



# Bioethics and Medical Humanities

## UNDERGRADUATE MINOR

### Grappling with the “Big Questions”

- How should public health address inequities in society?
- Is there a right to health care?
- Does corporate funding of health research imperil scientific integrity and public trust?
- Where does therapy end and enhancement begin?
- What are the implications of AI in health care and beyond?
- What does climate action demand in terms of intergenerational justice?
- How can we use narratives to inform bioethics today and tomorrow?

These are just some of the essential questions that bioethics—a relatively young and fast-growing discipline—seeks to answer. Students in the Bioethics and Medical Humanities (BMH) minor have the opportunity to probe these—and many other—pressing issues, drawing on scholarship from a wide range of disciplines, including philosophy, medicine, law, psychology, sociology, anthropology, biobehavioral health, public policy, international affairs, economics, art, literature, and environmental studies.

### Skills Building and Professional Preparation

The BMH minor is beneficial to all students, but it offers particular value to students planning to attend medical school, physician assistant school, law school, or veterinary school, as well as to students pursuing careers in nursing, dentistry, life sciences, public policy, informatics, or forensics. The knowledge and skills developed through the BMH minor provide students with the tools needed to tackle society’s major challenges in medicine, public health, science and technology, and the environment. Moreover, BMH minor graduates leave Penn State better prepared to engage as global citizens.

# BMH Undergraduate Minor Requirements

- Students must satisfactorily complete 18 approved course credits. The curriculum begins with a mandatory introductory course covering basic bioethics concepts (BIOET 100/PHIL 132). Subsequent classes are selected from the following list of offerings.
- Students may petition for substitutions, with permission dependent upon the student's other coursework and the nature of the requested course.
- The BMH minor culminates with a required capstone (BMH 490), which involves original student research and analysis. Students must receive a grade of C or better for all courses in the minor.

To request approval for alternative courses toward the minor, please email Bioethics Program Associate Director Michele Mekel at [mmekel@psu.edu](mailto:mmekel@psu.edu). Include all of the following in your email request:

1. The name and alpha-numeric identifier of the course you would like to substitute
2. Whether the course is intended to satisfy the ethics-course requirement
3. A list of the other courses you have taken and/or plan to take for the minor
4. Your major(s) and minor(s)
5. Your intended graduation date
6. Your transcript
7. The syllabus for the course you wish to take as a substitution

Courses that may be approved include, but are not limited to:

- BBH 302 Diversity and Health
- BBH 305 Introduction to Global Health Issues
- BBH 315 Gender and Biobehavioral Health
- BBH 407 Global Health Equity
- FDSC 105 Food Facts and Fads
- HIST 124 History of Western Medicine
- HPA 401 Comparative Health Systems
- HPA 410 Principles of Public Health Administration
- ECON/HPA 445 Health Economics
- HIST 111 American Food System: History, Technology, and Culture
- WMNST/BBH/NURS 452 Women's Health Issues

## Prescribed Courses (6 credits):

- BIOET 100/PHIL 132 Bioethics
- BMH 490 Bioethics and Medical Humanities Capstone or BIOET 496 Independent Study Capstone

## Additional Courses (12 credits):

Must include 3 credits at the 400 level and one course from the "Ethics" courses below.

### Ethics:

- BBH 301 Values and Ethics in Behavioral Research and Practice
- BIOET 401Q Science, Ethics, Policy, and Law (honors and interdomain course)
- BIOL 461 Contemporary Issues in Science and Medicine
- NURS 464 Dying and Death
- BIOET 432/PHIL 432 Medical and Health Care Ethics
- PHIL 498 Special Topics (when relevant)
- WMNST 458 Critical Issues in Reproduction

### Humanities:

- CAS 253 Health Communication
- CAS 453 Health Communication Theory and Research
- HIST 103 History of Madness, Mental Illness, and Psychiatry

### Other:

- AED/BIOET 322 New Media Arts Pedagogies, Transcultural Dialogues, and Bioethics
- ANTH 470H Our Place in Nature
- ANTH 471H Biology, Evolution, and Society
- CSD 269 Deaf Culture
- FD SC 280H Food, Values, and Health
- HPA 301 Health Services Policy Issues
- KINES 345 Meaning, Ethics, and Movement
- NUTR 430 Global Food Strategies
- WMNST 250 Sexual Identity over the Lifespan
- BIOET/ESC 220N Ethics, Society, and Science Fiction (interdomain course)

If you are interested in the BMH minor and would like to learn more, please email Michele Mekel at [mmekel@psu.edu](mailto:mmekel@psu.edu).

This publication is available in alternative media on request. Penn State is an equal opportunity, affirmative action employer, and is committed to providing employment opportunities to all qualified applicants without regard to race, color, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability or protected veteran status. Our events and programs are open to all students regardless of sex, gender, sexual orientation, race, or any other protected class. The College of the Liberal Arts is committed to building a community of belonging for all. UBR CLA 25-479