

Teaching bioethics as a space for constructive engagement

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Today's Focus:

1

Introduce context and personal approach to teaching bioethics

2

Why it matters – how skills learned through engaging bioethics can help

3

An applied example from Ohio State Graduate Course

My goal as an educator: Engaging from this space with a goal of constructive dialogue and fostering compassionate response



Why it matters: Engaging challenging ethical & political issues

- The current landscape
- How can engaging bioethics help?
 - Application of frameworks for analysis
 - Intentional engagement with opposing viewpoints
 - Intersection between bioethics and law & policy
- Focus on skills development:
 - Listening to understand
 - Critical assessment of reasons supplied
 - Learning to discern between sources of information
- Aim of fostering compassionate response



methods for developing skills for constructive engagement in challenging legal and ethical issues in the classroom setting

- Course: *Bioethics, Law & Public Policy (BIOETHC 6030)*
- Description: This course will address the interaction and roles of bioethics, law, and public policy. Special attention will be given to key legal issues affecting health care systems and practice, including human subjects research, death and dying, transplantation, genetic and reproductive law, and vaccinations. This course will also address constitutional foundations of health care law applicable to some classical and contemporary bioethical issues, and present an overview of the structures of the legal system of the United States.
- Structure: 7 Units (each focusing on one topic), weekly small assignments, 2 major assignments;
- Delivery: 100% online & asynchronous



Module Focus:

- Structure: Topic introduction, objectives introduced, roadmap for module presented
- Content: Each module is shaped by guiding questions that students must engage with as they move through the material; readings and other media assigned as core readings, additional materials and “trending topics”
- Engagement: small group discussions (guided), opportunities for optional, real time engagement with faculty and classmates



Assignments:

- Weekly Assignment: designed to have students engaged in small groups, foster discussion. Focus on community building, developing reason in support of a stated position and responding in a constructive manner
- Larger projects:
- Midterm
 - Scaffolded throughout first half of term
 - Peer review component to practice giving (and receiving) constructive feedback on an ethically challenging legal or policy issue (step by step guidelines provided, along with expectation in rubric form to help students develop concrete understanding of engaging in this way)
- Public policy project
 - Designed to foster engagement with current (or very recent) bill of ethical import
 - Integration of skills from throughout the term
 - Requires identifying support and opposition in an objective manner and presenting their positions in a factual manner
 - Practice developing own response and position considering the identified ethical issues and implications (ethically and and at a law & policy level)



Outside of the assigned material

- Connection as a key component of engaging
 - Challenging in online, asynchronous environment
 - Some solutions: community board, coffee chats —> intentional spaces for students to engage with each other outside of the virtual classroom assignments and to engage with faculty member

Concluding thoughts



Thank you!

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