

## **Understanding Organizational Ethics**

HCA 531 (3 credits)  
King's College, Fall 2016

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Office: McGowan 203  
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Class meeting time and location:  
Monday, 2:15-5:00 p.m., McGowan 207

Prerequisites: None

### **Course description**

This course is designed to expose graduate students to the kinds of ethical issues and problems they will encounter as health care administrators, in particular issues and problems involved in managing a health care organization's relationships with its many publics. The course focuses, then, on concrete cases as well as theory and emphasizes policy formulation. The course also attends to the principal process for coming to terms with ethical issues and problems in a health care context, namely, consultation with an ethics committee, which students will be charged with devising and simulating at the semester's end.

### **Course objectives**

By the end of this course, students should be able:

- 1) to demonstrate familiarity with the basics of ethical theory and analysis;
- 2) to demonstrate familiarity with the ethical challenges and issues particular to health care administrators; and
- 3) to demonstrate facility with reasoning and argumentation of the kind characteristic of a health care ethics committee.

### **McGowan School of Business Mission Statement**

This course directly serves the mission of the McGowan School of Business. To quote (emphasis added):

*The William G. McGowan School of Business seeks to develop in its*

*students the professional knowledge and skills needed to function successfully in the dynamic environments of business **with a commitment to exercising their professional responsibilities in an ethical and socially responsible manner** in a global marketplace.*

## **Learning Goals**

*The delivery of our business education program is guided by the following learning outcomes:*

*A student graduating with a Master of Science in Health Care Administration from the William G. McGowan School of Business should be an effective communicator.*

To this end, **in this course**, students will submit written work (one co-curricular report, one organizational analysis, a paper, and a take-home exam) and make an oral presentation of a case study.

*A student graduating with a Master of Science in Health Care Administration from the William G. McGowan School of Business should be a problem solver.*

To this end, **in this course**, students will grapple with and propose ethically-defensible solutions to challenging cases.

*A student graduating with a Master of Science in Health Care Administration from the William G. McGowan School of Business should be ethically and socially responsible.*

To this end, **in this course**, students will develop familiarity with the basics of ethical theory; become more proficient at recognizing, formulating, and addressing ethical issues and problems in the health care context; and practice skills of ethical reasoning and argumentation.

*A student graduating with a Master of Science in Health Care Administration from the William G. McGowan School of Business should be professionally knowledgeable.*

To this end, **in this course**, students will examine case studies and learn best practices in today's health care profession.

The more nuts-and-bolts goals of this course are to help you develop *skills* that will serve you both in graduate school and in your subsequent careers.

Goal		Method of assessment
Read and think critically	Analyze and bring critical understanding to difficult moral theories, grapple with cases exemplifying moral problems	Participation in class discussion, paper, exam
Write well	Write clearly and persuasively, supporting your positions with argumentation and evidence	Paper, co-curricular event report, organizational analysis exercise, exam
Communicate effectively orally	Articulate your own views based on your reading and in response to the contributions of other students	Participation in class discussion, case study presentation
Master co-operative learning skills	Work with and learn from other members of the class in a climate of mutual respect and support	Participation in class discussion, case study presentation

### **Assessment, etc.**

#### *Attendance/participation*

Attendance/participation will be worth 14 percent of the final grade: one point per meeting. Please note that attendance is expected at all meetings, with due allowance for reasonable excuses. Each class that you miss will result in your losing 1 point.

The attendance/participation grade will be determined using the following rubrics. Class participation deserving of an A grade (90-100) will be strong in most categories; participation that is strong in some categories but needs development in others will receive a B (80-90); a grade of C (70-80) reflects a need for development in most categories; D work (65-69) is typically unsatisfactory in several categories; and F work, unsatisfactory in nearly all.

	Strong work	Needs development	Unsatisfactory
Listening	Actively and respectfully listens to peers and instructor	Sometimes displays lack of interest in comments of others	Projects lack of interest or disrespect for others
Preparation	Arrives fully prepared with all assignments completed, and notes on reading, observations, questions	Sometimes arrives unprepared or with only superficial preparation	Exhibits little evidence of having read or thought about assigned material
Quality of contributions	Comments are relevant and reflect understanding of: assigned text(s); previous remarks of other students; and insights about assigned material	Comments sometimes irrelevant, betray lack of preparation, or indicate lack of attention to previous remarks of other students	Comments reflect little understanding of either the assignment or previous remarks in seminar
Impact on seminar	Comments frequently help move seminar conversation forward	Comments sometimes advance the conversation, but sometimes do little to move it forward	Comments do not advance the conversation or are actively harmful to it
Frequency of participation	Actively participates at appropriate times	Sometimes participates but other times is "tuned out"	Seldom participates and is generally not engaged

*Writing assignments*

As noted in the schedule below (week 6), you will be required to attend the keynote address of the Second Annual International Healthcare Management Conference by F. Daniel Davis, Director of Bioethics, Geisinger Health System. For this event, write me, *within one week after it*, an email 1) describing the event (just the facts) and then 2) reflecting substantively on it, in part by connecting it to our readings to date. This report counts for 3 percent of the final grade. The report will be graded using the following rubrics.

	Strong work: full credit	Satisfactory: partial credit	Unsatisfactory: no credit
Summary of the event	Account of the facts is accurate and clear	Account of the facts needs development or clarification	Account of the facts is inaccurate and unclear
Reflection on the event	Reflection is substantive and thoughtful	Reflection needs development	Reflection does not engage substantively with the event

You will also be assigned one organizational analysis exercise the fourth week of the semester. This assignment likewise counts for 3 percent of the final grade.

Finally, you will be required to write one paper, worth 30 percent of the final grade. The papers will be graded using the following rubrics. An A-level paper will be strong in most categories; B papers will be strong in some but need development in others; C papers need significant development; D papers are unsatisfactory in most categories.

	Strong work	Needs development	Unsatisfactory
Audience	Assumes audience is student who has familiarity with the text in question but could use still reminding; paper uses evidence to make points rather than to summarize	Spends inappropriate amount of time merely summarizing text or repeating material covered in class, <i>or</i> does not provide sufficient background/assumes too much knowledge of the text	Shows little evidence of having read the text; ideas mostly taken from class notes or class discussion and not developed further
Thesis	Single clear thesis (= answer to the question, What is this paper about?) that would be interesting to someone who had already studied the text	Thesis is either somewhat unclear or all too obvious to most thoughtful readers	No clear thesis, or multiple theses
Introductory paragraph(s)	Avoids inflated generalizations and gratuitous praise; “hooks” the reader; introduces clear thesis; briefly explains how the paper will proceed	Extraneous generalization; connection to thesis not entirely clear; thesis statement not clear; lacks compelling “hook,” or statement of how the paper will proceed	No clear thesis statement or sense of where the paper is going
Paragraphs in body of paper	Each paragraph does one and only one bit of work toward the paper’s goal	Some paragraphs are “baggy monsters,” trying to do all too much; or some do not	Little relationship between paragraphs and thesis, little to no evidence

	and is supported by evidence and argumentation	support thesis, or are not supported by evidence	mustered, paragraphs do not work toward the paper's goal
Argument	All necessary points in proving or developing thesis are made; paper does not assume reader agrees with author but <i>shows</i> the reader why he or she should agree	Some missteps are made in developing thesis; argument only compelling to someone who already agrees; only <i>tells</i> the reader that such-and-such is the case instead of <i>showing</i> the reader	Essay does not break any ground or develop a case
Organization	Argument intelligently ordered and easy to follow, reflected in order of points and paragraphs	Logical flow of argument needs improvement by reordering some points and/or paragraphs	Material is disorganized with no clear logical connection between points and/or paragraphs
Use of Evidence	Draws relevant evidence from close reading of a variety of passages; all quotations correctly cited using MLA or Chicago format	Evidence drawn from only one or two passages in text; some evidence does not support points made; citations present but not in correct format	Little evidence used; does not support points made; material quoted without citation
Conclusion	Brings the paper full circle, ties all loose ends together; makes a new point that builds on all preceding points, so reaches a summit rather than providing a mere summary	Merely summarizes everything that has been said so far, and/or feels abrupt or forced	Simply recycles the introductory paragraph
Mechanics	Nearly flawless grammar, spelling, and word choice; sentences read smoothly and are clear without being wordy	Grammar, spelling, word choice, sentence structure and word economy need attention	Serious problems with grammar, spelling, word choice, sentence structure and/or word economy

A punitive grade of F will be given to work found to have been plagiarized. Please discuss with me any questions that you might have about the use of secondary material.

As a word to the wise, read your paper out loud to yourself, asking yourself whether you would say what you have written. *Don't write just as you speak, but be sure that you would say what you write.* As you write, imagine that you are going to present your paper as a speech. *Picture your audience: first and foremost, other students!* Make sure that every sentence is clear and precise so that you can go on.

Note that late papers will be penalized one letter grade per day that they are late. (So a paper that would have been an A will be a B if it is late by a day, a C if it is late by two days, etc.) Again, due allowance will be made for reasonable excuses. You may also request extensions if need be. I urge you to take advantage of my office hours, listed above, in order to discuss the course generally and the paper in particular.

*Case study presentation*

Our last two class meetings before the final exam will be devoted to case study presentations. Working in groups of three or four, students must identify, research, and prepare a presentation on a real-life case raising questions of health care organizational ethics. (See the method for discussion of case studies at the bottom of this syllabus). The case study presentation is worth 30 percent of the final grade.

### *Exam*

There will be one final, take-home exam worth 20 percent of the final grade. Students will have two weeks to complete this exam.

In sum:	Attendance/participation	= 14 percent
	Organizational analysis exercise	= 3 percent
	Co-curricular report	= 3 percent
	Paper	= 30 percent
	Case study presentation	= 30 percent
	Final exam	= 20 percent
		= 100

### **Academic integrity**

To quote (with a few edits) from the Student Handbook (76-77):

In order for faculty members to perform their duty of fostering and accurately evaluating the individual academic progress of each student, they need to assume that laboratory reports, examinations, essays, themes, term papers, and similar requirements submitted for credit as a part of a course or in fulfillment of a College requirement are the original works of the student. Put simply, a violation of academic integrity is an action where a student tries to violate this assumption of the faculty member. Therefore, students shall not knowingly

1. receive or attempt to receive non-authorized assistance in the preparation of any work (when direct quotations are used, they are to be properly cited, and when the ideas of another are incorporated into a paper or paraphrased, they are to be appropriately acknowledged by citation);
2. sell, give, lend, or otherwise furnish, or attempt to sell, give, lend, or otherwise furnish unauthorized assistance to another in such preparation of any work;
3. take or attempt to take, steal, or otherwise procure in an unauthorized manner any material pertaining to the conduct of a class, including tests, examinations, grade change forms, grade reports, roll books, or reports, etc.;
4. sell, give, lend, or otherwise furnish to any unauthorized person any illicitly obtained material that is known to contain questions or answers to any examination scheduled to be given at some subsequent date or time offered by the College;

5. submit the same work for more than one course unless the faculty member to whom the work is being submitted has given their prior consent;
6. possess or use, without authorization of the instructor, copies of tests, answer sheets, books, notes, calculators, computers, cheat sheets, or similar means that could interfere with the fair, accurate testing or evaluation of a student;
7. obtain, without authorization of the instructor, answers from another student's exam, quiz, computer, or paper; and
8. provide false information to an instructor or College official for the purpose of misrepresenting an activity outside of class (reports on field experiences, internships, etc.), or improperly seeking special consideration or privilege (excused absences, postponement of an exam or due date of papers or project, etc.).

### **Accommodations for students with disabilities**

All students who have a documented learning or physical disability are encouraged to schedule an appointment with the instructor during the first week of class to discuss any needed accommodations.

### **Required texts**

Robert T. Hall, *An Introduction to Healthcare Organizational Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), ISBN 978-0-19-513560-2, and Tom L. Beauchamp and James F. Childress, *Principles of Biomedical Ethics*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), ISBN 978-0-19-992458-5, plus texts on Moodle

### **Schedule** (which may be revised as we proceed)

Meeting 1, 8/29      Introduction and context

NO CLASS MONDAY, 9/5, LABOR DAY

NO CLASS MONDAY, 9/12, EID AL-ADHA

Meeting 2, 9/19      The nature of health care

Reading (on Moodle): Daniel P. Sulmasy, "Dignity, Vulnerability, and the Personhood of the Patient," chapter 3 of *The Rebirth of the Clinic: An Introduction to Spirituality in Health Care* (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2006); Elizabeth Anderson, "For-Profit Corruption," *Boston Review*, May/June 2012; and Noam Scheiber, "Doctors Unionize to Resist the Medical Machine," *New York Times*, January 10, 2016

Meeting 3, 9/26      Moral norms

Reading (on Moodle): Reading (in part on Moodle): Beauchamp and Childress, *Principles of Biomedical Ethics*, 1-25, and Evelyn Nieves, "Girl Awaits Father's 2<sup>nd</sup> Kidney, and Decision by Medical Ethicists," *New York Times*, December 5, 1998

Meeting 4, 10/3      Organizational analysis

Reading: Hall, *An Introduction to Healthcare Organizational Ethics*, 3-7, 16-37

Organizational analysis exercise assigned

Meeting 5, 10/10      Charity care, social responsibility, and the pursuit of profit

Reading (in part on Moodle): Hall, *An Introduction to Healthcare Organizational Ethics*, 41-56; Andrew Pollack and Sabrina Tavernise, "Valeant's Drug Price Strategy Enriches It, but Infuriates Patients and Lawmakers," *New York Times*, October 4, 2015; and "Room for Debate: Should the Government Impose Drug Price Controls?" *New York Times*, September 23, 2015

Recommended but not required (google): Gretchen Morgenson, "Valeant's High-Price Drug Strategy," *New York Times*, October 2, 2015; James Surowiecki, "Taking on the Drug Profiteers," *The New Yorker*, October 12, 2015; and Ezekiel Emanuel, "I Am Paying for Your Expensive Medicine," *New York Times*, November 7, 2015

Meeting 6, THURSDAY, 10/13

F. Daniel Davis, Director of Bioethics, Geisinger Health System, "Organizational Ethics in Health Care: Thinking and Doing," Thursday, October 13, 7:00 p.m., McGowan School of Business, Burke Auditorium

Co-curricular report assigned

Meeting 7, 10/17      Justice and health care

Reading: Beauchamp and Childress, *Principles of Biomedical Ethics*, 249-264, 270-276, and 279-293, and Sheri Fink, "Drug Choices Forcing Hard Decisions on Rationing Treatments," *New York Times*, January 29, 2016

Meeting 8, 10/24      Managed care, accountable care, and the future of health insurance

Reading (in part on Moodle): Hall, *An Introduction to Healthcare Organizational Ethics*, 77-94; David DeGrazia, "Single-Payer Meets Managed Competition: The Case for Public Funding and Private Delivery," *Hastings Center Report* 38/1 (2008): 23-33; and Atul Gawande, "The Cost Conundrum," *The New Yorker*, June 1, 2009

Recommended but not required (google): Gawande, "Overkill," *The New Yorker*, May 11, 2015; Robert Pear, "Many Say High Deductibles Make Their Health Law Insurance All but Useless," *New York Times*, November 14, 2015; Abby Goodnough, "Many See I.R.S. Penalties as More Affordable Than Insurance," *New York Times*, January 3, 2016; Margot Sanger-Katz, "Even Insured Can Face Crushing Medical Debt, Study Finds," *New York Times*, January 5, 2016; Elisabeth Rosenthal, "Sorry, We Don't Take Obamacare," *New York Times*, May 14, 2016; and Robert Pear, "Why Do Health Costs Keep Rising? These People Know," *New York Times*, June 9, 2016

Paper assigned

Meeting 9, 10/31      Program development

Reading (in part on Moodle): Hall, *An Introduction to Healthcare Organizational Ethics*, 119-131, and Willard Gaylin, "Harvesting the Dead," *Harper's*, September 1974

Meeting 10, 11/7      Patient services and medical futility

Reading (in part on Moodle): Hall, *An Introduction to Healthcare Organizational Ethics*, 146-157, and Daniel P. Sulmasy, "Futility and the Varieties of Medical Judgment," *Theoretical Medicine* 18 (1997): 63-78

Meeting 11, 11/14      Conscience and the limits of toleration

Reading (on Moodle): Daniel P. Sulmasy, "What Is Conscience and Why Is Respect for It So Important?" *Theoretical Medicine and Bioethics* 29 (2008): 135-149; John F. Tuohey, "A Fatal Conflict: Can Catholic Hospitals Refuse to Save Lives?" *Commonweal*, January 11, 2011; and United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed., Pt. 4

Recommended but not required (on Moodle): Commission on Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Hospitals, "Catholic Hospital Ethics," *Linacre Quarterly* 39/4 (1972): 246-268

Meeting 12, 11/21      Case study presentations

Meeting 13, 11/28      Case study presentations

Meeting 14, 12/5      Final exam assigned

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### **Method for discussion of case studies**

- 1) What are the relevant facts of the case? Also, are there facts that need still to be gathered? Just the facts; no analysis, no argumentation, etc.
- 2) What are the ethical problems, challenges, questions to consider?—questions of responsibilities and obligations, questions of what would be morally permissible and what morally impermissible, questions of what would be right, what wrong, what good, what bad, what virtuous, what vicious....
- 3) What are different, apparently defensible courses of action that might be taken?—only courses that appear permissible (that is, nothing stands in the way) or justified (that is, there is, moreover, positive moral reason to go ahead).
- 4) What is the most ethical choice among the different possibilities? What reasons recommend this choice over the others? Discuss/argue, pushing toward basic claims or principles.