
PROPOSAL FOR SELF-DESIGNED MAJOR: BIOETHICS

Bioethics revolves around the study of ethical and moral implications of new biological discoveries and biomedical advances. I am on the pre-law track and would like to eventually practice law relating to bioethics/medical malpractice. This self-designed major would compile many courses from different areas, including philosophy, biology, public health, history, media and communications, and political science.

This major cannot be fulfilled within any other major at Muhlenberg because of the vast topics that it would have to cover. For example, if I was to major in Philosophy, I would not have the opportunity to take all the other public health/history/political science/ media and communications/psychology classes that I would need to in order to fulfill the topic of bioethics, in addition to fulfilling all of the GARs required to graduate.

GOALS OF THE MAJOR

(These are similar to those listed for the Bioethics major at Rochester University):

- Acquire the knowledge and skills needed to think about the major ethical and related legal questions that arise in medicine and public health
- Understand the frameworks in which individual moral decisions should be made
- Understand the frameworks in which social and political moral decisions should be made
- Understand the most important controversies in bioethics
- Develop the tools to analyze moral arguments in bioethics
- Develop the tools to construct arguments that contribute to some of these debates

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The major consists of the following 15 courses:

Biomedical Ethics (PHL 241) (corresponds to Rochester's core course "Ethical Decisions in Medicine"): An examination of the ethical issues raised by such practices as abortion, euthanasia, birth control, life prolonging techniques, human experimentation, recombinant DNA research, and cloning. How might such practices affect the individual and society? Are such practices ethical? Do patients and/or doctors have a right to refuse treatment? What considerations are relevant in making life or death decisions? How should scarce medical resources be allocated?

Prerequisites: none

Fulfills: HU

Neuroethics (PHL 341) (no corresponding Rochester course, but an important and growing field of bioethical concern): Advances in neuroscience, biochemistry, and genetics have brought a new set of ethical questions to the fore. We now have the ability to not only monitor brain functioning in real time (through such devices as PET scanners and fMRIs) but also to alter the structure of the brain (through drugs, surgery, implants, genetic engineering, etc.). But the brain is the seat of the mind; it directly affects how we think, feel, and act. Any change in brain structure can have a profound effect on the self. In this course, we will examine the ethical implications of the new brain scanning and brain altering technologies. How should they be used? How should they be regulated? For example: If we could identify people with brain structures that are highly correlated with violent behavior, should we force them to undergo treatment? If brain scanning can reliably tell when people are lying, should that evidence be used in court? If brain-altering procedures can erase memories, increase intelligence, or alter personalities, when, if ever, should it be used?

Prerequisite: Any previous course in philosophy or NSC 201, Mind and Brain.

Fulfills: W

Conduct and Character (PHL 105) (corresponds to Rochester's core course "General Ethics"): An introduction to ethics through the study of leading perspectives and familiar moral issues. We engage in moral choice and action every day of our lives, but we also struggle with questions about our moral life. Among the questions the course addresses are: Is there genuine moral truth, or is it all just 'opinion'? What is the relation of conduct to character? What standards might we use in judging conduct or character, and on what are they based? How do these various standards apply to concrete problems in contemporary life? Why should we struggle to be moral at all?

Prerequisites: none

Fulfills: HU

Ethics (PHL 333) (corresponds to Rochester's elective "Recent Ethical Theory"): Examination of the theoretical structures and historical movement of predominantly western moral theories as well as of recent critical responses to traditional approaches. Perspectives typically covered include ancient and modern virtue theories, utilitarianism, Kantianism, and its descendants, the critical views of Nietzsche or Marx, and contemporary Anglo-American work. Related issues, such as indeterminacy, pluralism, and the nature of moral judgment are also addressed.

Prerequisites: any previous course in philosophy

Fulfills: W

Issues in Public Health (PBH 200) (corresponds to Rochester's core courses "Introduction to Public Health I" and "Introduction to Public Health II"): Using a topical approach, this course is designed to introduce students to the wide variety of disciplines associated with the field of Public Health. Based on the issue or issues selected as the focal point of the course, students will examine the global impact of disease from various points of view- historically, biologically, economically, psychologically, and politically. Students will explore the roles of those in Public Health such as epidemiologists, health care managers, media broadcasters, health specialists, environmentalists, and public policy makers in maintaining the health safety of the public.

Prerequisites: none

Fulfills: none

Public Health Policy (PSC 213, 214) (corresponds to Rochester's core course "Public Health Ethics"): An examination of the ethical issues raised by such practices as abortion, euthanasia, birth control, life prolonging techniques, human experimentation, recombinant DNA research, and cloning. How might such practices affect the individual and society? Are such practices ethical? Do patients and/or doctors have a right to refuse treatment? What considerations are relevant in making life or death decisions? How should scarce medical resources be allocated?

Prerequisites: none

Fulfills: SL

Health Care Economics (ECN 243, 244) (no corresponding Rochester course but important for understanding issues relating to national health care): The purpose of this course is to study the facts, concepts, and analyses necessary to understand national health care. The emphasis of the course will be on the economic arguments for or against alternative public policy initiatives in health care and public and private health care systems.

Prerequisite: ECN 101 Principles of Macroeconomics or ECN 102 Principles of Microeconomics.

Fulfills: none

Health Communication (COM 334, 335) (no corresponding Rochester course but important for understanding issues relating to communication between health care providers and recipients): Examines interpersonal as well as mediated dimensions of health communication, including theories and case studies that address issues in physician and patient communication; gender, race, and cultural constituents in health communication; social marketing techniques for the production, distribution, and assessment of health-care information; the design and implementation of public health campaigns; and the use of communication technologies in the production of health communications.

Prerequisites: none

Fulfills: none

Law and Morality (PHL 242) (corresponds to Rochester core course "Social and Political Philosophy" and elective "Philosophy of Law"): An examination of issues at the intersection of law and morality. Readings drawn from historical and contemporary thinkers as well as from legal texts. Topics may include: the legitimate extent of legal control of individuals; the relation of legal validity and moral value; the role of moral reasons in judicial decision making; the nature of legal justice; legal obligation and forms of disobedience.

Prerequisites: none

Fulfills: HU

Biological Psychology (PSY 215) (no corresponding Rochester course, but important for understanding issues in neuroethics): A study of the nervous system and physiological processes directly related to behavior in human beings and animals. The mechanisms underlying sensory and motor processes, learning, emotion and innate behavior patterns.

Prerequisite: PSY 101 Introductory Psychology (I have the AP credit for this)

Fulfills: SC

Disease and Medicine in American History (HST 345, 346) (corresponds to Rochester elective Medicine, History, and Social Reform): This course focuses on the complex interplay of disease and medicine in the context of American culture and society over the last two centuries. It will examine the changing concepts of disease, the increasing success with which medicine has healed the body, and the development of the medical professions from the late 18th century to the present. It will also explore the ways in which Americans have employed diseases as social and culture metaphors.

Prerequisites: none

Fulfills: HU

Concepts of Human Bio, Sci & Soc (BIO 101) (corresponds to Rochester's core course "Concepts of Epidemiology"): This course covers topics in human structure and function, human genetics, and human ecology. A scientific and bio-ethical approach is used to study issues related to society as a whole as well as to an individual. The overall goal of the course is to help students become more scientifically literate so that they can make informed decisions.

Prerequisites: none

Fulfills: SC

*currently taking this course - Fall 2014

Statistical Analysis (MTH 119) (corresponds to Rochester's core course "Applied Statistics for Biological and Physical Sciences): Designed for students interested in accounting, business administration, economics, finance, psychology, and the natural sciences. Topics include: basic probability, distributions of random variables, sampling distributions, confidence intervals, hypothesis testing, regression analysis, sampling procedures, experimental design, analysis of variance, nonparametric statistics, and research ethics.

Prerequisites: 3 ½ years of high school math

Fulfills: RG

* Completed this course Spring 2014

Spc Top: Soc of Hlth/Community (SOC 286) (no corresponding Rochester course, but an important course to have to learn about the health system): In this course we will explore the social aspects of health and illness in the contemporary United States. This will include an examination of the social and historical construction of medical problems and disease, providers and patients, the health care system, and pressures that are transforming the medical sciences. Students will be expected to apply sociological concepts and theories to a number of topics related to health, illness, and the health care system. They also will integrate learning from both cluster courses to 1) locate themselves within the system of ~health~ and 2) identify actionable practices for addressing ill-health. Students will engage with local Allentown communities in service-learning as a requirement of the cluster.

Prerequisites: none

Fulfills: cluster requirement

* Completed this course Spring 2014

CUE: Graded internship (practicum): (PHL 960) This summer or next summer I will attempt to intern at a law firm that deals with the bioethical field, such as a medical malpractice law firm, and will learn how lawyers work in that field and will do research about major cases going on in the bioethics field.

Backup: Independent research study in bioethics

BACKUPS IN CASE ALL COURSES ARE NOT OFFERED:

Civil Rights and Liberties (PSC 203, 204) (no corresponding Rochester course but important for understanding issues relating to the rights of patients and doctors): An examination of the Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, and Eighth Amendments of the United States Constitution and their protection of the rights of criminal defendants. (Backup for Law and Morality or Public Health Policy.)

Prerequisites: none

Fulfills: SL

History of Public Health in America (HST 347) (corresponds to Rochester elective Medicine, History, and Social Reform): This course will explore the history of public health in America from the late seventeenth century to the present. It will examine the history of medical crises that evoked a public health response, including the development of formal institutions of public health and the environmental, industrial, and social aspects of public health in the contexts of the changing medical, political, and social environments of the United States. Topics to be considered include epidemic diseases, environmental problems, industrial medicine, social issues such as smoking, and the development of departments of public health on the local, state, and national level. (Backup for Disease and Medicine in American History.)

Prerequisites: none

Fulfills: HU

Independent research study in bioethics (PHL 500) (Backup for CUE: Graded Internship.)

Epidemiology: not offered yet, but may be offered in the next couple of years. (Backup for Issues in Public Health.)

THE BIOETHICS MAJOR AT ROCHESTER UNIVERSITY

This is taken directly from their web site: <http://www.rochester.edu/college/ph/undergrad/majors/bioethics.html>

A. Foundational Courses:		
None		
B. Common Core (5 courses):		
PH 101	Introduction to Public Health I	(none)
PH 102	Introduction to Public Health II	(PH 101)
PH 103	Concepts of Epidemiology	(none)
STT 212 or STT 211	Appl. Stat. for the Biological and Physical Sciences I or Appl. Stat. for Social Sciences	(none)
PHL 228 or PHL 225	Public Health Ethics (228) or Ethical Decisions in Medicine (225)	(1 in PHL; or permission of instructor)
C. Specific Core Requirements:		
Required Core (5 courses)		
PHL 102	General Ethics	(none)
PHL 223/223W	Social and Political Philosophy	(PHL 102)
PH/PSC 236	Health Care and Law	(none)
PH 300W (H)	Seminar for Bioethics Majors	(1 in PHL)

*PHL 228/228W or PHL 225/225W	Public Health Ethics or Ethical Decisions in Medicine	(1 in PHL; or permission of instructor)
*ONE COUNTS FOR THE COMMON CORE GROUP ABOVE, THE OTHER FOR THE SPECIFIC CORE IN THE MAJOR		
D. Electives (3 courses - 2 must come from Group I; 1 must come from Group II):		
I. Philosophy and Ethics		
PHL 103	Contemporary Moral Problems	(none)
PHL 220/220W	Recent Ethical Theory	(1 in ethics)
PHL 226/226W	Philosophy of Law	(1 in PHL)
PHL 230/230W	Environmental Justice	(1 in PHL)
II. History, Sociology, and Anthropology		
ANT 216	Medical Anthropology	(1 in ANT)
HIS 202/202W	Medicine, History and Social Reform <i>*prior to fall 2013 HIS 208</i>	(none)
HIS 203/203W	Changing Concepts of Health and Illness <i>*prior to fall 2013 HIS 209</i>	(none)
HIS 204/204W	History of International and Global Health <i>*prior to fall 2013 HIS 287</i>	(none)
PH 116	Introduction to the U.S. Health System	(none)
PH 397W	Community Engagement Internship* <i>*open to juniors, seniors, Take 5 & KEY PH majors</i>	(PH 101, PH 102, PH 103)
E. Upper-Level Writing Requirement:		
Students will be required to register for two upper-level writing courses within this major, one of which is PH 300W <i>Seminar for Bioethics Majors</i> .		

GARS THAT HAVE ALREADY BEEN FULFILLED:

FYS: Psychology of Choice (FYS 112) (fall 2013)
 FL: Intermediate Spanish II (SPN 204) (fall 2013)
 RG: Statistical Analysis (MTH 119) (spring 2014)
 AR: Flute lessons (every semester)
 HU: Holocaust: Nazi Germany & Jews (REL 357) (spring 2014)
 HU: Being & Knowing (PHL 108) (fall 2014)
 HU: Introduction to History: America's Consumer Nation (HST 130) (fall 2014)
 SC: Concepts: Human Bio, Sci & Soc (BIO 101) (fall 2014)
 CL: Spc Top: Learning - Community Engagement (EDU 281) (spring 2014)
 Spc Top: Sociology of Health/Community (SOC 286) (spring 2014)
 DE: Cultural Anthropology (ATH 112) (fall 2014)
 Physical Education: Fitness and Wellness (PED 050) (fall 2013)
 SL: Principles of Macroeconomics (ECN 101) (fall 2013)
 Introductory Psychology (PSY 101) (AP credit)

GARS THAT NEED TO BE FULFILLED:

W: Ethics (PHL 333)
 W: Neuroethics (PHL 341)
 DE: Medicine and Culture (ATH 291)
 SC: Biological Psychology (PSY 215)
 CUE: Graded internship (practicum): this summer or next summer I will attempt to intern at a law firm that deals with the bioethical field, such as a medical malpractice law firm, and will learn how lawyers work in that field and will do research about major cases going on in the bioethics field.
 Backup: Independent research study in bioethics

PLAN FOR THE NEXT 2.5 YEARS

(based off of proposed two year course-offerings):

	Spring 2015: Medicine and Culture (ATH 291) (1 credit) Business Law II (BUS 226-03) (1 credit) Biological Psychology (PSY 215) (1 credit) Biomedical Ethics (PHL 241) (1 credit) Flute lessons (.5 credits)
Fall 2015: Neuroethics (PHL 341) (1 credit) Issues in Public Health (PBH 200) (1 credit) Conduct and Character (PHL 105) (1 credit) Ethics (PHL 333) (1 credit) Flute lessons (.5 credits)	Spring 2016: Health Care Economics (ECN 243, 244) (1 credit) Civil Rights and Liberties (PSC 203, 204) (1 credit) Business Ethics (PHL 245) (1 credit) Constitutional Law II (PSC 207, 208) (1 credit) Flute lessons (.5 credits)
Fall 2016: Law and Morality (PHL 242) (1 credit) Health Communication (COM 334, 335) (1 credit) Disease and Medicine in American History (HST 345, 346) (1	Spring 2017: Philosophy East and West (PHL 104) (1 credit) Abnormal Psychology (PSY 240) (1 credit) Environmental Philosophy (PHL 246) (1 credit)

credit) Principles of Reasoning/Argument (PHL 110) (1 credit) Flute lessons (.5 credits)	Family Finance (FIN 105) (.5 credits) Flute lessons (.5 credits)
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I also believe that my cluster course, including a Sociology class about public health and the community, and an Education class about community engagement, encompassed many of the topics that the Rochester electives/core courses cover. In addition to learning about social reform, old and new concepts of health and illness, and learning about the health system in the United States, we also went out into the Allentown community and volunteered at a dialysis clinic and on a medical van, both experiences I believe were beneficial for this major.

SUMMARY

Muhlenberg certainly has all the courses needed to compose a Bioethics Major. I cannot, however, fulfill my Bioethics interest by declaring another major, because the Bioethics Major requires too many classes from different disciplines. The classes I have mentioned above that I would take for the next 2.5 years would not only help me fulfill my bioethical interests, but would also aid me in my path to law school and to eventually becoming a practicing lawyer in the bioethical field. Thank you for your time and consideration in reviewing my proposal.