

PUBP 4630

Law, Medicine, and Ethics

Syllabus

3.0 credit hours, Summer 2026 - GT Oxford Program

Monday - Thursday, 8:00 - 9:30 am, Seminar East

Prof. Chad F. Slieper

General Information

Catalog Description

This course will examine common ethical dilemmas and challenges in medicine, methods for thinking ethically, and how the law responds to these situations.

Detailed Description

This course will examine how law and ethics inform various areas of clinical medicine and healthcare. The course will take a particular look at various ethical frameworks and models for decision making, with an emphasis on the clinical application of ethics to assist in resolving ethical dilemmas and other ethically fraught situations that often arise in healthcare. From a legal perspective, the course will examine ways in which the law has responded to and offered guidance to ethical challenges in healthcare. The course will also utilize role playing exercises and simulations to help illuminate the application of these concepts in the clinical setting and to develop conflict resolution skills that can be applied in healthcare and beyond. Given our location and context in the United Kingdom during the Oxford Study Abroad Program, we will also take a comparative look at legal and ethical issues in healthcare.

Pre- &/or Co-Requisites

While there are no required pre- or co-requisites for this course, a basic understanding of the structure of the American judicial system, such as that you likely gained in a high school or college introductory American government class, will be helpful to your understanding of the material covered.

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, you should be able to:

- Explain and apply basic ethical theories to clinical situations in healthcare, including principle-based ethics, consequentialism, casuistry, and others.
- Explain and critique legal approaches to deal with common ethical challenges in healthcare including decisional capacity, surrogate decision-making, informed consent, informed refusal, medically inappropriate treatments, and others.
- Demonstrate various skills and techniques for conflict resolution both in healthcare and more broadly.

Course Requirements & Grading

Grades for this course will be based on a cumulative point system. You will have the opportunity to earn 1000 total points. 600 points come from written work products (300 for a midterm exam and 300 for a final paper) and 400 points come from class participation. The total points you've earned at the conclusion of the course will determine your final grade according to the grading scale below.

Grading Scale

Your total points earned will be divided by 1000 to determine a percentage grade, and your final grade will be assigned as a letter grade according to the following scale:

A	90 - 100%
B	80 - 89%
C	70 - 79%
D	60 - 69%
F	Below 60%

Extra Credit Opportunities

Extra credit may or may not be provided during the course of the semester at the sole discretion of the instructor. Any extra credit opportunities will be made available to the entire class (i.e. no extra credit opportunities will be provided to single students to make-up missed deadlines, bring up grades, etc.).

Grade Reconsideration/Change Policy

Assignment and final grades will be changed only in the event of an error in grading or calculations. Grades will not be changed for any other reason (i.e. you worked really hard, you feel like you deserve a higher grade, etc.) If you believe there is an error in your grade/a mistake in the calculation, you must submit your request for reconsideration by email to the instructor, explaining in detail the nature of the error.

Midterm Exam - 300 points

The midterm exam will cover material from the beginning of the course until the exam, and is geared towards measuring your mastery of foundational bioethics and legal concepts we will discuss in class and you will study in your readings. The exam is open-book, open-note, and will be given as an in-class Canvas exam. The date will be announced in class. You may only consult your class materials and notes, and you may not consult each other, any other sources, or websites.

The midterm exam is mandatory, and failure to take the exam will result in a grade of F in the course, regardless of your performance in class participation and on the final research paper.

Alternate exam dates are solely at the instructor's discretion, are reserved for truly exceptional circumstances, and you must discuss this with the professor BEFORE the exam.

Final Paper - 300 points

The course will conclude with a final paper in which each student selects an issue in medical ethics that is of particular interest to them and examines how their own beliefs or opinions around the issue have changed, evolved, or stayed the same over the course of the semester. This is not merely a reflection or opinion piece, but rather an opportunity to reflect on what you've gained from the class, applying the ethical methodologies of principlism and consequentialism that we have studied, legal cases and concepts we've explored, and critically evaluating what other scholars have said about the issue in scholarly writing. More details about this assignment and its requirements will be provided after the midterm exam.

The final paper is mandatory, and failure to turn in a paper evidencing a credible effort will result in a grade of F in the course, regardless of your performance in class participation and on the midterm.

Class Participation - 400 points

400 points of your final grade (200 assigned prior to the exam, and 200 assigned after the exam)

As a small, interactive seminar course, class participation is a very important part of the learning process as our class meetings will consist largely of interactive role-play exercises and class discussions. Your meaningful engagement in class is important to your own learning and to that of your classmates. As such, class participation counts for a significant portion of your grade in the course. Please plan to attend each full class meeting.

Your class participation grade will neither be arbitrary, nor will it punish attempts to engage with material you are still learning or struggling to understand. It will take into account your willingness to meaningfully engage with the material, the instructor, and your fellow students, both in class discussions and in role-playing exercises in class. Failure to come prepared for the research paper workshops will also negatively impact your participation grade. When you receive your graded midterm, the professor will include your class participation grade for the first half of the course. If you are not on track to earn a participation grade of 90% or above for either half of the course, the professor will reach out to you prior to the end of that segment of the course to discuss ways to improve.

Please note that class participation grades will be negatively impacted by excessive unexcused absences, and this is separate from the attendance policy outlined below.

Attendance

Given the small size, accelerated class meeting schedule, and the interactive nature of this class, it's very important to your learning that you and your classmates attend class. **Attendance is expected and required at each class meeting.**

Any requests for an absence to be excused must be made via e-mail to the professor either before or immediately after class. Excused absences are at the professor's discretion, and documentation may be required. Excused absences are granted in narrow circumstances that include, but are not limited to, Institute approved absences and illness. It is the student's responsibility to request that an absence be excused either before or immediately after the absence from class. All absences not excused by the professor are unexcused absences. **Note that trips away from Oxford and missed flights back to Oxford are all considered unexcused absences.**

I understand that life happens, and occasionally a conflict with class arises where you may have to, or want to, miss class even though it would be an unexcused absence. For those reasons, you have **ONE** "free" unexcused absence per semester with no penalty. If you have a second unexcused absence, it will trigger a conversation with me about your attendance. For the third and subsequent unexcused absences, your final

grade in the course will be lowered by one letter grade for each unexcused absence. (i.e. if you have three unexcused absences, the highest possible letter grade you can earn is a B, four a C, five a D, and six an F). Please note this is independent of the fact that your participation grade will also suffer from excessive unexcused absences as outlined in the class participation section above.

Georgia Tech's official attendance policy can be found at <https://catalog.gatech.edu/rules/4/> . In addition to the GT rules, it states "All students are responsible for obtaining an understanding of each instructor's policy regarding absences." Information about how to notify instructors when you need to miss class and what kind of documentation you should provide is at: <http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/policies/student-absence-regulations/> .

PLEASE DO NOT COME TO CLASS IF YOU ARE SICK. PLEASE LET ME KNOW VIA E-MAIL ASAP IF YOU WILL MISS OR HAVE MISSED CLASS DUE TO ILLNESS.

Course Materials

Course Texts

Resolving Ethical Dilemmas: A Guide for Clinicians, 6th edition, Bernard Lo, Wolters Kluwer, 2020

Crying in H Mart: A Memoir, Michelle Zauner, Knopf, 2021

Both of these books are available in electronic formats, and I recommend using those formats for ease of travel. Additional readings may be provided via Canvas at no cost to you as topical and news items arise during the semester.

Course Website

There will be a course website on Canvas. Canvas will be used for announcements, grades, and for posting of other documents relevant to the course.

Course Expectations & Guidelines

Academic Integrity

Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity, and honor. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. For information on Georgia Tech's Academic Honor Code, please visit <http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/policies/honor-code/> or <http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/18/>.

Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarizing on any assignment or exam will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity, who will investigate the incident and identify the appropriate penalty for violations.

Course Communications

I will communicate with you using only your Georgia Tech e-mail address, and you should communicate with me using my Georgia Tech e-mail address (above). All enrolled students have an e-mail account provided by Georgia Tech. This account is a student's official point of contact with the Institute, and you are expected to check it each school day. <https://catalog.gatech.edu/rules/3/>

I routinely send important class communications using Canvas announcements. Please make sure you have your Canvas settings adjusted so that announcements are delivered to your e-mail inbox when they are sent and not in a digest format.

Collaboration & Group Work

Part of the fun of studying law and ethics is talking with your classmates about cases and the issues they raise outside of class. It's practically the favorite past-time of law students and law professors, too, and I encourage you to do so. Just make sure that when it's time to complete your work for the course, that your work is entirely your own, and that you are not sharing resources or work with your classmates or anyone else. If you wish to study for exams in groups, please feel free to do so, though of course your work during the in-class exam must be entirely your own.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with learning needs that require special accommodation, contact the Office of Disability Services at 404.894.2563 or <http://disabilityservices.gatech.edu/>, as soon as possible, to make an appointment to discuss your special needs and to obtain an accommodations letter. Please also e-mail me as soon as possible in order to set up a time to discuss your learning needs.

Student-Faculty Expectations Agreement

At Georgia Tech we believe that it is important to strive for an atmosphere of mutual respect, acknowledgement, and responsibility between faculty members and the student body. See <http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/22/> for an articulation of some basic expectations that you can have of me and that I have of you. In the end, simple respect for knowledge, hard work, and cordial interactions will help build the environment we seek. Therefore, I encourage you to remain committed to the ideals of Georgia Tech while in this class.

Student Use of Mobile Devices in the Classroom

Georgia Tech's Center for Teaching and Learning has noted that, "Research on learning shows that unexpected noises and movement automatically divert and capture people's attention, which means that one student's use of a mobile device (laptops, cell phones, tablets, etc.) can distract another student, thus disrupting their ability to learn. In addition, students using mobile devices often become engaged in matters that are not related to the class they are attending. Further, research indicates that students taking notes on laptops tend to process less as they take notes, and the depth of their learning suffers."

For these reasons, I strongly encourage you to take notes by hand on paper. Understanding that you may prefer or have a need to use a tablet or laptop to take notes, they, too, are permitted. However, please put your phones away and on silent during class. If I notice you using a device for anything other than class, I may ask you to put it away.

Food and Drink

Please refrain from eating during class in order to minimize distractions for yourself and your classmates. Staying hydrated during class is encouraged!

Additional Resources for Students

I want to see you succeed not just in this course, but at Georgia Tech and during this time of your life in general. If you need assistance in the course, or in other areas, please don't hesitate to reach out for help. Resources to keep in mind if you're facing challenges while at Tech include the Dean of Students (<https://studentlife.gatech.edu>), the Counseling Center (<https://counseling.gatech.edu>), the GT Police (<https://police.gatech.edu>), and Stamps Health Services (<https://health.gatech.edu>).

If you are having issues with housing, food insecurity, clothing, or other financial issues, please be aware of possible assistance available to you through the STAR Program (Students' Temporary Assistance and Resources). More details on the STAR Program are available at: <https://studentlife.gatech.edu/content/star-services>

No Legal Advice/No Attorney-Client Relationship

While your professor is an attorney, nothing expressed during this class, office hours, or any other interaction you may have with the professor in or out of class constitutes legal advice of any kind, and no attorney-client relationship exists between the professor and any student.