Understanding Organizational Ethics
HCA 531 (3 credits)
King’s College, Spring 2016

Dr. Bernard G. Prusak
Associate Professor of Philosophy
Director, McGowan Center for Ethics and Social Responsibility
Office: McGowan 203
Office hours: MTW 1-2 and by appointment
extension 5689; bernardprusak@kings.edu

Class meeting time and location:
Tuesday, 2:15-5:00 p.m., McGowan 118

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, not counting the week of the final exam. 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strong work</th>
<th>Needs development</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>Actively and respectfully listens to peers and instructor</td>
<td>Sometimes displays lack of interest in comments of others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation</td>
<td>Arrives fully prepared with all assignments completed, and notes on reading, observations, questions</td>
<td>Sometimes arrives unprepared or with only superficial preparation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of contributions</td>
<td>Comments are relevant and reflect understanding of: assigned text(s); previous remarks of other students; and insights about assigned material</td>
<td>Comments sometimes irrelevant, betray lack of preparation, or indicate lack of attention to previous remarks of other students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on seminar</td>
<td>Comments frequently help move seminar conversation forward</td>
<td>Comments sometimes advance the conversation, but sometimes do little to move it forward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of participation</td>
<td>Actively participates at appropriate times</td>
<td>Sometimes participates but other times is “tuned out”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Writing assignments

As noted in the schedule below, you will be required to attend one co-curricular event the first week of the semester. 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 assigned readings for both weeks 1 and 2. The co-curricular event report counts for 3 percent of the final grade. The report will be graded using the following rubrics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary of the event</th>
<th>Strong work: full credit</th>
<th>Satisfactory: partial credit</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory: no credit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Account of the facts is accurate and clear</td>
<td>Account of the facts needs development or clarification</td>
<td>Account of the facts is inaccurate and unclear</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reflection on the event</th>
<th>Reflection is substantive and thoughtful</th>
<th>Reflection needs development</th>
<th>Reflection does not engage substantively with the event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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 20 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>Strong work</th>
<th>Needs development</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Spends inappropriate amount of time merely summarizing text or repeating material covered in class, or does not provide sufficient background/assumes too much knowledge of the text</td>
<td>Shows little evidence of having read the text; ideas mostly taken from class notes or class discussion and not developed further</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thesis</th>
<th>Single clear thesis ( = answer to the question, What is this paper about?) that would be interesting to someone who had already studied the text</th>
<th>Thesis is either somewhat unclear or all too obvious to most thoughtful readers</th>
<th>No clear thesis, or multiple theses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introductory paragraph(s)</th>
<th>Avoids inflated generalizations and gratuitous praise; “hooks” the reader; introduces clear thesis; briefly explains how the paper will proceed</th>
<th>Extraneous generalization; connection to thesis not entirely clear; thesis statement not clear; lacks compelling “hook,” or statement of how the paper will proceed</th>
<th>No clear thesis statement or sense of where the paper is going</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paragraphs in body of paper</th>
<th>Each paragraph does one and only one bit of work toward the paper’s goal</th>
<th>Some paragraphs are “baggy monsters,” trying to do all too much; or some do not</th>
<th>Little relationship between paragraphs and thesis, little to no evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
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 shows the reader why he or she should | Some missteps are made in developing thesis; argument only compelling to someone who already agrees; only tells the reader that such-and-such is the case instead of showing 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 20 percent of the final grade.

Exam

There will be one final, take-home exam worth 40 percent of the final grade. Students will have two weeks to complete this exam.

In sum:  
Attendance/participation = 14 percent
Co-curricular report = 3 percent
Organizational analysis exercise = 3 percent
Paper = 20 percent
Case study presentation = 20 percent
Final exam = 40 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


Schedule (which may be revised as we proceed)

Week 1, 1/19 Introduction and context: Is health care a commodity?


Co-curricular report assigned

CO-CURRICULAR EVENT: 2016 Bessette Lecture

“21st Century Genomic Medicine: What Care and for Whom?”

Dr. Kevin FitzGerald, S.J., Dr. David Lauler Chair of Catholic Health Care Ethics in the Center for Clinical Bioethics, Georgetown University; Associate Professor in the Department of Oncology, Georgetown University Medical Center
Tuesday, January 19, 2016, 7:00 p.m., Burke Auditorium, McGowan School of Business

ABSTRACT: Every week one finds reports in the media touting new and exciting advances in genetic research and genomic medicine. These reports often include multiple assumptions about how these advances will benefit patients and society. The goal of this presentation is:

To examine some of these new medical technologies and the assumptions often associated with them as to how they will benefit us;

To identify fundamental problems inherent in these assumptions; and

To suggest approaches that could lead to a better integration of these genetic and genomic advances into our health care systems and our society.

Week 2, 1/26

The spirituality of health care


Week 3, 2/2

Moral norms


Week 4, 2/9

Organizational analysis


Organizational analysis exercise assigned

Week 5, 2/16

Is healthcare a utility?

Reading (in part on Moodle): Hall, An Introduction to Healthcare Organizational Ethics, 41-56; United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Ethical and

Week 6, 2/23 Justice and health care: Is there a right to health care?

Reading: Beauchamp and Childress, Principles of Biomedical Ethics, 249-264, 270-276, and 279-293

Week 7, 3/1 Managed care and the future of health insurance


Paper assigned

SPRING BREAK

Week 8, 3/15 The promise of accountable care organizations


Week 9, 3/22 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

Week 10, 3/29  Patient services and medical futility


Week 11, 4/5  Conscience and the limits of toleration


Week 12, 4/12  Guest lecture by Dr. Lee Saltzgaber, M.D., M.M.M., M.P.H.

Week 13, 4/19  Case study presentations

Week 14, 4/26  Case study presentations

Week 15, 5/3  Final exam assigned

**Method for discussion of case studies**

1) What are the relevant facts of the case? Just the facts; no analysis, no argumentation, etc. **List.**

2) What are the ethical problems, challenges, questions to consider? Not questions of fact; instead, a) questions of responsibilities and obligations, b) questions of what would be morally permissible and what morally impermissible, c) questions of what would be right, what wrong, what good, what bad, d) questions about what a virtuous person would do, which is to say what a kind, thoughtful, courageous, charitable, generous, gentle, tender, wise, etc. person would do (see the list of virtues at The Virtues Project, online). **List again.**

3) What are different courses of action that might be taken? Only those courses that appear ethically defensible—that appear permissible (that is, nothing stands in the way) or justified (that is, there is, moreover, positive moral reason to go ahead). **List.**

---

¹ Note that an action may be “right” in two senses. We might call an action right because it is the best course of action available in a given situation. Still, we may not want to praise this action; we might even have reason to regret that the person in question has put himself in the situation where he has to act one way or the other. We might also call an action right because we want to commend it—because it is the action that a virtuous person would take.
4) What is the best or most ethical choice among the different possibilities? What reasons recommend this choice over the others? Discuss/argue, pushing toward basic claims or principles.