SPPH 538DL: APPLICATION OF ETHICAL THEORIES IN THE PRACTICE OF PUBLIC HEALTH
Summer 2018: May 26, June 16, July 14 (8:30 am to 4:30 pm)
Class location: SPPH 143, UBC Vancouver
(May 3, 2018 draft – please check the Canvas site for any updated version)

Instructor
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Additional Course Materials: http://canvas.ubc.ca (use your CWL -- you may be asked to create a new account the first time you login)

Description
This course will survey ethical issues and cases in population and public health, and review related ethical discussions, concepts, and principles as relevant to these issues. It is designed to help build competency in ethical reasoning and professional practice in public health. Such competency is defined by the Association of Schools & Programs of Public Health (ASPPH) as the ability to identify and respond with integrity to ethical issues in diverse economic, political, and cultural contexts, and promote accountability for the impact of policy decisions upon public health practice at local, national, and international levels. Keeping in mind the impact of various health policies and practices on health equity and social justice, we will pay particular attention on protecting human research participants in diverse cultural settings, responding to public health emergencies, holding international organizations accountable for public health practice standards, and promoting integrity in professional practice. While public health ethics has tended to focus on communicable diseases (CDs), pandemics, and emergencies, the increasing prevalence of diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancer, and respiratory illnesses, which are associated with environmental, systemic, and structural factors, have prompted increasing attention to the significance of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in public health policy and practice. As such, we will pay attention to both CDs and NCDs in this course.
Learning Objectives

The overall goal of this course is to increase students’ decision-making, reasoning, and analytic capacity related to ethical issues in practice, policy, and research. Informed by the ASPH model public health ethics curriculum, this course is designed with the following objectives in mind:

1. Stimulate students’ moral imagination
2. Improve students’ ability to recognize ethical issues in public health practice and research
3. Develop analytic skills
4. Elicit a sense of ethical obligation and responsibility for our work in public health
5. Teach skills for managing ethical ambiguity

Readings

All readings in this course are either open access or accessible through the UBC library/CWL Login. They are listed below for each class, and should be read prior to that class to facilitate informed discussions. Additional news articles and videos to be viewed in between classes will be posted on the Canvas course website (http://canvas.ubc.ca). Two consolidated volumes that will be referenced throughout the course are the following two case collections:


Topics Covered

- The concept of public health and its ethical dimensions
- Moral principles relevant to health care and public health
- Tensions between individual liberty and collective interests in population and public health
- Justice and health inequities
- A survey of public health ethics issues arising in preventing and managing communicable and non-communicable diseases.

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Course activities and expectations

All three full-day course meetings are required. Active participation in group discussions and preparations is required. Given that this is a distributed learning course, there will be approximately 15 hours of extra curriculum online, some of which will include group work, video lectures, online discussion forum, teleconferencing, etc.

Active class participation, online discussion, group presentations, and two short papers using various ethical tools will help you build and demonstrate skills of ethical reasoning and decision-making in written form and in verbal argumentation.

Grades

Participation in In-Class Meetings (15%): Participation is based on attending the three face-to-face full-day meetings and engaging in class activities, such as general class discussions, presentations, and group exercises. Students are expected to demonstrate understanding based on the assigned readings for each meeting. This includes readings before the first session (May 26), as well as during the 3-4 weeks between the sessions. As face-to-face participation cannot be made up outside of the classroom regardless of reasons for non-attendance, any absence will automatically result in deduction of participation points. 5% will be assigned for each full-day meeting (or 2.5% for each half-day).

Online Discussions (15%): As a DL course, online discussions between class meetings are designed to help maintain critical thinking and learning throughout the summer term. There will be two discussions – one between Session 1 and Session 2, and another one between Session 2 and Session 3. They will be based on either a video presentation or news articles. You will be required to submit an original entry (5% per discussion topic) plus at least one response to your classmate (2.5% per discussion topic). Demonstration of critical understanding and engagement is expected for both your original entry and your response.

Group presentation (15%): As public health practitioners and researchers often have to work in teams and present their ideas to funders, concerned citizens, and other stakeholders, you will collaborate with colleagues to produce an ethical analysis of a case or propose a public health intervention/campaign that is ethically sound. A PowerPoint presentation will be submitted, and groups will be called upon during the 2nd and 3rd sessions to present. You will work in groups of 2-3 to develop an understanding of the controversies and basis for disagreement and then each present an argument in support of a different ethical conclusion. The topic and partners will be assigned at the 1st and 2nd sessions, and the presentations will be in the 2nd and 3rd sessions. The communication and preparation can occur through meetings, email, or online, as each group decides will work best for them.

Short Papers (55%) Two 4-6-page (double spaced) ethical analyses. The objective of each analysis is to explain the ethical issue(s), the controversies, and to describe what additional information or assessment might help with a final recommendation. The topics for the papers will be distributed on the first class (Paper 1: 25%) and second class (Paper 2: 30%). The papers will be due on June 25th and July 23 respectively. Late papers will be reduced by 5% for each
day past deadline.

**Grading Scale**

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<td>90-100</td>
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<td>85-89</td>
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**Course Schedule, readings and activities**

To optimize your learning and facilitate productive in-class discussions, it is essential that all students complete the assigned readings beforehand. More detailed descriptions of in-class activities will be posted on the Canvas site closer to each class date.

**Session I: May 26, 2018**

**Theorizing and Framing Public Health Ethics**

- Françoise Baylis, Nuala P. Kenny, Susan Sherwin; A Relational Account of Public Health
Public Health Codes of Ethics:


Individuals, Communities, and Justice in Public Health:

- Case Discussion: Equitable consequences: Issues of evidence, equity and ethics arising from outdoor smoke-free policies, in *CIHR Casebook*, pp. 59-69
- Case Discussion: Health Inequities in First nations communities and Canada’s response to the H1N1 Influenza pandemic, in *CIHR Casebook*, pp. 153-163

SESSION II: JUNE 16

Public Health Research and Surveillance


Health Promotion and Behaviour Modification


**Harm Reduction**


**SESSION III: JULY 16**

**NCDs and Public Health Genomics**


• Stacy M. Carter; The Ethics of Menu Labelling, *Public Health Ethics*, Volume 8, Issue 1, 1 April 2015, Pages 94–97, [https://doi.org/10.1093/phe/phu044](https://doi.org/10.1093/phe/phu044)


**Chronic Pain and the World Drug Problem**


**Genomics and Public Health: Ethical Considerations in the Next Frontier**


