Bioethics is the ethics of life, the life sciences, and the medical sciences. It includes ethics of medicine, nursing and other clinical professions; ethics of research on human subjects; ethics on research on animals; ethics of genetics of humans, animals, plants and microorganisms; environmental ethics and much more.

Sources of bioethics begin with the life and health sciences themselves. But when asking what is right and wrong, we often begin with sources like religion, law, custom, philosophy, etc. Since different people have been educated, or have chosen to become educated, in different cultures or sub-cultures, there have always been cross-cultural interactions in bioethical discussions. Sometimes these interactions have been harmonious, sometimes disharmonious.

Two very significant factors in sharpening cross-cultural interaction were the ethics of genetics and the ethics of the HIV pandemic in the last two decades of the twentieth century.

International conferences and publications on Ethical, Legal and Social Implications of the Human Genome Project led, especially in the early 1990s, to increased attention to Western cultural hegemony. This was especially so with respect to scientific and medical culture and their ethics. Cross-cultural bioethics developed as a movement to apply ethical thinking from Southern and Eastern cultures to today's bioethical questions and to give such cultures an equal place in international publications, declarations and agreements. Cross-cultural bioethics deals not only with the ethics of genetics but also with end-of-life care, fertility treatment, abortion, animal rights, the environment, biometrics and more. The course will examine
bioethical questions from points of view of Judaism, Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism, Shinto, and Western bioethical thinking.

Course Objective(s): The students should be expected to improve their ability to communicate on bioethical issues with people from other cultures, to relate with understanding to views very different from their own, and to contribute to rewarding intercultural activities in and outside of their respective professions.

Total # of Credits: 2

Teaching Method: Lectures will usually be informal so as to encourage discussion. Students will be assigned papers on topics decided upon in consultation with the lecturer. The bulk of the students’ reading will be in preparation for these papers. In most cases the readings for the papers will be taken from the list in the course schedule, below. But exceptions may be considered. A major part of the teaching will be tutoring for these papers.

Course Requirements
Compulsory attendance
Pre-requisites: none

Structure of Final Course Grade
1. Attendance and active participation 20%
2. Mid-term short paper (5 pages) 30%
3. Final paper 12-15 pages) 50%

In the case of papers with a clinical content, where a shorter paper in medical journal format is appropriate, exceptions may be made – with the teacher’s permission -- as to the length of the paper.

Notes:
- Work handed in late without prior permission will not be graded!
- Students will have their final grade lowered an entire grade level if they miss more than 2 class meetings unexcused. (This means that if you are going to miss a class, please email the lecturer in advance or ‘phone if there is not enough time for email exchange. The students will receive the lecturer’s email and mobile ‘phone number on the first day of class.)
- Students who make an outstanding contribution to class discussion may be rewarded with extra points. Quiet but attentive students will not be penalized.
- Grades will not be distributed according to a bell curve or any other pre-determined curve. Each student’s contribution will be graded according to its own merits. This means that your friend’s success will not be at your expense. Students are, therefore, encouraged to help one another study. It should go without saying, however, that the work which you present must be your own.
- Papers must be in 12 point font with spacing of 1 ½ or 2.

Course Schedule:
Notes: The readings in this list are recommended. Each student will be required to undertake a substantial amount of reading for the purpose of his or her written work. These readings will be decided upon by the student in consultation with and with the permission of the lecture.
The first half of the course will consist of introductions to the foundations of the ethics of various cultures. The second half will deal with practical bioethical questions.

**Week 1:** Introductory Lecture. What is cross-cultural bioethics? Ethical absolutism, cultural relativism and ethical relativism.

**Week 2** Foundations of Western Bioethics in Utilitarianism.
Recommended reading:
John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*

**Week 3:** Foundations of Western Bioethics in Kantianism.
Recommended reading:
I. Kant Immanuel, *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals*

**Week 4:** Western Bioethics, principles of bioethics and exercises in their use.
Recommended reading:
Beauchamp T and Childress JF, *Principles of Biomedical Ethics*

**Week 5:** Jewish Bioethics.
Recommended Reading:
Rabbi Sir Immanuel Jakobovits. *Jewish Medical Ethics: A Comparative and Historical Study of the Jewish Religious Attitude to Medicine and Its Practice*


**Week 6:** Hindu Bioethics: Introduction.
Recommended Reading:
The *Bhagavad Gita*. Eliot Deutsch, tr


**Week 7:** Shinto and Buddhist Bioethics, Introduction.
Recommended reading:

Mitford AB. *Tales of Old Japan*. (1966) Rutland, etc, Tuttle.

http://fore.research.yale.edu/religion/shinto/

Rosemarie Bernard. Shinto and Ecology Bibliography

http://fore.research.yale.edu/religion/shinto/bibliography.html

Jinja Honcho, [Representative body of all Shinto Shrines in Japan]. Shinto Faith Statement.

http://www.arcworld.org/faiths.asp?pageID=74


Week 8:
The unborn baby: abortion, fertility treatment, embryo experimentation.
Recommended reading:


Week 9: Care for the Dying Patient.
Recommended reading:


Week 10: Ethics in Research on Human Subjects
Recommended reading:
Nuremberg Code: ethics for human experimentation
http://ohsr.od.nih.gov/guidelines/nuremberg.html

World Medical Association Declaration of Helsinki
http://www.wma.net/en/30publications/10policies/b3/


Week 11: Ethics in Complementary and Alternative Medicine.
Recommended readings:
http://www.issuesinmedicalethics.org/161nbc29.html


The Oath of Sun Si Miao for Physicians of Traditional Chinese Medicine
http://www.heartofhealingacupuncture.com/code_of_ethics

The Hippocratic Oath (for comparison)
http://nktiuro.tripod.com/hippocr.htm

Physician’s Oath and Prayer of Maimonides (for comparison)
(Note: it may be debated to what extent the texts of Maimonides’ oath are authentic. See:

**Week 12:** Ethics in Human, Animal and Plant Genetics
Recommended reading:

Selected Articles from: Asian Biotechnology and Development Review. 2006; 9:

Eubios Journal of Asian and International Bioethics
http://www.eubios.info/EJAIB.htm

**Week 13:** The Animal Rights Controversy
Recommended reading:

http://www.hughlafollette.com/papers/BERNARD.HTM

**Week 14:** Biometrics, Ethics and Democracy
Recommended Reading: