

Distinction in Bioethics Program – Rutgers NJMS

Updated December 18, 2024

Description

Increased medical capability from developing technologies results in changes in healthcare delivery throughout the life cycle, particularly at the beginning and end of life. Moral and ethical considerations of these changes often lags behind the technology. The COVID-19 pandemic further highlighted the need for physicians to be able to identify, articulate, and navigate ethical issues in healthcare to provide holistic care that is consonant with the patient's values and physician's moral and professional obligation. Issues regarding allocation of scarce resources, informed consent, withholding or withdrawal of interventions, end-of-life decision-making, research ethics, and health issues in public policy are omnipresent in medicine. NJMS students are introduced to bioethics as first year students and will face ethical issues around patient care, research, and policy throughout their medical education, training, and beyond.

The Distinction in Bioethics Program is designed to enable NJMS students to engage the field of bioethics in more depth than permitted in the regular curriculum, and to develop expertise in a particular bioethical problem. Students will become familiar with the Bioethics Committees of our various hospitals, be involved with clinical ethics consultation, and to complete a bioethics scholarly project. Students with prior experience in Bioethics or Philosophy are encouraged to apply for this distinction program, but prior experience is not a prerequisite.

Distinction In Bioethics Program Committee

Co-Directors: Michael E. Shapiro, MD Chair, Bioethics Committee, UH
Professor of Surgery, R-NJMS

Frances Rieth Maynard, PhD, MBE, FNP-BC Co-Chair, Bioethics Committee, UH
Associate Professor, R-SON
Jt. Appt. Family Medicine, R-NJMS

Grace Lee Riddle, MD, MSME Assistant Professor of Surgery, R-NJMS

Other faculty with training/experience in Bioethics will be added subsequently.

Program Requirements

I) Didactics

There will be monthly seminars covering topics in bioethics on a recurrent basis over two years. Seminars may include a didactic portion to ensure foundational bioethical principles are discussed, as well as a flipped-classroom utilizing literature review to critically assess emerging issues in bioethics. Case-based presentations for application of bioethical principles in real-world clinical ethics may also be used for discussion. Students will be expected to participate in a minimum of 6 sessions a year to obtain the Distinction in Bioethics at graduation.

OPTIONAL: Dr. Michael Shapiro is the course director for GSND 5325 Introduction to Biomedical Ethics, an elective in the School of General Studies. Students are encouraged to attend these classes as schedule permits. The class is offered each semester (fall and spring) with two section options:

- IN PERSON: Tuesdays 2-4p
- VIRTUAL: Thursdays 10a-12p

Contact Dr. Michael Shapiro for further details

II) Practicum

Distinction program students will be required to attend at least 8 bioethics-specific meetings throughout the course of their time at NJMS. Options include:

- UH Bioethics Committee
 - First Wednesday of every month except July and August, 3:30-5p
 - IN PERSON: D212
 - Virtual Zoom option available
- Ethics Committee meetings at the hospital for a clinical rotation in MS3 or MS4 (UH, CBMC, NBI, JCMC, VA, Morristown)
 - CBMC: Mondays every other month, will need to be coordinated in advance by Distinction faculty and Chair of CBMC Ethics Committee
 - We are in process of obtaining information on Ethics Committees of other sites, TBD
- IRB Review Meetings
 - Will need to be coordinated in advance by Distinction faculty and IRB liaison

A sample schedule for attending bioethics meetings over the course of the Distinction Program:

- Year 2 – Attend 2 UH Bioethics Committee meeting, 1 IRB Review Meeting
- Year 3 – Attend 1 Ethics Committee meetings at the site of a clinical rotation
- Year 4 – Attend 2 UH Bioethics Committee meeting, 1 Ethics Committee meeting at the site of a clinical rotation, 1 IRB Review Meeting

Distinction students must also take ONE of the following electives:

- MS3 (2-week elective)
 - SURG 9512 Surgical Ethics
- MS4 (4-week elective)
 - SURG 9012 Surgical Ethics
 - MED 9004 Palliative Care
 - PEDS 9081 Clinical Genetics

III) Capstone

The student will develop a bioethics research project within the domain of clinical ethics or research ethics. Upon approval of the Committee and under the mentorship of a Distinction in Bioethics faculty member, the student will complete the project over the course of the program to produce the following deliverables (one paper, at least one presentation):

- Paper
 - Written manuscript(s) ready for submission for publication
 - Written thesis
- Presentation (poster, podium talk, lecture)
 - Annual NJMS Distinction Symposium
 - Local, regional, or national academic conference

The Capstone project may build on earlier work from the summer between MS1 and MS2, or may be a new project based on clinical experiences in MS3. If the student enters the Distinction program during MS1, the student is expected to spend the summer between MS1 and MS2 in an intensive bioethics learning experience structured around a bioethics research project. The actual preparation of a paper for submission may not be completed by the end of the summer but should be completed by the time of the NJMS Distinction Symposium.

Timeline

The timeline will mirror the timeline established for the other Distinction Programs. The application, selection, and follow-up process is as follows:

MS1

Winter	Info Session for the Distinction of Bioethics Program
Winter/Spring	Deadline for Distinction of Bioethics Program Application
Spring	Interview with Applicants
Spring	Notification of Accepted Applicants

MS2

Aug	Written Progress Report from Summer Project Due (if applicable)
May	End-of-Year Written Progress Report Due

MS3

May	End-of-Year Written Progress Report Due
June	Submission of Written Thesis or Publication Proposal

MS4

May	Presentation During NJMS Distinction Symposium
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Student Name
Checklist for Distinction in Bioethics Pathway

Didactics (Minimum 6 per year)

MS2	MS3	MS4
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Bioethics Meetings (Minimum 8 over 3 years, provide session and date)

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Bioethics Elective (One of the following)

- SURG 9512 Surgical Ethics
- SURG 9012 Surgical Ethics
- MED 9004 Palliative Care
- PEDS 9081 Clinical Genetics

Capstone

- Paper
- Presentation