



**COURSE TITLE/SECTION:** SOCW 7333/19976 Bioethics: Theory and Application for Social Work Practice

**TIME:** Wednesday 1:00 – 4:00pm

**FACULTY:** Dr. Janice Allen Chilton

**OFFICE HOURS:** Wednesday, prior to class by appointment

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**\*\*SYLLABUS SUBJECT TO CHANGE\*\***

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## I. Course

### A. Catalog Description

3 credit. Introduction to bioethics as an interdisciplinary subject. Prerequisite: Foundation, or consent of instructor.

### B. Purpose

The purpose of this course is to provide both theoretical and substantive content, which will help familiarize students with bioethics as an interdisciplinary subject through critical thinking and discussion of contemporary issues. The course challenges students to think about critical issues in bioethics by presenting various opposing viewpoints in the literature. The content and discussion should provide knowledge and it is part of the Human Behavior in Social Environment sequence is and is guided by the assumptions that all social workers, regardless of method of practice, need to have a sound knowledge base with respect to ethics and to human behavior in the context of modern society.

## II. Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to demonstrate the following competencies based on the Council on Social Work Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS, <http://www.cswe.org/File.aspx?id=13780>):

1. Critically appraise the use of ethical theories as principles guiding bioethical problems. *EPAS 2.1.3: Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments.*
2. Identify bioethical problems and analyze solutions to them using scientific and philosophical theories. *EPAS 2.1.2 Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice.*
3. Acquire knowledge and strategies that are effective in promoting ethical

- decision making. *EPAS 2.1.7: Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment.*
4. Demonstrate understanding of the issues of professionalism in social work and social work values and ethics as they occur and affect the continuum of bioethical decision making. *EPAS 2.1.1: Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly.*
  5. Illuminate the ways in which culture, ethnicity, spirituality, and socioeconomic status and other dimensions shape moral beliefs and decisions. *EPAS 2.1.4: Engage diversity and difference in practice.*
  6. Demonstrate thinking that is clear, logical, coherent, and relevant in discussing issues in bioethics. *EPAS 2.1.3: Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments.*
  7. Critically apply concepts of bioethical theory and methods to social work practice. *EPAS 2.1.5: Advance human rights and social and economic justice.*

### **III. Course Content**

This course will include the following topic areas:

1. Major ethical theories, principles, and concepts in bioethics.
2. Moral issues and dilemmas in bioethics.
3. Ethical issues in advanced directives, physician assisted suicide, and stem cell research.
4. Professional / patient relationships.
5. Cultural issues in bioethics.
6. LGBTQ issues in bioethics.
7. Reproductive medicine, reproductive rights, family planning, and access to abortion.
8. Resource allocations as right-making principles.
9. Justice and health care allocation.

### **IV. Course Structure**

Class time will be a combination of lecture and student discussion. Lecture content is primarily designed to provide supplementary material rather than review assigned readings. Guest speakers may supplement particular content areas.

### **V. Expectations for maintaining a safe, respectful, learning environment and classroom behavior.**

As this course will include discussion of controversial subject matter, it is pertinent that students maintain a professional and respectful environment at all times. All viewpoints that are expressed respectfully will be received respectfully.

Students are asked to turn off cell phones during class time. Disruptions of this nature compromise the academic process and therefore will not be tolerated. If you are on call, or have reasons which require you to have access to your cell phone during class time, please inform the instructor, and keep the cell phone on SILENT (not vibrate). Additionally, as this is a lecture and discussion based class, and there are no exams, laptops are not needed for this class.

Classroom Behavior: The Golden Rule for expected behavior in the classroom is to be respectful of yourself and your colleagues. By virtue of the nature of our profession, we will often engage in content and discussions in courses that elicit varied opinions, perspectives, and emotions. This course will provide a well-rounded educational experience for us all, if we practice and demonstrate the core values of social work.

## **VI. Textbooks**

No textbook is assigned for this class. Readings will be posted on Blackboard, emailed, or available online.

There will be assigned readings weekly. It is the student's responsibility to remain current with the readings since they provide the major source of learning for this course. These are used to develop your understanding of the topic assigned in more depth and can become the basis of your presentation and weekly reaction papers.

## **VII. Course Requirements**

This section should identify the course assignments, including written assignments, projects, and exams, as well as due dates. It is suggested that any stipulations regarding late submissions be included here.

### **A. Weekly self-reflection reaction papers**

Based on the assigned readings and case study each week, students are expected to write a **1 to 2 page (single space)** self-reflective reaction paper. These are not only to ensure that students are doing the required reading, but also that students are thinking critically about the readings and implications of the subject, including exploring their own biases. One of the case studies provided should be used in your reaction paper. The case study will either be a case, or a news story / current event. The paper is informal, but should be in APA style, and does not need an abstract or cover page. A reference page is not needed, unless student cites readings not on the reading list. In-text citations should be in APA format. Papers will be graded on a 1 to 10 point scale. A **10-point** paper will clearly show that all assigned articles / readings were read and that the student is critically analyzing the topic and relating it to the NASW ethical code, and implications to social work. A **6-point** reaction paper will demonstrate a good summary of the assigned readings, but no attempt at

elaborating beyond the text or thinking of implications. A **3-point** reaction paper will cover some of the assigned readings, with no attempt at critical analysis or stating implications. A **Zero-point** reaction paper will be one that was not turned in.

There are 13 assigned papers, and **10** papers are required. **No late papers will be accepted.**

### **B. Class Discussion Group ( 2 to 3 persons)**

Each group will be required to lead a class discussion based on the readings that week. Class discussion groups are required to read the optional articles and discuss in class. Case studies can be used (either cases provided in course, or a case the discussion group provides). The class discussion group may also choose to report on a current event that is relevant to the topic of bioethics & the week's readings.

Groups can use their reaction paper as the topic or basis of the class discussion they lead. **As a part of the discussion, the group should provide the key social, legal, and cultural issues that are involved in the topic.** The group should prepare questions to facilitate class discussion. The group will lead discussion on how bioethical decision making and how the four principles of bioethics, (autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, justice), and the NASW and/or International code of ethics figure into the decision-making process.

### **C. Group Presentation (3 to 4 persons)**

A critical analysis of bioethical case issue or problem will be presented. Presentations will be held on the last 2-3 days of class. Groups should be 3 to 4 persons and a grading rubric will be provided for each group member to calculate each other's grade. Presentations should be ~20 minutes.

Guidelines: Select an ethical issue or problem, (such as assisted suicide, terminal care, reproductive rights, etc.) that presents an ethical dilemma for practitioners. Prepare a case study that illustrates the dilemma. Provide a thorough assessment of the bioethical issue(s) and a review of the literature which presents various viewpoints from professionals (i.e. social workers, physicians, nurses, policy makers, clergy, etc.). Give a brief review of the literature, using peer review journals (a minimum of 4).

The presentation should provide a discussion about the following:

1. What are the major ethical issues you are describing?
2. What ethical theories, if any, are used to support various viewpoints?
3. Discuss if any new research or clinical findings have influenced changes in treatment and / or philosophy of care.
4. Propose a resolution to the bioethical issues and present the theory you are using to support your conclusions.

5. Discuss how the social work literature addresses the issue.
6. Evaluate whether the social work literature is sufficient to critically appraise the bioethical case issue.
7. Discuss how you might resolve the issue and what suggestions you have for the social work profession and other relevant professions to increase their knowledge base.

#### **D. Participation**

**Attendance is mandatory.** Points will be deducted from attendance grade for absences, up to 10%. If three (3) or more absences (includes being more than 10 minutes late) occur, you will receive one letter reduction in your class grade, and the instructor may request a meeting with you and your advisor. No "incompletes" will be given unless there is a specific emergency that occurs in the semester and is discussed with the instructor before the final grade is submitted. All papers are due at the beginning of class at 1:00PM. Papers are late if you submit it after 1:00 P.M. A three-point penalty will be given per day for late papers.

### **VIII. Evaluation and Grading**

The following standard grading scale has been adopted for all courses taught in the college. This is the scale used to assign final course grades.

A = 96-100% of the points	C+ = 76-79.9%	<b>Grade Composition:</b>
A- = 92-95.9%	C = 72-75.9%	Class participation – 10%
B+= 88-91.9%	C- = 68-71.9%	Class discussion leader – 20%
B = 84-87.9%	D = 64-67.9%	Weekly reaction paper – 30%
B- = 80-83.9%	F = Below 64%	Group participation – 30%

### **IX. Policy on grades of I (Incomplete):**

The grade of "I" (Incomplete) is a conditional and temporary grade given when students are either **(a)** passing a course or **(b)** still have a reasonable chance of passing in the judgment of the instructor but, for non-academic reasons beyond their control have not completed a relatively small part of all requirements. Students are responsible for informing the instructor immediately of the reasons for not submitting an assignment on time or not taking an examination. Students must contact the instructor of the course in which they receive an "I" grade to make arrangements to complete the course requirements. Students should be instructed not to re-register for the same course in a following semester in order to complete the incomplete requirements.

The grade of "I" must be changed by fulfillment of course requirements within one year of the date awarded or it will be changed automatically to an "F" (or to a "U" [Unsatisfactory] in S/U graded courses). The instructor may require a time period of less than one year to fulfill course requirements, and the grade may be changed by the instructor at any time to reflect work completed in the course. The grade of "I" may not be changed to a grade of **W**.

## **X. Americans with Disabilities Statement**

Whenever possible, and in accordance with 504/ADA guidelines, the University of Houston will attempt to provide reasonable academic accommodations to students who request and require them. Please call 713-743-5400 for more assistance. Instructors may not provide accommodations without supporting documentation from the UH Center for Students with Disabilities.

## **XI. Policy on academic dishonesty and plagiarism**

Students are expected to demonstrate and maintain a professional standard of writing in all courses, do one's own work, give credit for the ideas of others, and provide proper citation of source materials. Any student who plagiarizes any part of a paper or assignment or engages in any form of academic dishonesty will receive an "I" for the class with a recommendation that a grade of F be assigned, subsequent to a College hearing, in accordance with the University policy on academic dishonesty. Other actions may also be recommended and/or taken by the College to suspend or expel a student who engages in academic dishonesty.

All papers and written assignments must be fully and properly referenced using APA style format (or as approved by the instructor), with credit given to the authors whose ideas you have used. If you are using direct quotes from a specific author (or authors), you must set the quote in quotation marks or use an indented quotation form. For all direct quotes, you must include the page number(s) in your text or references. Any time that you use more than four or five consecutive words taken from another author, you must clearly indicate that this is a direct quotation. Please consult the current APA manual for further information.

Academic dishonesty includes using any other person's work and representing it as your own. This includes (but is not limited to) using graded papers from students who have previously taken this course as the basis for your work. It also includes, but is not limited to submitting the same paper to more than one class. If you have any specific questions about plagiarism or academic dishonesty, please raise these questions in class or make an appointment to see instructor. This statement is consistent with the University Policy on Academic Dishonesty that can be found in your UH Student Handbook.

## **XII. Course Schedule and Reading Assignments**

Readings with \* are optional and found in the optional readings folder  
Readings with \*\* - optional but must choose one to read

### **WEEK 1 – January 21, 2015**

Introduction to Bioethics and Moral Foundations and the Four Common Principles of Bioethics

1. Read over NASW Code of Ethics
2. Read over International Social Work Ethical Principles

3. Read over the Texas State Board of Examiners Administrative Code for Social Workers
4. Question – What are the similarities / differences you see between the NASW code and the International ethical principles?
5. Is there such a thing as universal ethics?

### **WEEK 2 – January 28, 2015 – The Four Principles of Bioethics & Value Systems**

1. Reaction papers due
2. Class discussion leaders
3. Readings: Beauchamp (2004); Gillon (2003); Holm (1995); Jacobson & Silva (2010).
4. Lecture

### **WEEK 3 – February 4, 2015 – Theory**

1. Reaction papers due
2. Class discussion leaders
3. Readings: Banjeree (2011); \*Blackstock (2011); Campbell (2011); Congress (2000); Stewart & DeMarco (2005).
4. Lecture

### **WEEK 4 – February 11, 2015 – Practice / Frameworks for Decision Making**

1. Reaction papers due
2. Class discussion leaders
3. Readings: Gonzalez-Prendes (2011); Kopelman (1997); Macklin (2003); \*Boland-Prom & Anderson (2005); Spielthener (2012); Nathanson, Calderon, & Giffords (2011).
4. Lecture – NASW Framework for solving ethical dilemmas

### **WEEK 5 – February 18, 2015 – Practice / Professional Relationships / Commitment to Clients**

1. Reaction papers due
2. Class discussion leaders
3. Readings: USA Patriot Act (AMA); \*Little (2009); Reamer (2001); Reamer (2013); \*Brownlee (1996); \*Brenner, Kindler, & Freundlich (2010); Trimmerger (2012); Tapp & Payne (2011); \*Mayes (2008).
4. Lecture

### **WEEK 6 – February 25, 2015 – Professional vs. Personal Values / Religion / Conscientious Objection**

1. Reaction papers due
2. Class discussion leaders
3. Readings: Savulescu (2006); \*Fisher; Murphy & Genuis (2013); Sweifach (2011); \*Stempsey (2011); When your beliefs run counter to care.

### **WEEK 7 – March 4, 2015 – Difficult Healthcare Decisions / Futility / Organ donation / Advanced Directives**

1. Reaction papers due
2. Class discussion leaders

3. Readings: Friel (1982); Miller (2008); Truog (2007); Milligan (2011); Jecker (2011); Ashby (2011); Read ONE of the following: \*\*Jecker (2011); \*\*Evans (2003); \*\*Van Buren et al. (2010); \*\*Nelson (2009); Lemmens (2010).
4. Lecture

**WEEK 8 – March 11, 2015– Difficult Healthcare Decisions / Palliative Care / Advanced Directives**

1. Reaction papers due
2. Class discussion leaders
3. Readings: Koenig, Rinfrette, & Lutz (2006); Sanders, Bullock, & Broussard (2012); Read ONE of the following\*\*Wahlert & Fiester (2012); \*\*Wahlert & Fiester (2013); Raybould & Adler (2006).
4. Lecture

**WEEK 9 – March 18, 2015**

SPRING BREAK – No assignments. ☺

**WEEK 10 – March 25, 2015 – Difficult Healthcare Decisions / Euthanasia**

1. Reaction papers due
2. Class discussion leaders
3. Readings: \*Parkinson et al. (2005); Himchak (2011); \*Huxtable (2009); Csikai (1999); Behuniak (2011); Mackelprang (2005); McCormick (2011); \*Sharp (2012); \*Krais (1982)

**WEEK 11 – April 1, 2015 – Difficult Healthcare Decision – Issues of Reproduction, Abortion & Fetal Right to Life**

1. Reaction papers due
2. Class discussion leaders
3. Readings: Lemmens (2000); Ely and Dulmus (2010); NASW Position Statement of the Confirmation of Judge G. Roberts to the SCOTUS; Ely et al (2012); \*Hine (2013); \*Pullman (2010).
4. Lecture

**WEEK 12 – April 8, 2015 – Difficult Healthcare Decision – Issues of Reproduction, Sterilization & Reproduction Rights**

1. Reaction papers due
2. Class discussion leaders
3. Readings: Anos & Feldman (2012); Chamberlain et al (1984); Pollack (2011); \*Servals et al (2002); \*\*Rutecki (2011); \*\*Volscho (2011); Schenker & Eisenberg (1997).
4. Lecture

**WEEK 13 – April 15, 2015 – Special Populations / LGBT**

1. Reaction papers due
2. Class discussion leaders
3. Readings:
4. Guest lecturer

**WEEK 14 – April 22, 2015 – Mental Health**

1. Reaction papers due
2. Class discussion leaders
3. Readings: Ahmedani (2011); Ryan (2011); \*Merskey (1996); \*Cheit (1998); Robertson & Reid (1999); Stein (2012)
4. Lecture

**WEEK 15 – April 29, 2015 - Technological Advances**

1. Reaction papers due
2. Group presentations
3. Readings: Andorno & Laurie (2004); Otlowski (2005); Borgelt & Buchman (2011); Sanders (2009); Garver & Garver (1994); Kromberg (2013); Sanders (2009).
4. Lecture

**WEEK 16 – May 5, 2015–Pharmacology & Policy**

**LAST DAY OF CLASSES**

1. Reaction papers due
2. Group presentations
3. Readings: Moynihan (2003a); Moynihan (2003b); \*Mansfeild; Donohue, Cevalco, & Rosenthal (2007); \*Cole, Kesselheim, & Kesselheim (2012).
4. Lecture