

BIOETHICS & HUMANITIES NEWSLETTER



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WELCOME...

Welcome to the monthly Bioethics and Humanities Newsletter provided by the Program in Bioethics and Humanities at the University of Iowa Carver College of Medicine.

Program in Bioethics and Humanities: *Our Mission*

We are committed to helping healthcare professionals explore and understand the increasingly complex ethical questions that have been brought on by advances in medical technology and the health care system. We achieve this through education, research, and service within the Carver College of Medicine, University of Iowa Health Care, University of Iowa, and the wider Iowa community.

[More Details About
The Program](#)

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS AT CCOM

FALL 2025 BIOETHICS AND HUMANITIES SEMINAR

MED:8076

A one-credit hour elective course directed and taught by Lauris Kaldjian, MD, PhD.

The purpose of the Seminar is to provide an introduction to topics and themes that are central to bioethics and the humanities in the context of medicine. The course covers a diverse but inter-connected range of topics, including ethical theory, different approaches to ethical reasoning (principles, consequences, virtues), clinical ethics, professionalism and humanism in medicine, moral agency, ethical pluralism, ethics in relation to cultural diversity and global health, historical examples of research abuses, technology and the future, narrative ethics, and the use of stories in medicine. The course provides 'breadth' through the number of topic areas it covers, and it offers opportunities for dialogue afforded by small-group discussion.

The Seminar will meet in person every Monday from 12:00-12:50 PM in room 1121 MERF. Class size is limited to 12 students. Priority for enrollment is given to medical students but the course is also open to other students at the University of Iowa, as space allows. Students wishing to enroll in the Fall 2025 Seminar should email [Dr. Kaldjian](mailto:Dr.Kaldjian).

FALL 2025 FOUNDATIONS IN HEALTHCARE ETHICS

MED:8416:0400 (medical students) MED:5416:0100 (graduate students)

A three-credit hour elective course directed and taught by Lauris Kaldjian, MD, PhD. Open to medical students and graduate students throughout the University of Iowa.

In this 15-week, reading-intensive course, students review major ethical traditions, ideas, and frameworks that have shaped contemporary approaches to healthcare ethics in morally pluralistic Western cultures. Topics include four prominent frameworks in healthcare ethics (virtue-based, principle-based, circumstance-based, and consequence-based) that emphasize four aspects of ethical decision making (agent, action, context, outcome). Through written reflections, weekly class discussions, and a final paper, students engage ethical concepts, translating from ethical theory to ethical practice by applying foundational beliefs and values to concrete challenges in clinical practice.

The course will meet virtually every Tuesday from 4:30-6:30 PM. Students wishing to enroll in the Fall 2025 semester should email [Dr. Kaldjian](mailto:Dr.Kaldjian).

PUBLICATION HIGHLIGHT

“Surgery was a Rotation That I Dreaded:” Medical Student’s Perceptions of Surgeons

Elizabeth K. Callahan, Laura A. Shinkunas, Erica M. Carlisle

[Journal of Surgical Research](#)

Introduction: Medical students may bring biased, unfavorable attitudes about surgeons to the surgical clerkship. These preconceived ideas can negatively impact the surgical clerkship experience-making students less likely to pursue careers in surgery and more likely to maintain negative attitudes toward their surgical colleagues when they enter practice. The purpose of this study was to qualitatively analyze essays written by medical students during their surgical clerkship to assess their perceptions of surgeons.

Methods: Retrospective qualitative review of essays written by all medical students on the surgical clerkship at a university hospital from April 2017 to May 2023. Perceptions of surgeons were identified by two investigators using content analysis by first coding each essay as positive, negative, or not mentioned, and then identifying main themes.

Results: Of the 626 student essays reviewed, 308 (49%) included student's perception of surgeons: 141 (46%) perceived surgeons positively, and 167 (54%) held negative perceptions. Nine themes were identified: (1) traits of a surgeon; (2) stereotypes-confirmed or debunked; (3) surgeons as decision-makers; (4) surgeons as communicators; (5) honesty and disclosure; (6) patient-centric (or not); (7) trust; (8) informed consent; and (9) professionalism in the operating room.

Conclusions: Many medical students have negative perceptions of surgeons. Identifying student's perceptions will allow surgical educators to provide targeted guidance to clinical and preclinical students to help ensure accurate depictions of surgeons and surgery as a profession. These efforts may improve recruitment of students into the surgical workforce and subsequent multidisciplinary interactions with colleagues.

To read the full article, [click here](#).



HUMANITIES CORNER



This month's spotlight is on **Daniel Moe, a fourth year medical student**. His creative work is a poem. He completed this creative work as part of the *Ethics and Humanities Sub-Internship Seminar*. During this Seminar students are asked to complete a written reflection or creative work that responds to a situation they encountered during their sub-internship that illustrated values in ethics, professionalism, or humanism.

Healing without Cure

Not all wounds need cure;
some are stitched by listening,
threaded with respect.
Plans and scans aside,
she wanted a gentler thing –
healing without cure.

This poem was written about a patient interaction in which I was reminded of the importance of humanism in healthcare and that successful treatment does not always mean the patient deciding to pursue all the medical team's recommendations but instead can sometimes be achieved by simply helping the patient feel cared for.

BIOETHICS IN THE LITERATURE

- ⇒ Abadie R, Anderson E, Eberts J, Lynch HF, Fisher J, Gelinas L, et al. Pursuing fair and just compensation for research participants: An open letter to the research ethics community. [Am J Bioeth](#). 2025 Jul; 25: 3-7.
- ⇒ Aliyev N, Vokoun C, Lukas LA. A pragmatic and ethical guide for addressing life-sustaining treatments in patients with suicidal thoughts or behaviors. [J Hosp Med](#). 2025 Jun 17. [Online ahead of print]
- ⇒ Charnysh E, McCain S, Truhlar A, Pal S, Reader JM, Sanghavi K, et al. Perceived understanding and psychosocial outcomes: Employees' responses to learning results of workplace genetic testing. [Per Med](#). 2025 Jun 11: 1-11. [Online ahead of print]
- ⇒ Clark AM, Sousa BJ, Ski CF, Thompson DR. Honest yet unacceptable research practices: When research becomes a health risk. [BMJ Open](#). 2025 Jun 20; 15: e097757.
- ⇒ Collins BX, Bhatia S, Fanning JB. Adapting clinical ethics consultations to address ethical issues of artificial intelligence. [J Clin Ethics](#). 2025 Summer; 36: 167-183.
- ⇒ Deshmukh AD, Wagner JK. FDA draft guidelines for AI and the need for ethical frameworks. [JAMA Pediatr](#). 2025 Jul 7. [Online ahead of print]
- ⇒ Hantel A, Marron JM, Abel GA. Establishing and defining an approach to climate conscious clinical medical ethics. [Am J Bioeth](#). 2025 Jul; 25: 8-21.
- ⇒ Heifner AL, Ortiz MM, Major-Kincade TL, O'Connor C. Parental authority and the weight of assent: Navigating moral dilemmas in adolescent end of life care. [J Bioeth Inq](#). 2025 Jun; 22: 235-241.
- ⇒ Kimbel K, Hayes M, Bucher M, Calo WA, Garg T, Joshi M, et al. Facilitating advance care planning conversations among patients with cancer and their care partners utilizing a conversation game: A pilot study. [Cancer Rep \(Hoboken\)](#). 2025 Jun; 8: e70250.
- ⇒ Kitts M, Smolenski J. The (in)capacity to exclude: The normative value of preferences in surrogate exclusion. [J Clin Ethics](#). 2025 Summer; 36: 112-120.
- ⇒ Kuitert SG, Herrmann A, Mertz M, Quitmann C, Salloch S. Should healthcare professionals include aspects of environmental sustainability in clinical decision-making? A systematic review of reasons. [BMC Med Ethics](#). 2025 Jul 3; 26: 78.
- ⇒ Ladd JM, Henry RK. Ethical issues in pediatric endocrinology: A primer for the practitioner. [Adv Pediatr](#). 2025 Aug; 72: 171-184.
- ⇒ Lindholm O, Karjalainen S, Launis V. Chasing 'vulnerability' across six decades of the Declaration of Helsinki. [Monash Bioeth Rev](#). 2025 Jun; 43: 1-33.
- ⇒ MacDuffie KE, Wilfond BS, Kraft SA. Revisiting the obligation to share aggregate results with research participants in the era of open science. [Ethics Hum Res](#). 2025 Jul-Aug; 47: 29-36.
- ⇒ Malika N, Salsbury S, Coulter I, Cooley K, Chesney M, Prenguber M, et al. Health equity checklist for research. [Ethics Med Public Health](#). 2025; 33.



BIOETHICS IN THE LITERATURE (CONTINUED)

- ⇒ McBride SM, Richman BD. Medical staff bylaws and shared governance. [JAMA](#). 2025 Jul 14. [Online ahead of print]
- ⇒ Mello MM, Char D, Xu SH. Ethical obligations to inform patients about use of AI tools. [JAMA](#). 2025 Jul 21. [Online ahead of print]

“Health care practitioners are right to ask questions about what patients should be told about AI use, but they should not be left to grapple with them on their own. When a health care organization decides to deploy an AI tool, it should decide whether notification or consent is ethically required. If it is, the organization should identify steps it can take to ensure that this policy is applied consistently.”

(Mello et al.)

- ⇒ Meyer EC, Lamiani G, Uveges M, McLeod-Sordjan R, Mitchell C, Truog RD, et al. Everyday clinical ethics: Essential skills and educational case scenarios. [HEC Forum](#). 2025 Jun; 37: 179-201.
- ⇒ Ouchi K, Block SD, Rentz DM, Berry DL, Oelschlager H, Shiozawa Y, et al. Serious illness conversations in the emergency department for older adults with advanced illnesses: A randomized clinical trial. [JAMA Netw Open](#). 2025 Jun 2; 8: e2516582.
- ⇒ Patrick C. According to which criteria should a return EMS trip of long duration and distance be deemed ethically justifiable? [AMA J Ethics](#). 2025 Jul 1; 27: E491-496.
- ⇒ Rusinova K, Voigt L, Michalsen A. Navigating appropriateness of care in the ICU: A case-based application of the fourfold assessment. [J Intensive Care Med](#). 2025 Jun 26. [Online ahead of print]
- ⇒ Waddimba AC, Ashmore J, Douglas ME, Thompson LM, Parro C, DiMaio JM, et al. Association of well-being-centered leadership with burnout and professional fulfillment among physicians: Mediating effects of autonomy support and self-valuation. [Leadersh Health Serv \(Bradford Engl\)](#). 2025 Jun 9; 38: 65-81.
- ⇒ Wittrock K, Kane S, Chang J, Turaczyk Kolodziej DA, Aziz H. Conflict of interest statements and disclosure policies for surgical and medical societies. [Am Surg](#). 2025 Jun 10. [Online ahead of print]

“Overall, there was a general lack of accessibility, accountability, and consistency in conflict-of-interest statements for surgical and medical societies.”

(Wittrock et al.)

- ⇒ Zhu T, Wu R, Wu J, Kwan RYC, Liu M, Zhou A, et al. Using nudges with electronic health records systems to improve advance care planning: A systematic review. [BMC Palliat Care](#). 2025 Jul 1; 24: 180.

BIOETHICS IN THE NEWS

- ⇒ HHS says it will begin reforms of organ donation system after federal investigation finds ‘horrrifying’ problems. [CNN](#), July 21, 2025.
- ⇒ My mother refused treatment for her breast cancer. Her doctors should have respected her choice. [STAT News](#), July 21, 2025.
- ⇒ Mary had schizophrenia—then suddenly she didn’t. [The New Yorker](#), July 21, 2025.
- ⇒ A push for more organ transplants is putting donors at risk. [The New York Times](#), July 20, 2025.
- ⇒ A sloppy report on mifepristone is being used to undermine the FDA—and the biotech industry. [STAT News](#), July 19, 2025.
- ⇒ Trump administration hands over Medicaid recipients’ personal data, including addresses, to ICE. [Associated Press](#), July 17, 2025.
- ⇒ Patients who feel heard are more likely to stick with medical treatment. [The Conversation](#), July 16, 2025.
- ⇒ How a third parent’s DNA can prevent an inherited disease. [NPR](#), July 16, 2025.
- ⇒ When AI listens in: How conversational data could disrupt medicine. [Sensible Medicine](#), July 15, 2025.
- ⇒ I worked for 20 years for the HHS office that safeguarded people in research studies. DOGE gutted it. [STAT News](#), July 15, 2025.
- ⇒ 25 years ago, I reported on horrrifying hospital errors. Here’s what’s changed since then—and what hasn’t. [STAT News](#), July 14, 2025.
- ⇒ So your doctor is a D.O. Does that matter? [The New York Times](#), July 13, 2025.
- ⇒ AI in health care could save lives and money—but change won’t happen overnight. [The Conversation](#), July 11, 2025.
- ⇒ Scientists hide messages in papers to game AI peer review. [Nature](#), July 11, 2025.
- ⇒ Recommendations and practical tools issued for conducting ethical first-in-human pig kidney xenotransplant clinical trials. [Hastings Center News](#), July 10, 2025.
- ⇒ The AI therapist will see you now: Can chatbots really improve mental health? [The Conversation](#), July 10, 2025.
- ⇒ Feds investigate hospitals over religious exemptions from gender-affirming care. [NPR](#), July 8, 2025.



BIOETHICS OPPORTUNITIES

UPCOMING

- ⇒ [Pediatric Pain & Palliative Care Annual Conference](#), November 6, 2025, Radisson Hotel and Conference Center, Coralville, Iowa

ONGOING

- ⇒ American Journal of Bioethics: [YouTube channel](#) containing previous webinars
- ⇒ Children's Mercy Kansas City: [Pediatric Ethics Podcast series](#)
- ⇒ Consortium on Law and Values in Health, Environment & the Life Sciences: [Events](#)
- ⇒ The Hastings Center: [Webinars](#) and [Events](#)
- ⇒ [Health Ethics](#) podcast with host Bryan Pilkington, PhD (Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine): Find on Google Podcasts, Spotify, Apple Podcasts, and Audible.
- ⇒ The MacLean Center for Clinical Medical Ethics: [YouTube channel](#) containing previous lectures
- ⇒ Michigan State University Center for Bioethics and Social Justice: [Recorded Webinars](#)
- ⇒ Office for Human Research Protections [Luminaries Lecture Series](#)
- ⇒ University of Minnesota Center for Bioethics: [Events](#)

BIOETHICS SERVICES AT THE UIHC

ETHICS CONSULT SERVICE

This service is a clinical resource for UI Health Care personnel who would like help addressing an ethical question or problem related to a patient's care. Consults can be ordered through EPIC or by paging the ethics consultant on call. For more information, [click here](#).



CLINICAL RESEARCH ETHICS SERVICE

We provide free consultation on ethical issues related to research design, tissue banking, genetic research results, informed consent, and working with vulnerable patient populations. In particular, we assist clinical investigators in identifying and addressing the ethical challenges that frequently arise when designing or conducting research with human subjects. These include ethical challenges in sampling design; randomized and placebo-controlled studies; participant recruitment and informed consent; return of individual-level research results; community engagement processes; and more. For more information, [click here](#).