



Syllabus

Course Title:

Beyond the Bedside: Biomedical Ethics and Global Health Perspectives

Program and Date: London Signature, May 30-June 17, 2026

Academic Department: Philosophy

Instructor Name: Dr. Catherine (Cate) Sherron

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Get to Know Your Professor

I discovered bioethics in college and it led me to study philosophy in graduate school. In the past 20 years, I have taught many bioethics and philosophy of science courses. My active research interests focus on reducing barriers to good end of life planning and teaching interfaith understanding. Hosting exchange students is another way to bring cultural difference into my life; my husband and I have sons from Turkey and Bahrain, and “nephews” from Ghana and Bosnia. I love to travel and have visited Italy, Switzerland, England, and South Africa as an adult. When I was young, I lived with my family in Tehran and San Francisco, among other places around the U.S. Teaching in London brings me full circle, because it is where I was born. I especially welcome first-time travelers and novice philosophers to global bioethics!

Course Description

What rights do patients have? Why are doctor-patient relationships important? How do ethics affect responses to pandemics? Examine these and other ethics questions, including cloning, stem-cell research, and end-of-life care. Through visits in London such as the Old Operating Theatre, a cholera walking tour (don't worry – it's historical!), the Florence Nightingale Museum, Highgate Cemetery, and modern health care facilities, we'll study these ethical issues and explore the differences between approaches to them in the U.S. and the U.K. During a day trip to Dover, we'll also visit the War Tunnels and look at medical ethics during pivotal moments in British wartime history.

Course Level and Credit Hours

Undergraduate and undergraduate honors. Three credit hours.

Prerequisite(s)

None.

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Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of all coursework with a passing grade and full participation in course activities, students shall be able to:

- Identify the basic tenets of major ethical theories (papers, cases, final exam);
 - Accurately describe several ethical theories (discussion, papers, cases, country analysis);
 - Explain current global bioethical challenges in their historical contexts (discussion, papers, country analysis, final exam, journal);
 - Recognize good ethical arguments (discussion, papers, cases);
 - Critically evaluate texts and ideas presented in the course (discussion, papers, journal, final exam);
- Develop an awareness of the ubiquity of global bioethics (blog, discussions, country analysis, journal, final exam);
- Recognize the complexities of moral decision making in multicultural and global biomedical settings by:
 - Applying (via blog, papers, discussion, journal, final exam) critical thinking skills, focused on competently identifying:
 - where more information is desired and
 - what courses of action are possible, in order to
 - choose a course of action based on sound, relevant reasons which can be expressed to another person.
 - Employing cultural sensitivity in respectful responses, marked by dispositions of intellectual humility, intellectual courage, fair-mindedness, and confidence in reason (discussion, cases, country analysis);
 - Defending and critiquing multiple positions, not just one's own personal beliefs (cases, discussion, journal);
- Combine the above and express one's thoughts in meaningful, reflective, and engaged dialogue with self and others in both written and oral forms (discussion, papers, cases, journal, final exam)

Required Readings and Materials

- ❖ Rachel Clarke. *Your Life in My Hands*. Metro Books. London. 2017.
- ❖ Paul Kalanithi. *When Breath Becomes Air*. Random House. New York. 2016.
- ❖ Mary Shelley. *Frankenstein*. (any edition is fine). 1818.

Assignments and Grades

Presentations	30% (5% case + 5% ethical theory, + 20% site leader)
Participation	10%
Journal	20% (see specific instructions & prompts in Canvas)
Essays	40% (10% Kant + 30% Final exam essays)



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Grading Scale

The following scale will be used to compute your grade.

Grading will be on a 100 point scale, and letter grades will be assigned using the letter system (no A+):					
93-100 A	90-92 A-	88-89 B+	83-87 B	80-82 B-	78-79 C+
73-77 C	70-72 C-	68-69 D+	63-67 D	60-62 D-	below 60 F

Onsite Learning Experiences and Activities

Onsite learning experiences in this class will likely include the following site visits. This is a tentative list, which will be replaced with a detailed daily itinerary of class meetings and field trips prior to the departure date.

- Day trip to Dover (cliffs, hospital, castle, city, war tunnels)
- Old Operating Theatre
- A working hospice facility
- British Red Cross Museum
- Nightingale Museum guided tour
- London Science Museum
- Museum of the Order of St. John's
- Royal College of Physicians medical garden
- Medical Madness tour
- London Plague Walk
- Westminster Abbey
- Tower of London
- Highgate Cemetery
- Royal Botanic Gardens (forest bathing as medicine)
- Albert Pub
- The Gatehouse Pub
- University College London's Student Centre on Gordon Square (also has Japanese garden)
- A British Tea Room and service

Attendance Policy

Attendance is mandatory at all scheduled activities and class meetings, as well as field trip excursions. This includes any virtual meetings before and after the onsite experience. Repeated absences, including for ill health, will require documentation to be excused.

Each unexcused absence at required outings will lower <u>final</u> grade one half-letter (A → B+, B → C+, etc.).
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Academic Integrity Policy

DO NOT CHEAT. If you do not know what counts as plagiarism (improper citation as well as copying, using generative AI, etc.), **talk to me.** Turning in papers that are not your own will result in a grade of zero for the assignment at best, and if the offense is egregious, you could fail the course. *This is an ethics class.*

Physical Expectations

The program requires walking 3-5 miles per day on uneven pavement in all kinds of weather and long periods of standing. Students must be able to carry their own bags and belongings.

Disability Accommodation

CCSA is committed to providing access to education abroad to the extent possible in a study abroad setting. The earlier CCSA and the faculty know the needs, the more likely we can accommodate them. At a minimum, students seeking accommodations are to contact both the CCSA office and the faculty one month in advance of the program's beginning. Students seeking such accommodation must provide CCSA with a copy of the letter on file with their own Office of Disability Services outlining what services they receive on their home campus.

Title IX Policy

Sexual misconduct (including sexual harassment, sexual assault, and any nonconsensual behavior of a sexual nature) and sexual discrimination violate CCSA policies. Students experiencing such behavior may obtain support from the Onsite Program Director or the CCSA Executive Director. To report sexual misconduct or sex discrimination, contact either of these two officers. Disclosure to faculty instructors or CCSA officers of sexual misconduct, domestic violence, dating violence, or sex discrimination occurring on the program or involving a visitor, student, or employee is not confidential under Title IX. Faculty and other CCSA employees are required to forward such reports, including names and circumstances, to the CCSA Executive Director.

Statement about Final Syllabus

Please note that all CCSA syllabi are subject to change, but every effort will be made to ensure participants receive notice of such changes in a timely manner.