economics, and the social sciences. **P: MHE 601 and MHE 605.**
- MHE 607 Practical Ethics in Health Care Settings (3)**
The practical application of ethics to clinical situations is much more than following standards of practice. This course will provide the opportunity to apply foundational concepts of ethics to a variety of health care settings. Additionally, the use of deliberative methods to think through and discuss the unique features presented by different health care settings and professional conduct will be an integral component of the course. The typical charges of institutional ethics committees will be examined: consultation, education, and policy review/development. **P: MHE 605.**

MHE 608 Practicum (3)

This course requires synthesis of content from foundational course work as well as at least two of the following courses: “Health Policy,” “Research Ethics,” or “Practical Ethics in Health Care Settings.” Students will analyze a particular group, population, policy, or structure that raises significant concerns about vulnerability and develop a practical plan for responding to the identified ethical issue or problem in a constructive manner. Using a portfolio approach, students will integrate appropriate course content and other relevant support material into the plan. **P: MHE 603, MHE 604, MHE 606 and two of the following: MHE 601, MHE 602, or MHE 607, provided that the student complete the course covering the focus area of the Practicum.**

MHE 609 Capstone Project (3)

In this final required course of the degree program, students are expected to integrate insights gained and competencies acquired. Applying methods of scientific inquiry, students will synthesize their findings in a publishable commentary to an article in the scholarly literature, selected by the course director. **P: MHE 601, MHE 602, MHE 603, MHE 604, MHE 605, MHE 606, MHE 607, MHE 608, and Elective.**

MHE 611 Advanced Bioethical Theory (3)

Whereas MHE 605 focuses on the major ethical theories as they have been developed since Greek antiquity and that nowadays still inform bioethical thinking, this course focuses on modern variations on these historical theories and newly developed theories that have specific relevance for the field of health care ethics. The course is particularly useful for students planning to continue their education with doctoral studies and/or students who are planning to engage in bioethical research and scholarship. **P: MHE 605.**

MHE 612 Philosophical and Theological Perspectives on End of Life Care (3)

The possibilities of modern medicine to extend people’s lives are considerable and are generally much appreciated. But these advances have also evoked ever more ethical quandaries. Patients have begun to decline the available life-extending interventions or even request euthanasia. Medicine - and society more in general - appear unable to balance quantity of life gained with quality of life. On top of that, the economic expenses are quickly becoming prohibitive. Neither the biomedical sciences nor philosophy or theology appear theoretically able to address these new challenges, for extending life has been one of the most important goals of western medicine for many centuries, rarely questioned and fully supported by most major faith traditions. This course will (1) challenge participants to reflect on and examine their own views on disabilities, aging and dying; (2) review historically, culturally and religiously significant patterns of societies’ understanding of aging and death; (3) offer analytical tools to critically examine the paradox of harmful life-extension; (4) examine the merits of legislation and policy development in the area of end of life health care; and (5) provide students with an opportunity to study and debate hallmark ethics cases in end of life care. **P: MHE 603, MHE 605.**

MHE 613 Professional Ethics and the Vocation of Health Care (3)

This course will examine what health-care professionalism is and should be in light of health/health care inequalities, cross-cultural issues, humanistic concerns, and practical considerations. Topics will include (1) historical development and social configuration of health care professions and structures; (2) proposed moral foundations such as vocation, social contract, moral principles, and an ethic of care (3) scope of professional obligations, including direct health care, public health, advocacy, elimination of health inequalities, codification, standardization, peer review, whistle-blowing, and protection of public trust; (4) intersectoral collaboration; and (5) legal status of professions. Students will be invited to critically assess whether professional tenets and structures promote or undermine health and health care equality, humanistic care, fair treatment, openness to diversity, power inequalities, and systemic critiques.

MHE 614 Demeanors and Dispositions of Health Care Professionals (3)

“Burnout,” “callousness,” “jaded,” “compassion fatigue,” and other kindred concepts have been used to characterize moral psychological dimensions of professional care giving and processes of moral damage suffered by professional caregivers. This elective explores this rich, multi-disciplinary literature on how health care professionals orient themselves affectively to their patients.

- MHE 615 Ethics and the Cultural Construction of Categories, Measurement, and Time (3)**
 Categories of measurement are culturally constructed to include certain aspects and omit others. As health care ethics examines issues of power in US health care delivery, one crucial question involves the kinds of health care that garner reimbursement and their implications. Who decides which categories are legitimate and how they should be ranked? Taking an historical approach, students in this course will examine the phenomena of measurement, standards, and ranking in the delivery of health care, and consider how these categories reflect and reinforce ideological movements in the US. Of particular interest will be the development of common coding strategies.
- MHE 616 Quality Improvement and Institutional Ethics (3)**
 Essentially all health care institutions conduct Quality Improvement (QI) activities, generally overseen by a committee structure. These activities rarely have input from those who are consultants or experts in bioethics. Thus QI activities seldom give specific consideration to questions of ethics in their choice of subjects for examination, their analyses or recommendations. This course will explore the purposes of QI, its ethical bases, barriers to considerations of bioethics in QI programs, and means to integrate ethics into QI by affecting the institutional cultural ethic. **P: Instructor Approval.**
- MHE 617 Mental Health and Medical Humanities (3)**
 Recent policy trends in mental health, health inequalities, and intersections of health policy and social policy are focal points of study in this elective. A handful of scholarly articles complement our main study of these issues through literature and film. **P: MHE 601, MHE 604, MHE 606.**
- MHE 618 Teaching and Learning Strategies in Ethics (3)**
 What sorts of knowledge do teachers of ethics need whether the instruction occurs in a classroom, online, or in a professional seminar? This course will examine the knowledge that Shulman asserts teachers need including: 1) content knowledge; 2) general pedagogical knowledge with special reference to broad principles and strategies of management and organization that transcend subject matter; 3) pedagogical content knowledge, that special form of understanding of best practices in teaching ethics; and 4) knowledge of learners and their characteristics. The course will emphasize teaching and learning methods that are most effective for ethics content. **P: MHE 605.**
- MHE 619 The Social Constructions of Dying and Organ Transplantation in the American Hospital (3)**
 Students will explore the social construction of dying and death in the American hospital through the mechanisms of rescue, stabilization, and the ritual of intensification. The role of the CPR obligation in the context of non-equal access to health care will be explored regarding social justice, US ideology, the medical industrial complex, and advance directives. With this conceptual background in place, students will explore the assumptions which underlie transplantation in the US, including the cultural anchoring of brain death, medical legitimacy, and the role of neurological injury in the definition of personhood. The US transplantation experience will be compared with other nations, including Japan.