

Distinction in Bioethics Program

Faculty Lead: Dr. Michael Shapiro, mes362@njms.rutgers.edu

Description

Increasing medical capability resulting from developing technology has resulted in changes in healthcare delivery throughout the life cycle, but especially at the beginning and end of life. Often, consideration of the moral and ethical issues resulting from these changes has lagged behind the technology. The recent pandemic has further highlighted the need for physicians to be able to identify, articulate, and navigate ethics issues in healthcare to provide holistic care that is consonant with the patient's values and physician's moral and professional obligation. Issues of allocation of scarce resources, informed consent, withholding or withdrawal of interventions, end-of-life decision-making, research ethics, health issues in public policy, etc., are all current problems being studied in Bioethics. NJMS students are introduced to bioethics as first year students and will face ethics issues around patient care throughout their medical school career and into their post-graduate training.

The Distinction in Bioethics Program is designed to enable NJMS students to engage the field of bioethics in more depth than permitted in the regular curriculum, and to develop expertise in a particular bioethical problem. Students will become familiar with the Bioethics Committees of our various hospitals, be involved with clinical ethics consultation, and be expected to develop, with mentorship from faculty, a bioethics research project, resulting in a manuscript suitable for submission for publication. Students with prior experience in Bioethics or Philosophy are encouraged to apply for this distinction program, but prior experience is not a prerequisite.

Distinction In Bioethics Program Committee

Chair: Michael E. Shapiro, M.D. Chair, Bioethics Committee, UH
Professor of Surgery, R-NJMS

Co-Chair: Frances Rieth Ward, Ph.D., RN, MBE, Co-Chair, Bioethics Committee, UH
Associate Professor, R-SON
Jt. Appt. Family Medicine, R-NJMS

Additional Faculty: Grace Lee Riddle, MD, MSME
Assistant Professor of Surgery

Program Requirements

I) Didactics

Will be based on the framework of a current **SGS** course (GSND 5325 Introduction to Biomedical Ethics), which is a flipped-classroom, literature and case-based introductory bioethics course, currently taught by Dr. Shapiro. The plan for the distinction program would be to use the cases and papers selected for the course and spread them over a 3-4-year structure. Monthly seminars will be held where distinction program students would meet to discuss specific papers and cases illustrative of various bioethical principles or present real cases encountered by students in the clinic or clerkship rotations. Students on clinical rotations or dedicated study periods for Step 1 and 2 would not be expected to attend all didactic sessions, but participation as their schedule permits is highly encouraged.

II) Practicum

Distinction program students will be required to attend at least 10 UH Bioethics Committee monthly meetings during the course of the distinction program: During Year 3 and 4, students may elect to attend Ethics Committee meetings at the hospital where they are doing a clinical rotation.

- Year 1 – Attend at least 2 UH Bioethics Committee Meetings
- Year 2 – Attend at least 2 UH Bioethics Committee Meetings
- Year 3 – Attend at least 2 UH Bioethics Committee Meetings
- Year 4 – Attend at least 3 UH Bioethics Committee Meetings

Additional requirements include taking the following electives:

- Year 3 – SURG 9512 Surgical Ethics (Optional)
- Year 4 – SURG 9012 Surgical Ethics OR MED 9004 Palliative Care OR PEDS 9081 Clinical Genetics

III) Capstone

The student will develop a bioethics research project within the domain of clinical ethics or research ethics. Upon approval of the Committee and under the mentorship of a Distinction in Bioethics faculty member, the student will complete the project over the course of the program to produce the following deliverables:

- Written manuscript(s) ready for submission for publication, *or*
- Written thesis
- Presentation(s) (lecture, poster, conference)

The Capstone project may build on earlier work from the summer between Year 1 and 2 or may be a new project based on clinical experiences in Year 3.

A presentation given during a monthly didactic session or UH Bioethics Committee Meeting is also acceptable.

Students in Year 4 may choose to enroll in a one-month Independent Study to complete their capstone project.

Timeline

The timeline will mirror the timeline established for the other Distinction Programs. The application and selection process would be completed in the fall and early winter, permitting students to begin the didactic curriculum and discussions relating to the summer experience in January. It would be expected that the student would spend the summer between Year 1 and Year 2 in an intensive bioethics learning experience structured around a bioethics research project, resulting in a paper suitable for presentation and submission for publication.

The actual preparation of a paper for submission may not be completed by the end of the summer, but could continue with meetings with the mentor during Year 2, as necessary. Regular didactic sessions would continue through Year 2 – 4, and, as students advance, they would be expected to take more of a role in leading these sessions.

I) Year 1

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| Jan | Info Session for the Distinction of Bioethics Program |
| Feb 15 | Deadline for Distinction of Bioethics Program Application |
| Feb-March | Interview with Applicants |
| March | Notification of Accepted Applicants with Matched Faculty/Mentor |
| March – Apr | Identification of Summer Bioethics Research Project |
| March – May | Monthly Didactics, Attend at least 2 UH Bioethics Committee Meetings |
| Apr | Summer Bioethics Research Project Proposal Due, Project Presentation |
| Apr – May | Summer Bioethics Research Project Preparation |
| June – July | Summer Bioethics Research Project |

II) Year 2

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| Aug | Written Progress Report Due |
| Sept – May | Monthly Didactics, Attend at least 3 UH Bioethics Committee Meetings |
| Apr – May | Poster Session/Presentation of Research During Year 1 & 2 |
| May | End-of-Year Written Progress Report Due |

III) Year 3

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| June – Apr | SURG 9512 Surgical Ethics elective |
| Sept – May | Monthly Didactics, Attend at least 2 UH Bioethics Committee Meetings |
| May | End-of-Year Written Progress Report Due |

IV) Year 4

June Submission of Thesis Proposal

June – Apr SURG 9012 Surgical Ethics OR MED 9004 Palliative Care OR PEDS 9081
Clinical Genetics

Sept – Apr Monthly Didactics, Attend at least 3 UH Bioethics Committee Meetings

Apr Submission of Written Thesis

May Poster Session/Presentation During NJMS Distinction Program Symposium