MEDICAL HUMANITIES AND BIOETHICS

https://bioethics.northwestern.edu/masters/

Degree Types: MA, including established dual-degree options with an MD or an MS in Genetic Counseling

The Master of Arts in Medical Humanities & Bioethics (https://bioethics.northwestern.edu/masters) program provides a rigorous exploration of medicine and its ethical implications through the perspectives of anthropology, literature, philosophy, history, and law. Students acquire the interdisciplinary tools to develop a broader, richer understanding of medicine in society and to engage in complex ethical analysis. Graduates can apply their knowledge and skills to clinical practice, consulting, policy debates, and academic scholarship.

This interdisciplinary degree is designed for current and future professionals in medicine, law, or related fields. It can be pursued independently or as a dual-degree with an MD or MS in Genetic Counseling. Combining the MA with a JD, PhD, or other Northwestern degree may also be possible on a case-by-case basis.

The program consists of two years of course work (which can be compressed into one year), plus a master’s thesis or comprehensive exam.

Degrees Offered

• Medical Humanities and Bioethics MA (https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/tgs/medical-humanities-bioethics/medical-humanities-bioethics-ma)

Medical Humanities and Bioethics Courses

MHB 401-0 Foundations of Bioethics (1 Unit)
This course will explore major theories and key cases in contemporary bioethics. Participants will learn the history and the application of principlism, casuistry, care ethics, virtue ethics, narrative ethics, pragmatism, and communitarianism. The central issues in bioethics will be examined through key historical cases.

MHB 402-0 Medicine & Law (1 Unit)
Using judicial opinions as our primary text and constitutional law as our primary lens, this course analyzes how the U.S. legal system mediates conflicts between individuals and the state, parents and children, and doctors and patients. Topics covered include reproductive medicine (contraception, abortion, and assisted reproduction), termination of life support and other treatments by patients and surrogates, and physician assisted suicide. In addition to increasing substantive legal knowledge, the course aims to help students to interpret and engage with the medico-legal texts and arguments they will encounter in the future by improving their rhetorical skills and legal literacy.

MHB 403-0 The History of Medicine and Bioethics (1 Unit)
The history of medicine in the United States is a large subject, and in this seminar we will touch on many, but by no means all, of what can be considered as part of this history. In addition to covering an abbreviated history of medicine in the US with the goals of helping you place current topics in medicine within a historical frame (and appreciating this frame as a useful one), this course will also give you a chance to think like a historian and provide a basic introduction to historical methodology.

MHB 404-0 Literature, Medicine, and Bioethics (1 Unit)
This course surveys the uses of literary texts and theories in understanding the workings of health care, illness experience, and bioethics. The first five weeks focus on narratology and close reading as methods for understanding texts relevant to medicine and illness; the second on how narrative works in bioethics, from clinical ethics to speculative fiction to the design of health policy.

MHB 405-0 Social Science and Medicine (1 Unit)
This course will introduce students to key classic and contemporary scholarship in the social science of medicine to explore how empirical research can inform and enrich our understanding of moral issues in medicine. Organized around a series of core topics in bioethics (e.g. death and dying, reproductive technologies, organ transplantation, and disability), the course examines a range of theoretical frameworks and methodological strategies from the social sciences, with a particular emphasis on ethnographic and cross-cultural approaches. Students will learn how to interpret and assess social scientific research, as well as how to bring a social scientific perspective to bear on problems in medicine.

MHB 406-0 The Practice of Bioethics (1 Unit)
This capstone course takes students from theory to practice, providing an introduction to ways they might put their MHB knowledge into action as they develop careers in various clinical and social contexts. One-third of the course is devoted to the practice of clinical ethics consultation and the work of institutional ethics committees. Other topics covered include writing and publishing academic articles, delivering compelling conference presentations, developing excellent teaching skills, conducting and regulating research, and offering expert opinion to public debate through the media.

MHB 410-1 Special Topics in Medical Humanities and Bioethics (0.33 Unit)
This course is a year-long weekly series of one-hour lunchtime lectures chosen to illustrate the breadth and depth of topics in bioethics and the medical humanities. These lectures are delivered by faculty members and invited guests, on topics in which they specialize.

MHB 410-2 Special Topics in Medical Humanities and Bioethics (0.34 Unit)
This course is a year-long weekly series of one-hour lunchtime lectures chosen to illustrate the breadth and depth of topics in bioethics and the medical humanities. These lectures are delivered by faculty members and invited guests, on topics in which they specialize.

MHB 410-3 Special Topics in Medical Humanities and Bioethics (0.33 Unit)
This course is a year-long weekly series of one-hour lunchtime lectures chosen to illustrate the breadth and depth of topics in bioethics and the medical humanities. These lectures are delivered by faculty members and invited guests, on topics in which they specialize.

MHB 499-0 Independent Study (0.5-1 Unit)
This is a unit of independent study on a topic or topics within bioethics and/or the medical humanities. Students will study independently or in groups and will meet periodically with a program faculty member ("tutor"). Specific details of course content and meeting schedule are designed collaboratively between student(s) and tutor as appropriate to the chosen topic.