

# BIOETHICS

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Program Office: Department of Interdisciplinary Studies

Master of Science in Bioethics (<https://gradschool.creighton.edu/programs/masters-degrees/health/bioethics/>)

## Graduate Study in Bioethics

The Master of Science in Bioethics degree program is designed for students who are seeking a deeper understanding of the impact of relevant cultural, philosophical, political, and legal issues in health care practices and policies, especially regarding their impact on vulnerable populations. Pursuant to promoting the Jesuit value of concern for people who are 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 Master of Science in Bioethics degree will be able to:

1. Identify and deconstruct ethical problems in health care, systems, policies and laws.
2. Apply ethical principles, norms, and theories in ethically complex situations to facilitate open and informed discussion among multiple stakeholders.
3. Analyze general concerns of bioethics surrounding health care of populations made vulnerable or marginalized.
4. Synthesize and communicate findings from research and critical reflection on a selected topic of ethical concern.
5. Critically reflect on personal and professional attitudes, actions, and experiences to improve communication and interaction with diverse populations.
6. Incorporate diverse perspectives from the humanities and liberal arts into ethical reflection about health care structures.

### Graduate Certificate Admissions Requirements

- **Baccalaureate degree or higher:** 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.
- **Transcripts:** Applicants must submit official transcripts from the institution that awarded their baccalaureate degree. Issuing institutions must send the transcripts directly.
- **Curriculum vitae:** Applicants should include relevant education, employment history, certifications and licensures, teaching and research experience, publications, presentations, awards, honors, affiliates, professional associations, experience and background in health, public health, or bioethics.
- **Personal Statement:** In 500 words or fewer, applicants must explain how their professional goals relate to the field of bioethics and how successful completion of this program will assist them in achieving those goals.
- **Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL):** All international applicants must demonstrate proficiency in the English language by submitting a minimum TOEFL score of 100 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, or New Zealand are not required to submit a TOEFL score report.

- **Application and application fee of \$50.**

### Master of Science in Bioethics Admissions Requirements

In addition to the requirements for the graduate certificate, applicants seeking admission to the MS in Bioethics program must also submit the following:

- transcripts from all graduate-level coursework and
- two letters of recommendation (to be completed and submitted by persons other than family members who can assess the applicant's performance in an academic or work setting).

### Degrees in Bioethics

- Bioethics, M.S. (<http://catalog.creighton.edu/graduate/graduate-programs-courses/bioethics/bioethics-ms/>)

### Graduate Certificates in Bioethics

- Bioethics (<http://catalog.creighton.edu/graduate/graduate-programs-courses/bioethics/grad-cert-bioethics/>)
- Clinical Ethics Consultation (<http://catalog.creighton.edu/graduate/graduate-programs-courses/bioethics/grad-cert-clinical-ethics-consultation/>)

### Courses

#### MHE 600. Scholarly Reading and Writing. 3 credits.

The course will build on and improve existing writing skills. Students and faculty are all members or a larger writing community in which everyone contributes to an on-going dialogue. The course assumes one's writing can always improve. The specific aims of the course are: 1) to produce clear and precise writing and 2) to accurately credit and incorporate the others' scholarly work. The course includes recognizing, attributing and summarizing existing scholarship. The course also stresses responses to existing work, distinguishing response types, anticipating arguments or objections, and tying it all together. Concrete templates and rhetorical moves are employed to enhance reasoning and organizational abilities. Students incorporate detailed instructor feedback in multiple writing assignments. The course assumes understanding of the rules of English grammar, spelling, syntax, and punctuation.

#### MHE 601. Health Policy. 3 credits.

MHE 601 explores health policy and its development, emphasizing social justice and human rights. Students consider institutional, local, regional, national, and international approaches to public health, health systems, and priorities for research and development. American health systems - operations, processes, successes, and failures - are extensively analyzed. Students consider processes for and challenges in making health policy at institutional, state, and federal levels. Past and current attempts at health systems reform are reviewed, stressing 2010 U.S. healthcare reform.

**MHE 602. Research Ethics. 3 credits.**

This course will enhance students' understanding of core ethical issues in biomedical research and improve their ability to analyze, explain, and justify relevant cases, arguments, positions, and policies. The focus is biomedical research involving human participants. A stress is investigation involving populations and communities with vulnerability. Study of historically pivotal cases leads to review of ethical, policy, and programmatic responses. Students also study ethical factors in community-based research, informed consent, multinational research, genomics, and neuroscience. Discussions develop collective inquiry related to core topics. Individual papers also develop students' knowledge and aim to enhance their analytical and compositional skills.

**MHE 603. Law and Health Care Ethics. 3 credits.**

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 and Cultural Contexts of Health Care. 3 credits.**

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 credits.**

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, deontology, utilitarianism, casuistry and principlism. 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 500; MHE 600.

**MHE 606. Theories of Justice. 3 credits.**

This course will introduce students to theoretical and practical complexities, ambiguities, and persistent questions at the intersections of clinical ethics, social policy, and health justice. P. MHE 500; MHE 600.

**MHE 607. Practical Ethics in Health Care Settings. 3 credits.**

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 500; MHE 600.

**MHE 608. Practicum. 3 credits.**

This course requires synthesis of content from all previous foundational course work. Students will analyze vulnerability and corresponding ethical issues as they pertain to a particular group, population, policy, or structure. Students will develop a practical plan for responding to the ethical issue or problem that has been identified in a collaborative and constructive manner with key individuals at the practicum site. Students will integrate appropriate course content and other relevant support material into the plan. P. MHE 605; MHE 606; or permission of program director.

**MHE 609. Capstone. 3 credits.**

In this final required course of the degree program, students are expected to integrate insights gained and competencies acquired. Applying scholarly methods of bioethical inquiry and composition, students will develop a scholarly product on a theme related to their Practicum course experience. P. MHE 605; MHE 606; or permission of program director.

**MHE 610. Introduction to Bioethics. 3 credits.**

Bioethics is a complex field with few easy answers. This course uses an interdisciplinary lens to introduce students to the ethical dilemmas inherent in health care and health policy with specific emphasis on populations with vulnerability, disadvantage, or marginalization. Students develop a broad understanding of the philosophical, historical, cultural, economic, technological, and political dimensions of ethical issues the discipline of bioethics encompasses.

**MHE 614. Ethical Aspects of End-of-Life Care. 3 credits.**

This course examines different end-of-life care practices including forgoing treatment, PAS/euthanasia, palliative care, sedation and decision-making for incompetent patients. Students reflect on their own views on disabilities, aging and dying; examine the merits of policies/legislation; and consider how society at large can come to appreciate those dying in our midst.

**MHE 615. Patient-Centered Consultation. 3 credits.**

This course is an interactive introduction to the key, basic-level skills in healthcare ethics consultation involving adult patients. The course will focus on the three categories of skills for healthcare ethics consultants - ethical assessment and analysis, process skills and interpersonal skills - that are the foundation of the Core Competencies for Healthcare Ethics Consultants, 2nd ed., a report of the American Society of Bioethics and Humanities (ASBH, 2011).

**MHE 619. Rescue and Transplantation: Manifestations of Scarcity and Power in U.S. Health Care. 3 credits.**

This elective course combines the perspectives of bioethics and anthropology. It focuses on the impact on society of a rescue-oriented health care system and the promotion of transplantation as a quintessential form of rescue. Through reading, discussion, and reflection students explore the concepts of rescue, scarcity, and the search for control in terms of acute care and mortality in the U.S. Students also choose one of several international perspectives on organ transplantation, compare it to a U.S. perspective, and present their finds to the class. The course begins by considering how CPR and the obligation to rescue reflects and shapes both U.S. health care and the social construction of dying and death in the American hospital. The course relates rescue to scarcity and power, including power over nature. The course considers micro and macro perspectives as it explores the organ transfer project, its promises, and its ability to deliver on those promises. Finally, students consider an alternative set of ideas to contrast to rescue's positivist frame.

**MHE 622. Public Health Ethics. 3 credits.**

This course introduces students to ethical issues in population health and the discipline of public health. This course draws upon some of the major discourses and analyses in human rights, social justice and other ethical theory, and health policy to consider health and healthcare as aggregate public and social goods. The ethical dimensions of geopolitical, economic, cultural, environmental, educational, and social influences on health will be explored in global, national, and community contexts. The course will consider ethical questions about the discipline of public health and the roles of governments, academic medical centers, healthcare organizations, health professions, professionals, and members of the public as stewards of health.

**MHE 623. Catholic Bioethics. 3 credits.**

Intensive introduction to the Catholic tradition in bioethics-including theological and philosophical foundations, key teachings of the church's Magisterium, and points of current controversy. Special focus on Catholic understandings of human dignity and justice, in general and as applied to selected health care issues.

**MHE 624. Oral Health Care at the Intersection of Professional and Business Ethics. 3 credits.**

This course reviews the ethical challenges faced by health care providers who are both private entrepreneurs and members of a profession. Business and professional aims are not identical and may even be mutually exclusive. The course focuses on ethical issues in the practice of dentistry and oral health care, but many other health providers face similar conflicts, such as pharmacists, optometrists, physical/occupational therapists, and plastic surgeons. Specific attention will be paid to the historical development of the dental profession, underserved populations, esthetic treatments, advertising, error management, and peer review.

**MHE 695. Independent Study in Health Care Ethics. 3 credits.**

This course offers students the opportunity to explore a topic in health care ethics in depth. Specifically, students will collaborate with the instructor to design a plan to achieve agreed upon learning goals, strategies to achieve goals, and evidence of learning.