

## Bioethics & Medical Humanities Minor ([bioethics.la.psu.edu](http://bioethics.la.psu.edu))

### Introduction to the Minor

Should we use medical science to produce “designer children” or to enhance our mental and physical performance? Where does therapy end and enhancement begin? Do we have a right to choose the time and means of our own death—and should medical personnel be permitted to assist us? Can we have a meaningful discussion about physician-assisted suicide in a country without universal access to health care? Do we have a right to health care and what does this mean for health care rationing? What demands does social justice make on public health, and what challenges does discrimination pose—whether on the grounds of race, gender identity, sexual orientation, or disability? What do we owe the developing world, particularly when we rely on its population as research subjects for the development of new drugs? How can we ensure that academic research is truly independent when it is funded by pharmaceutical companies or others in the private sector? What role should religion play in debates about stem cells, abortion, and end of life issues? What are the implications of recent developments in medical science for “cognitive liberty” and “genetic privacy”? What ethical issues are raised by CRISPR (sometimes called “gene-splicing,”) or animal-human chimera research? What are the ethical and public health implications of “fracking” and global climate change?

These are just some of the questions that bioethics seeks to ask and answer. Students taking the BMH minor will have the opportunity to probe these questions, drawing on literature and recent scholarship from a wide range of disciplines (including philosophy, medicine, law, psychology, sociology, anthropology, public policy, international studies and environmental studies). Students electing to pursue the BMH minor are required to take 18 credit hours, beginning with an introductory course on basic ideas and concepts in bioethics, followed by a selection of other relevant ethics and humanities courses, and capped with an integrative capstone course involving original research by the student. The minor is suitable for students in many majors in the College of the Liberal Arts, Health and Human Development, Science, Engineering, and IST—especially students going on to further academic work or careers in medicine, law, the health or life sciences, health administration, health informatics, or forensics.

### Requirements

Students are required to take 18 credit hours, beginning with an introductory course in bioethics, followed by a choice of other relevant courses on topics in bioethics and medical humanities, capped by an integrative capstone course involving original research by the student.

- A grade of C or better is required for all courses in the minor.
- Scheduling Recommendation is by Semester Standing (e.g. Sem.: 5-8)

PREREQUISITES: NONE.

PRESCRIBED COURSES: (6 credits)

PHIL 132/RL ST 131: Introduction to Bioethics

BMH 490: Bioethics and Medical Humanities Capstone (Sem: 5-8)

ADDITIONAL COURSES (12 credits) of which 3 credits must be at the 400 level, and at least one course must be selected from the list of Ethics courses. (List overleaf.)

ETHICS:

BBH 301: Values and Ethics in Behavioral Research and Practice  
BIOL 461: Contemporary Issues in Science and Medicine  
NURS 464: Dying and Death  
PHIL 432: Medical and Health Care Issues  
PHIL 498: Special Topics (when relevant)  
WMNST 458: Critical Issues in Reproduction

HUMANITIES:

CAS 253: Health Communication  
CAS 453: Health Communication Theory and Research  
HIST 103: History of Madness, Mental Illness, and Psychiatry

OTHER:

ANTH 470H: Our Place in Nature  
ANTH 471H: Biology, Evolution, and Society  
CSD 269: Deafness Culture  
FD SC 280H: Food, Values, and Health  
H P A 301: Health Services Policy Issues  
KINES 345: Meaning, Ethics, and Movement  
NUTR 430: Global Food Strategies  
WMNST 250: Sexual Identity over the Lifespan

If any student would like to request approval for alternative courses to count toward the minor, please contact **Katelyn Perry**, [krp5@psu.edu](mailto:krp5@psu.edu), **the Advisor for the Bioethics Minor**. Courses that may be approved on a student-by-student basis include (but are not limited to):

BBH 302 Diversity and Health  
BBH 305 Introduction to Global Health Issues  
BBH 315 Gender and Biobehavioral Health  
BBH 407 Global Health Equity  
FD SC 105 Food Facts and Fads  
HIST 124 History of Western Medicine  
H P A 401 Comparative Health Systems  
H P A 410 Principles of Public Health Administration  
H P A 445 Health Economics  
HIST 111 American Food System: History, Technology and Culture  
WMNST/BBH/NURS 452 Women's Health Issues

If you would like to request a course substitution, please indicate in your email request:

- (a) the name of course you would like to substitute;
- (b) whether the course is intended to satisfy the ethics course requirement;
- (c) a list of the other courses you have taken or plan to take for the minor;
- (d) the list of all your majors and minors;
- (e) the date when you intend to graduate; and (if possible) attach
- (f) a copy of your (i) transcript and (ii) the syllabus for the course you wish to take.