

2025-26

# CLINICAL BIOETHICS

Degree Offered: Certificate



## Program Description

The Certificate in Clinical Bioethics program is designed to provide a foundational introduction to the philosophical, legal, and clinical foundations of health care ethics. Specifically designed to enhance the clinical practice of health care professionals or to provide a foundation for further study of bioethics for professionals and students in any discipline, the Certificate program is offered in an accessible online format available to individuals from across the nation and throughout the world.

## Admission Requirements

In addition to the general [Graduate School admission requirements](#), this program has no additional specific requirements.

## Credits Required to Graduate

12 credits

## Program Credit Requirements

All courses of the Certificate program are delivered in an online format. The pedagogical capabilities of the online environment enhance the course discussions and allow for more individualized instructor feedback making the courses truly student-centered.

Students receive a Certificate in Clinical Bioethics from the Medical College of Wisconsin's Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences upon completion of all four courses. Graduate credits accumulated in this program may be applicable toward the Master of Arts degree at the Medical College of Wisconsin.

## Required Courses

### **10209 Clinical Topics in Bioethics.** *3 credits.*

This course will provide an overview of the major areas of clinical bioethics. These are the topics that clinical ethicists commonly wrestle with in their role as consultation leaders, ethics committee members and teachers of contemporary bioethics. These have not yet been resolved to everyone's satisfaction. Students will examine informed consent, decision making, the role of advance directives, treatment limitations and appropriate end of life care. Further, students will look at the role of both physician and nurse in these dilemmas as well as the role of the ethics committee. Finally, students will tackle some more global issues that are still within the clinical arena--such as epidemiology and the concerns with emergency preparedness, institutional ethics and, and research ethics.

### **10210 Philosophical Bioethics.** *3 credits.*

In this course, students will explore the foundations of philosophical ethics in the West, and how early themes shape current work in philosophical bioethics. To this end, students will read works by Aristotle, Kant, and Mill, focusing on their theoretical approaches to ethics. Detailed discussion will focus on the ethics theories known as virtue theory, casuistry, deontology, utilitarianism, communitarianism, and principlism, considering both their historical

origins and modern interpretations. Students will apply these theories to topical themes of moral development, abortion, assisted death and others, noting their strengths and weaknesses.

**10223 Law and Bioethics.** *3 credits.*

This course provides an introduction to legal principles and legal precedent relevant to issues in bioethics, aimed at providing the foundation for understanding relevant law concerning these issues.

**Elective Courses**

For the elective course, students can choose one course from among the following selection of approved and offered courses, with the guidance of an advisor:

**10203 Justice and Healthcare.** *3 credits.*

This course will provide an overview of Justice and Health Care. We will begin with a close look at a number of philosophical perspectives on distributive justice, including John Rawls' Theory of Justice, Utilitarianism, Equality of Opportunity, various theories of Equality, and the concept of Triage. Students will then apply these perspectives to issues in access to healthcare/health insurance coverage, genetic enhancement, and the distribution of risks and benefits of medical research. The second part of the course will focus on the effects of managed care on contemporary medical practice in the US. In particular, students will examine how managed care arrangements alter the physician-patient relationship, the factors which have led to the development of managed care reimbursement systems, state and federal health care plans, and in particular the Oregon Plan.

**10207 Introduction to Research Ethics.** *3 credits.*

This course provides students with a comprehensive introduction to the ethical issues involved in scientific, animal and human subject's research. After a brief look back at the history of research ethics, students will spend time considering issues that impact research in both the laboratory setting and in the clinical setting. This course provides the necessary research ethics instruction required to satisfy the United States Public Health Service Policy on Instruction in the Responsible Conduct of Research for institutions receiving research funds from the Department of Health and Human Services. (Issued December 1, 2000.)

**10233 Issues in Pediatric Ethics.** *3 credits.*

This course will discuss the question of children's rights, the social value of children and cross-cultural issues of childhood. The objective of the course is to examine our individual assumptions about childhood and parenting that form the basis of approaches to pediatric ethics.

**10234 Ethics and Human Reproduction.** *3 credits.*

This course will provide an opportunity for students to explore some of the ethical issues related to human reproduction, including assisted reproductive technologies, genetics, and cloning. Students will also examine the various religious and philosophical arguments, as well as international perspectives, surrounding issues of human reproduction.

**10240 History and Meaning of Ethics and Professionalism in Medicine.** *3 credits.*

Medical ethics and professionalism have meant different things to different people for literally thousands of years. In this course, we will explore the history and meanings of medical ethics and medical professionalism from ancient times through contemporary challenges.

We will delve into a variety of schools of thought on what it means, or should mean, to be a physician-learning from each other and through readings from disciplines including history, law, sociology, economics, political science, and philosophy. Special attention will be paid to the social roles of physicians, to the roles of professional associations, and the evolution of Codes of Ethics in medicine. The first part of the course is intended to be primarily historical in nature, providing an overview of the history of medical professionalism. In the second part of the course, we will delve more deeply into the sociology of professions, ending with an exploration of contemporary ways of understanding professionalism in medicine. In the third part of the course, we will delve into several specific, contemporary challenges facing the medical profession and approaches to these challenges. Throughout the course, we will use specific cases as examples to develop and illustrate methods of analysis.

**10275 Special Topics in Bioethics. 3 credits.**

This course focuses on topics of special interest in bioethics. Examples of topics include neuroethics, ethics at the end of life, ethical issues in mental health, and political issues in bioethics and public health.

Contact information: [gradschool@mcw.edu](mailto:gradschool@mcw.edu) | (414) 955-8218