

**CCTS 21005 (50 Units)**  
**The Making of the “Good Physician”:**  
**Virtue Ethics and the Development of Moral Character in Medicine**

*“The practice of medicine is an art, not a trade; a calling, not a business; a calling in which your heart will be exercised equally with your head.” – Sir William Osler*

*“Can virtue be taught [to physicians]? Or if not, does it come by practice? Or does it come neither by practice nor by teaching, but...by nature, or in some other way? –Plato, The Meno*

**Spring 2018 (Thurs 2:00-3:20pm), Mar 29-May 31**

**M214 CHeSS Conference Room (Section of Hospital Medicine), Mitchell Hospital**

*(Enter through the Ellis Ave entrance near bookstore and work your way South, then West to the “A West” elevator to the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. To your right, the conference room will be at the end of the hallway).*

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**Course Description:** This multi-disciplinary course draws insights from medicine, sociology, moral psychology, philosophy, ethics and theology to explore answers to the unique challenges that medicine faces in the context of late modernity: How does one become a “good physician” in an era of growing moral pluralism and health care complexity? Throughout the course, we will be drawing from Lauris Kaldjian’s book, *Practicing Medicine and Ethics: Integrating Wisdom, Conscience, and Goals of Care* (Cambridge University Press, 2014) who provides a framework for addressing this question from the perspective of virtue ethics. The course will first introduce the challenges that moral pluralism in contemporary society presents to the profession of medicine along with the subsequent calls for a renewed pursuit of clinical excellence in today’s complex health care system. It will then survey the resurgence of a virtue ethics that has begun to shape contemporary debate regarding what types of “excellences” are needed for a good medical practice dominated by medical science and technology. Lastly, students will examine recent research in the field of moral psychology that is shaping contemporary views regarding moral and professional formation and identity. Finally, students will examine studies from the vocational psychology literature on work motivation, focusing particularly on the construct of calling and its application to the pursuit of clinical excellence in medicine. Students will engage the virtue ethics literature to address issues regarding the legitimate goals of medicine, medical professionalism, the doctor-patient relationship, vocation and calling, the role of religion/theology in medicine, and character development in medical education.

**Course Materials:** All readings are journal articles or book excerpts and are available through the university library’s electronic resources or on Chalk. In addition, several books may be recommended as optional reading.

**Course Pre-requisites:** This course is limited to those who have been accepted into the Emerging Scholars Cohort in Bioethics (Hyde Park Institute, <https://hydeparkinstitute.org/esc>). Depending on space availability, Bucksbaum Clinical Excellence Scholars, and other interested students will need prior approvals from Course Instructor(s).

**Course Requirements and Grading.** Course pre-requisite: Students must have already completed SOSC sequence. Grades will be based on four requirements, each of which accounts for approximately 1/3 of the final grade: (1) class attendance/participation, (2) weekly abstracts (3) the final paper,

**(1) Students should attend and participate in class discussions.** Depending on the size of the class, discussions may begin with short (~ 5-10 minute) oral presentations in which students are assigned to introduce the topic of discussion for that week and summarize readings for the benefit of the class.

**(2) Students will be required to write one abstract (500 words max) per week** based on one or more of that week's readings. I anticipate readings each week to be no more than a 50-60 pages. A *Question of the Week* will be formulated to help focus your responses. Abstracts (9 total) must be submitted through Chalk by 11:59pm the day prior to the scheduled discussion. [0 points if no abstract is turned in; 1 point if only a summary without response, or response without thoughtful summary; 2 points for summary & response.]

**(3) Final paper** (10-12 pg double-spaced), due on the last day of the quarter (earlier for graduating fourth years). This paper can address a topic from one of the core themes of the course or, with instructor consent, another related topic of interest to the student. (See paper instructions below)

### **Course Final Paper:**

Option 1: Students may take a typical term paper approach (ask a research question, and then answer it in 10+ pages). There are many excellent general guides to help you think about writing projects, such as former UC prof Wayne Booth's legendary *The Craft of Research* (2008), as well as more focused guides such as Howard Becker's highly personal and humorous *Writing for Social Scientists* (1986), Becker's *Tricks of the Trade: How to Think about Your Research While You're Doing It* (1998), or Robert Alford's more formal *The Craft of Inquiry* (1998). Some students may be preparing a BA paper. With the consent of the instructor, you may choose to study the topic of your BA paper through a different theoretical or empirical lens. Alternatively, you may write a research proposal outlining how you would go about finding the answer to your question(s). There are many good guides to writing proposals, including, for example, Sage Publication's *Proposal Writing, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed* (2007). For third year students contemplating a 4<sup>th</sup> year BA paper, this exercise might be a good way to get a head start on the process of writing a research proposal. You could also perform a Systematic Literature Review on a topic discussed in this course and summarize the findings of your research while also drawing your own conclusions. (BEME Guide No 3, Medical Teacher, Vol 25, No. 4, July 2003) Key advice for the class paper is to choose something you are interested in and pursue the topic with diligence.

Option 2: Based on readings from the course and your own research, you may advance a theoretically reasoned or empirically based argument answering the question: "*In light of the growing complexity of the health care system and moral pluralism in medicine, how does one become a good physician?*"

### **Some topic ideas to get you thinking, others of your choosing may be allowed with instructor consent:**

- How should medical educators address issues of character in medical education?
- What differences, if any, does the approach of virtue ethics make with respect to their clinical ethical decisions compared to contemporary ethical traditions?
- Should clinicians in a pluralistic society like our own practice in ways that are self-consciously grounded in and informed by religious traditions? (Why or why not?)
- What would it mean to rightly set the practice of medicine in the context of a good (virtuous, ethical, and/or faithful) life?

**COURSE SCHEDULE & READINGS**

Kaldjian, Lauris C. *Practicing Medicine and Ethics: Integrating Wisdom, Conscience, and Goals of Care*. New York: Cambridge University Press 2014. (Primary Textbook for Course)

**WEEK 1: Thurs Mar 29<sup>th</sup>**

- Read Kaldjian Ch. 1: Medicine as a Goal-Directed, Moral Practice
- Read Curlin, *What is Medicine For?*

**WEEK 2: Thurs Apr 5<sup>th</sup>**

- Read Kaldjian Ch. 2: Virtue Ethics
- Read MacIntyre A. *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame; 2002, Third Edition (Read Prologue, Ch 1-2, pgs. 1-22).

**WEEK 3: Thurs Apr 12<sup>th</sup>**

- Read Kaldjian Ch. 3: Practical Wisdom in Medicine
- Read Warren Kinghorn, *Medical Education as Moral Formation: An Aristotelian Account of Medical Professionalism*. *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine*, Vol. 53, No. 1(2010): 87-105

**WEEK 4: Thurs Apr 19<sup>th</sup>**

- Read Kaldjian Ch. 4: Conscience and Its Relation to Practical Wisdom
- Read Curlin, "Religion, Conscience and Controversial Clinical Practices" *New England Journal of Medicine*, 2007;356: 593-600.

**WEEK 5: Thurs Apr 26<sup>th</sup>**

- Read Kaldjian Ch. 5: The Authority, Fallibility, and Normative Reach of Conscience
- Read Kaldjian Ch. 6: Conscience as Integrity

**WEEK 6: Thurs May 3<sup>rd</sup>**

- Warren Kinghorn Guest Speaker
- Reading TBD or Kinghorn, W. A., et al. "Professionalism in Modern Medicine: Does the Emperor Have Any Clothes?" *Acad Med* 82.1 (2007):40-5.

**WEEK 7: Thurs May 10<sup>th</sup>**

- Read Kaldjian Ch. 7: The Challenge and Inescapability of Moral Pluralism
- Read Siegler M. *Searching for moral certainty in medicine: a proposal for a new model of the doctor-patient encounter*. *Bull N Y Acad Med* 1981;57:56e69.

**WEEK 8: Thurs May 17<sup>th</sup>**

- Read Kaldjian Ch. 8: Implications of Moral Pluralism for Public Dialogue and Professional Practice
- Read Curlin, FA. *A Case for Studying the Relationship Between Religion and the Practice of Medicine*. *Acad Med*. 2008;83(12):1118-1120.

**WEEK 9: Thurs May 24<sup>th</sup>**

- Read Kaldjian Ch. 9: Conscientious Objection and Conscientious Practice
- Read Brauer SG, Yoon JD, Curlin FA. US Primary Care Physicians' Opinions about Conscientious Refusal: A National Vignette Experiment. *Journal of Medical Ethics*. 2015 Jul

**WEEK 10: Thurs May 31<sup>st</sup>**

- Read Kaldjian Ch. 10: An Integrity-Centered Framework for Practical Wisdom in Medicine
- Read Hawking M, Curlin FA, Yoon JD. Courage and Compassion: Virtues in Caring for So-Called "Difficult" Patients. *AMA Journal of Ethics*. April 2017, Volume 19, Number 4: 357-363. [[Link](#)]