

**INTERAMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF PUERTO RICO**  
**METROPOLITAN CAMPUS**  
**Science and Technology Campus**  
**Department of Natural Sciences**

**SYLLABUS**

**I. GENERAL INFORMATION**

Course Title	Biomedical Ethics
Code and number	BMSC 4020 s. xxxxx
Credits	3 credits
Academic Term	xxxx
Professor	xxxx
Office hours	xxxx
Office Phone	xxxx
Electronic mail	xxxx

**II. COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Study of the medical aspects of biological research. Analysis discussion and application of ethics in conflict situations in medicine and biomedical research. Requisites: to have completed 24 credits in the area of biomedical sciences.

**III. OBJECTIVES**

1. To apply the principles of bioethics in the analysis of ethical problems in biomedical sciences.

- 1.1 To define values, morality, ethics, and bioethics.
- 1.2 To be able to distinguish bioethics from scientific research.
- 1.3 To distinguish between ethics and law, and ethics and religion.
- 1.4 To enumerate some historical events that brought forth the beginning of clinical bioethics.
- 1.5 To explain the four basic principles of bioethics.
- 1.6 To apply an adequate method in the analysis of particular cases in medicine.
- 1.7 To rationally justify the moral options for obtaining solutions to bioethical problems.
- 1.8 To argument for and against relativism and moral absolutism.

2. To evaluate the bioethical dimension in clinical practice.

- 2.1 To recognize the importance of integrity in the health professional
- 2.2 To discuss the challenge presented by some scientific advances in the doctor/patient relationship.
- 2.3 To discuss the characteristics that describe the clinical meeting as a moral event.
- 2.4 To define professionalism.
- 2.5 To analyze the fairness problems that arise from the distribution of health services resources.
- 2.6 To summarize the elements included in what is called Informed Consent.
- 2.7 To enumerate the components of HIPAA law.

3. To recognize some ethical problems which arise at the beginning of life.
  - 3.1 To explain the ethical problems presented by abortion.
  - 3.2 To explain the ethical problems relating to the ethical statute, which relate to the human life of the unborn.
  - 3.3 To defend one of the three moral positions which represent the statute of embryos and human fetuses.
4. To recognize some ethical problems presented by the end of life.
  - 4.1 To distinguish the criteria on death verification.
  - 4.2 To define death and medical vitalism.
  - 4.3 To describe the social and legal dimension of the death of a human being.
  - 4.4 To define the following terms: euthanasia, assisted suicide, physician-assisted suicide, limitation of therapeutic efforts, extraordinary and ordinary methods surrounding the death.
  - 4.5 To explain the distinction between killing and allowing death to occur.
  - 4.6 To analyze a case about the subject of bioethics at the end of life.
  - 4.7 To apply the term limitation of the therapeutic effort in the analysis of cases.
  - 4.8 To ascertain whether a medical treatment is an ordinary one or an extraordinary one.
  - 4.9 To define the following terms: living will, anticipated wills, and notary power.
  - 4.10 To distinguish between the concepts of the living will and notary power.
  - 4.11 To describe the requisites of PR Law 160 of November 21, 2001, on anticipated wills.
  - 4.12 To mention two limitations on anticipated wills.
  - 4.13 To prepare a document on anticipated wills.

### **III. THEMATIC CONTENTS**

#### **Theme 1: Basic concepts on biomedical ethics**

- A. Introduction
- B. Basic concepts
  - a. Philosophy
  - b. Morality
  - c. Ethics
  - d. Values
  - e. Norms
  - f. Moral and absolute relativism
- C. Bioethics and its application to the clinical practice:
  - a. Historical events that marked issues relating to patients and the use of human subjects.
    1. Willowbrook – Children exposed to hepatitis B virus.
    2. Jewish Chronic Disease Hospital – inoculation of cancer cells into patients without informed consent.
    3. Pseudo-research on Nazi prisoners.
- D. Four Basic Principles
  - a. Beneficence – Promoting what is best for the patient
  - b. Non-maleficence – do no harm
  - c. Justice – obey all principles and laws as pertains to patient care

- d. Respect for the autonomy of the patient – Autonomy refers to the capacity to think, decide and act out of one's own free initiative.
- E. When rules and principles enter into conflict
- a. Application of the principles of bioethics in the biomedical and clinical setting
  - b. Moral deliberation

**Theme 2: Relation between the health professional and his/her patient**

- A. Respect of the person
- B. From paternalism to informed consent
- C. The medical secret
- D. Informed consent
  - a. Elements of the informed consent
    - 1. Information
    - 2. Understanding
    - 3. Willfulness
    - 4. Choosing your subjects
  - b. Exceptions to informed consent
- E. Justice in the health systems
- F. HIPAA

**Theme 3: Ethical problems at the start of life**

- A. The ethical status of the unborn
- B. Abortion
- C. Viewpoints from a philosophical-theological aspect

**Theme 4: Ethical problems at the end of life**

- A. Death and dying at the present time
  - a. Criteria of death
  - b. From medical vitalism to a medicalized death
- B. Euthanasia and other related terms
  - a. Minimally conscious state
  - b. Lock-in-syndrome
  - c. Persistent vegetative state
  - d. Permanent vegetative state
- C. The limitation of the therapeutic effort
  - a. Extraordinary and ordinary treatments
  - b. Paradigmatic cases
    - 1. Karen Ann Quinlan's case (1954-1985)
    - 2. Nancy Cruzan's case (1983, "1983-1990")
  - c. Conflictive situations
    - 1. Jehovah's witness case
    - 2. Ramón Sampédro case

3. Terri Schiavo (1963-2005) case
4. Inmaculada Echevarría case

## V. ACTIVITIES

- A. Lectures
- B. Documentaries / Movies
- C. Readings and commentaries about current issues.
- D. Case analysis / Debate

## VI. EVALUATION

Criteria	Value	Percent (%)
Partial exams (Midterm Exam) and oral/written reports	200	60
Final Exam	100	30
Quizzes, class participation, short essays	60	10
	360	100%

Evaluation of criteria will be discussed with students.

## VII. SPECIAL NOTES

### ***Rights of students with special needs:***

Any student requiring auxiliary services or special assistance will request the same at the start of the course or as soon as he or she is aware of the need at the Office of the Coordinator of Services for Students with Impairments, located in the University counseling program.

### ***Warning about dishonesty, fraud, and plagiarism:***

Plagiarism, lack of honesty, fraud, and the manipulation or falsification of data and any other inappropriate behavior related to academic matters are contrary to institutional principles and norms and are subject to disciplinary sanctions, as stated in chapter V of the Student Manual.

### ***Use of cell phones, tablets, and notebooks:***

Cell phones are to be used in airplane mode when in class. Students may look up any definition or theme during the class using the internet as it pertains to the subject under discussion in the course. At no time will any such device be allowed during exams, quizzes, or any other evaluation.

## NOTES:

- Student Evaluations:
  - No reposition of quizzes.
  - With a reasonable excuse and a certificate, there might be reposition of an exam. If this is allowed, said reposition will be given at the end of the semester as agreed by the instructor and the student.
  - No reposition of the final exam will be given.
- The classroom will be left in the same condition as received at the start of the class.
- It is the student's responsibility to sign the roll book.

## VIII. EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

*Text:*

Ferrer, J. J. (2007). Deber y deliberación. Una invitación a la bioética. PR: Editorial CePA. Código Biblioteca

The following chapters will serve as the base for the first two lectures: 1, 2, 3, 4. This book, although in Spanish, can be found in the library in Reserve. It can only be photocopied in that room.

The following are some of the texts the student may use:

Boylan, M. (2013). **Medical Ethics**. Second Ed. Wiley Blackwell

Yates-Stripling, M. (2013). **Bioethics and Medical Issues in Literature**. University of California Medical Humanities Press.

Lewis, M.A., Tampo, C. D., Tatro, B.M., (2012). **Medical Law, Ethics and Bioethics for the Health Professions**. Seventh Ed. Davies.

Mappes. T. A. and D. DeGrazia (2006) **Biomedical Ethics**. 6<sup>th</sup> edition. McGraw-Hill Higher Education.

Other readings, lectures, movies, documentaries may be added to the course as needed. The instructor will decide which ones to use.

### **Additional Readings:**

Bernat, J. L. **Neuroethics**. (2008), In Ethical Issues in Neurology, 3rd edition. Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, Philadelphia: PA, p. 495-510.

Tooley, M. (1998). **Abortion and Infanticide**. In Classic Works in Medical Ethics. McGraw Hill. Boston: MA p. 203-217 (Clásico)

Heffernan Schinler, J. (2007). **Abortion. A Catholic Moral Analysis**. In Medicine, Health Care and Ethics. Catholic Voices. The Catholic University of America Press: Washington, D. C.

Silence, scapegoats, self-reflection: **Nazi medical crimes on medicine and bioethics**.2014.

### **Supplementary Readings:**

Álvarez Pérez, J. C. (2007). Limitación del esfuerzo terapéutico. En F. J. Elizari Basterra (Dir.). 10 palabras clave ante el final de la vida (p.245-301). España: Editorial Verbo Divino.

Colby, W. H. (2005, March, 6). 5 minutes that can spare a family years of pain. Tomado el acceso el 1 de junio de 2007, de [http://www.usatoday.com/news/opinion/editorials/2005-03-06-schiabo-edit\\_x.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/opinion/editorials/2005-03-06-schiabo-edit_x.htm)

Colby, W. H. (2007). Unplugged. Reclaiming Our Right to Die in America. NY: American Management Association, 2007.

Cowart, D. & Burt, R. (1998). Confronting Death: Who Chooses Who Controls? A Dialogue between Dax Cowart and Robert Burt. *Hastings Center Report*, 28(1), 14-24.

Congregación para la doctrina de la Fe. (1980). Declaración sobre la eutanasia. Tomado el acceso el 16 de julio de 2007, de

[http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_doc\\_19800505\\_euthanasia\\_sp.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19800505_euthanasia_sp.html)

Gayá González, L. (2006). Cuando “ni vivimos ni morimos: el caso Schiavo. *Puerto Rico Health Sciences Journal*, 25(3), 347-354.

Laureys, S. (2007). Eyes Open, Brain Shut. *Scientific American*, 296 (5), 86-89. Tomado el acceso el 6 de mayo de 2007 de EBSCOhost; <http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/>.

Schiavo, M. (2006) Terri. The Truth. Mljolini, LLC.

Simón. P. & Barrio-Cantalejo, I. M. (2008). El caso de Inmaculada Echevarría: implicaciones éticas y jurídicas. *Medicina Intensiva*. V. 32 n. 9, ISSN 0210-5691. En [http://scielo.isciii.es/scielo.php?pid=S0210-56912008000900005&script=sci\\_arttext](http://scielo.isciii.es/scielo.php?pid=S0210-56912008000900005&script=sci_arttext)

Treatment of Vital Maintenance and Vegetative State. [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/speeches/20040320\\_Congress-fiamc\\_sp.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/speeches/20040320_Congress-fiamc_sp.html)

Nuremberg's Code

<http://www.cirp.org/library/ethics/nuremberg>

Helsinki Declaration

<http://www.wma.net/e/policy/b3.htm>

Belmont Report: <http://www.bioeticaweb.com/content/view/1060/40/>

### **Movies and Documentaries:**

Documentaries/ Videos/ Movies (Subject to time limitations and subjects covered)

- Grey Matter por Joe Berlinger
- A Choice for K'aila: May Parents Refuse a Transplant for Their Child?, Filmmakers Library
- Dax Cowart
- Mar Adentro, 2004
- Sicko, 2007
- You don't know Jack. The Life and Deaths of Jack Kevorkian, 2010
- The Diving Bell and the Butterfly, 2008
- Wit, 2001
- Miss Evers' Boys, 1997 (Syphilis Experiments without informed consent)
- Nuremberg, 2000 (Movie on the Nuremberg Trials 1945-46)
- The Doctor, 1991 (Humane treatment of Patients)

## **IX. BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Beauchamp, T. L. and J. F. Childress (2001) *Principles of Biomedical Ethics*. 5th edition. Oxford University Press.

Ferrer, J. J. y J. C. Álvarez (2003). *Para fundamentar la bioética. Teorías y Paradigmas Teóricos en la Bioética Contemporánea*. Desclée de Brouwer, Madrid.

Gafo, J. (1997) *Eutanasia y ayuda al suicidio: Mis recuerdos de Ramón Sampedro*. Editoriales Universidad Pontificia de Comillas y Desclée De Brouwer, S. A. (clásico).

Hauser, M. D. (2006) *Moral Minds: How Nature Designed Our Universal Sense of Right and Wrong*. Harper Collins Publisher. New York: New York.

Pérez, I. (2007). *La salud no tiene precio*. Publicaciones Puertorriqueñas editores, Puerto Rico

Post Stephen G. (ed). *Encyclopedia of Bioethics*. (2004). 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. New York: Macmillan Reference USA,. 3062 pp. 5 vols. (Gale Virtual Reference Library- CAI). (clásica)

Warren, R. T. (ed.). *Encyclopedia of Bioethics*. (1995). (clásica).

Wijdicks, Eelco F. M. (2006). Minimally Conscious State vs. Persistent Vegetative State: The Case of Terry (Wallis) vs. the Case of Terri (Schiavo). *Mayo Clin. Proc.* 81(9), 1155-1158.

Internet Addresses:

Roe v. Wade:

<http://www.tourolaw.edu/patch/Roe/>

Caso Dax Cowart:

<http://www.ascensionhealth.org/ethics/public/cases/case12.asp>

Karen Ann Quinlan:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karen\\_Ann\\_Quinlan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karen_Ann_Quinlan)

Nancy Cruzan:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nancy\\_Cruzan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nancy_Cruzan)

*Revised October 2021*