Course Syllabus: Ethics in Healthcare

College of Robert D. & Carol Gunn College of Health Sciences & Human Services NURS 4703
Spring 2025
Contact Information

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Course Description

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1. This course builds on the ethical and legal foundations for professional nursing practice and health care services. Ethical, legal, and moral/social principles along with the ANA Code for Nurses are applied to common and complex health care related situations.

2. The course provides an opportunity to assess ethical and legal issues confronting nurses in a variety of health care delivery settings.

3. The course focuses on identification and analysis of legal and ethical concepts and principles underlying nursing and health care.

4. This course includes information required for examination of ethical decision-making in clinical practice. The focus is on values clarification, ethical theory, ethical decision-making models, and professional ethical standards. Emphasis is on ethical obligations of professional nurses in their roles as citizens, members of a profession, providers of care, and designers and managers of care.

AACN Essentials: For further information regarding the AACN Essentials identified for each course objective, refer to: The 2021 Essentials of Baccalaureate Education for Professional Nursing Practice

Table 1: DECs 2021

Course Objectives	AACN	DEC
Upon completion of this course the student should be able to:		
1. Describe the ethical theories in relation to morality, laws and social practices and policies.	II,III,V,VI,VIII,IX.	IA, IB,IC,ID,IIB,IID,IIE,IIIB,IVB.
2. Define and apply the principles of autonomy, beneficence, nonmaleficence, veracity, justice, and fidelity to common and complex health care and professional situations including economics, access to care, and personal rights.	II,III,IV,V,VI,VIII.	IA,IB,IC,ID,IIB,IIC,IID,IIE,IIIB,IVA, IVB,IVD.
3. Describe the process of ethical decision-making as it relates to nursing practice and the nurse: person/patient/ family/community relationships	II,III,IV,V,VI,VII,VIII, IX.	IA,IB,IC,ID,IIA,IIB,IIC,IID,IIE,IIIB,IVA,IVB,IVC,IVD.
4. Compare and contrast law and ethics related to health care Services including end of life issues.	II,III,IV,V,VI,VIII,IX.	IA,IB,IC,ID,IIA,IIB,IIC,IID,IIE,IIIB,IIIC,VA,IVB,IVC,IVD.
5. Apply American Nurses Association (ANA) Code for Nurses to clinical and other professional situations.	III,IV,V,VI,VII,VIII,IX.	IA,IB,IC,ID,IIA,IID,IIE,IIF,IIIA,III,IIIC,IIID,IIIE,IIIF,IVA,IVB,IVD,IVF,IV G.
6. Demonstrate communication in engagement/crucial conversations related to complex and controversial ethics, law, and professional practice issues.	II,III,IV,V,VII,VII,VIII, IX.	IA,IB,IC,ID,IIA,IIB,IIC,IID,IIE,IIF,IIG,IH,IIIB,IIIC,IIID,IVA,IVB,IVC.IVD.

Textbook & Instructional Materials

Required textbook

Butts, J.B., & Rich, K.L.(2022).Nursing Ethics (6th ed.). Burlington, MA: Jones & Bartlett Learning. ISBN 9781284259247.

American Psychological Association (2019). Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (7th ed.). Washington D.C. ISBN 9781433832161

Learning Experiences

Students are expected to be self-directed in the acquisition of basic nursing knowledge. Learning activities available to the students include but are not limited to:
1. Reading assignments
2. Class assignments/quizzes
3. Group work/class participation
4. Online learning assignments

Student Handbook

Refer to: 25-26 Student Handbook

Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures

This course adheres to the MSU Code of Conduct. In particular, academic dishonesty, however small, creates a breach in academic integrity. A student's participation in this course comes with the expectation that his or her work will be completed in full observance of the MSU Code of Student Conduct. A student should consult the current Student Handbook for answers to any questions about the code.

Students are encouraged to take full advantage of many resources available including online Desire 2 Learn course resources, Internet sites, other textbooks and journals, faculty, and peers when accomplishing objectives. This interactive collegial learning environment is conducive for life-long learning.

However, all components of the course are designed to represent the efforts of each student individually or each group of students individually when completing a group project and are not to be shared, copied, or plagiarized from other sources. When students submit their efforts for grading, they are attesting they abided by this rule.

Academic dishonesty includes cheating, collusion, plagiarism or the acquisition of tests or test questions and other academic materials such as test banks without the permission of the faculty. Cheating, collusion, or plagiarism is defined as: (1) cheating - intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, equipment, or study aids in any academic exercise; (2) collusion - the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing work offered for credit; (3) plagiarism - intentionally representing the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise.

Academic dishonesty (cheating, collusion, plagiarism, etc.) will not be tolerated in this class. Whenever a student is unsure of whether a particular situation will be interpreted as academic dishonesty, he or she should ask the instructor for clarification.

Unless otherwise specified, the use of Automated Writing Tools, including chatGPT and similar artificial intelligence (AI) tools, is strictly prohibited in this course, even when properly attributed. The use of automated writing tools is considered plagiarism (as defined by SRRR 9.3) and will be handled in accordance with existing policy.

Students will be held responsible for checking their own work prior to submitting to D2l for turnit in report and AI submission verification. Any work submitted with a turnit in report of 20% or greater and/or 30% or greater AI completion may receive a failing grade.

That is, any student found to be academically dishonest as defined above on any assignment will automatically receive a grade of "0" on the assignment.

Grading

Table 2: Percentage allocated to each assignment –

Assignments	Percentage
Discussions	25%
Ethical Dilemma Paper	25%
Hospital Case Essay	25%
Case Study Paper	25%
Total	**100%**

Table 3: Total points for final grade. **There will be no rounding of grades.**

Grade	Points
A	90 to 100
B	80 to 89
C	79 to 74
D	65 to 73
F	64 and below

Projects Required

Assignments vary in each module and each assignment has its own rubric for completion and grading. Written work is to be completed and submitted electronically in the appropriate assignment (drop box) on D2L and submitted by assigned due date and time. An overall average of at least 74% is required to pass this course. Faculty reserves the right to make changes at any time to this syllabus. Students are to be accountable for all communications sent by faculty on Desire 2 Learn; therefore, you **must** check the site for announcements, assignments, and messages. Faculty prefers students use email as a means to make a specific request or to ask for content clarification. Virtual and phone appointments are available upon request. All assignments are run through Turn-it-In for a similarity plagiarism score. Scores above
20% similarity will receive a 30-point deduction. Students may revise and resubmit as many times as needed before the due date and time. Only the last submission will be graded.

Discussion Board

You must post a substantive response to each of the required questions. A substantive response is constructive and adds value to the weekly discussions. Substantive responses should be at least 150 words in length. Rarely should each require more than 250 words. Your responses need to reflect critical thought and demonstrate an understanding of the relevant concepts. All factual knowledge must be supported with appropriate citation of source. Response to the discussion board questions must be posted by 10:59 PM CST of the due date on the Discussion Board section in the appropriate Discussion Question thread as stated in the course outline. Initial discussion responses posted more than 2 days late and or in the wrong thread will not be accepted. Initial postings will receive a 10 percent deduction for each day late and will not be accepted if posted more than 2 days late. It is the responsibility of the student to post the

assignment on the correct thread by 10:59 PM CST on or prior to the due date. Participation in the classroom discussion is required. In addition to posting your Initial response to the discussion questions you must post a substantive comment to at least two of your classmate's posts. Peer post may be made anytime during the week but must be made prior to the close of the week before the due date and time. Peer Posts made after the due date and close of the week will not be accepted for credit.

Late Work

Assignments more than two days late will not be accepted. Assignments submitted late which is within two days of the due date will receive a ten-point deduction for each day they are late.

Assignment Upload

All assignment submissions made by students in D2L are considered final submissions. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the correct and complete file has been uploaded. If a student submits an incorrect document, an incomplete draft, or any unintended version, the assignment will be graded as submitted. Students are strongly encouraged to double-check their upload before finalizing the submission.

Additionally, Apple file formats such as .pages or Keynote files will not be accepted. All submissions must be uploaded in Microsoft Office formats—such as .doc, .docx, .ppt, or .xlsx—or as otherwise specified in the assignment instructions.

Important Dates

Last Day to drop with a grade of "W:" is March 18, 2026
Refer to: Drops, Withdrawals & Void

Desire-to-Learn (D2L)

Extensive use of the MSU D2L program is a part of this course. Each student is expected to be familiar with this program as it provides a primary source of communication regarding assignments, examination materials, and general course information. You can log into D2L through the MSU Homepage. If you experience difficulties, please contact the technicians listed for the program or contact your instructor.

Online Computer Requirements

Taking an online class requires you to have access to a computer (with Internet access) to complete and upload your assignments. It is your responsibility to have (or have access to) a working computer in this class. ***Assignments and tests are due by the due date, and personal computer technical difficulties will not be considered reason for the instructor to allow students extra time to submit assignments, tests, or discussion postings.*** Computers are available on campus in various areas of the buildings as well as the Academic Success Center. **Your computer being down is not an excuse for missing a deadline!!** There are many places to access your class! Our online classes can be accessed from any computer in the world which is connected to the internet. Contact your instructor immediately upon having computer trouble If you have technical difficulties in the course, there is also a student helpdesk available to you. The college cannot work directly on student computers due to both liability and resource limitations however they are able to help you get connected to our online services. For help, log into D2L**.**

Instructor Class Policies

Instructor Drop. An instructor may drop a student any time during the semester for excessive absences, for consistently failing to meet class assignments, for an indifferent attitude or for lack of engagement in the online learning environment. For example, failure to participate in online discussions as schedule and on time is considered being absent. Prior to dropping a student from the class, the instructor must give the student a verbal or written warning. An instructor's drop of a student takes precedence over the student-initiated course drop at a later date. The instructor will assign a grade of WF or F the 6th week of a 10-week summer term. After this time, the grade will be an F. The date the Office of the Registrar receives the instructor drop form is the official drop date. RN Transition students must complete all nursing courses within a two-year period of time beginning with the first nursing course. RN Transition students must maintain enrollment in at least two courses per semester. If a student does not maintain enrollment for one semester they will be placed on inactive status. If a student were to withdraw for a second time from the same and or any nursing course and or received a second D or F in the same and or any nursing course, even if the student has repeated a course and received a grade of C or above the student will be dismissed from the program.

Change of Schedule

A student dropping a course (but not withdrawing from the University) within the first twelve class days of a regular semester or the first four class days of a summer semester is eligible for a 100% refund of applicable tuition and fees. Dates are published in the ***Schedule of Classes*** each semester.

Refund and Repayment Policy

A student who withdraws or is administratively withdrawn from Midwestern State University (MSU) may be eligible to receive a refund for all or a portion of the tuition, fees and room/board charges that were paid to MSU for the semester. HOWEVER, if the student received financial aid (federal/state/institutional grants, loans and/or scholarships), all or a portion of the refund may be returned to the financial aid programs. As described below, two formulas (federal and state) exists in determining the amount of the refund. (Examples of each refund calculation will be made available upon request).

Disability Support Services

Midwestern State University is committed to providing equal access for qualified students with disabilities to all university courses and programs, and by law all students with disabilities are guaranteed a learning environment that provides reasonable accommodation of their disability. This guarantee is provided through Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. The ADA reads: "No qualified individual with a disability shall, by reason of such disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of a public entity, or be subject to discrimination by any such entity." The Director of Disability Support Services serves as the ADA Coordinator and may be contacted at (940) 397-4140, TDD (940) 397-4515, or 3410 Taft Blvd., Clark Student Center 168.

College Policies

Campus Carry Rules/Policies
Refer to: Campus Carry Rules and Policies
                          Smoking/Tobacco Policy
College policy strictly prohibits the use of tobacco products in any building owned or operated by WATC. Adult students may smoke only in the outside designated-smoking areas at each location.

Alcohol and Drug Policy
To comply with the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 and subsequent amendments, students and employees of Midwestern State are informed that strictly enforced policies are in place which prohibits the unlawful possession, use or distribution of any illicit drugs, including alcohol, on university

property or as part of any university-sponsored activity. Students and employees are also subject to all applicable legal sanctions under local, state and federal law for any offenses involving illicit drugs on University property or at University-sponsored activities.

Grade Appeal Process

Students who wish to appeal a final course grade should consult the Midwestern State University [Undergraduate Catalog.](#) Appeals process is outlined.

Notice

Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor.

Course Schedule

Week	Weekly Objectives (To be completed as independent study, building upon prior knowledge. Self-determined competence)	Due Date
Week 1 Course Orientation, Introduction to Ethics, Introduction to Bioethics and Ethical Decision making, and Ethics in Professional Nursing Practice	**Readings** Butts & Rich Chapters 1,2,& 3 Watch Video: Nursing Ethics Understanding Ethics In Nursing Review Slides Chapter 1, 2, & 3 Discussion Board **Four Topics Method for Analysis of Clinical Ethics Cases**	**Discussion for week 1** Initial discussion post due by Friday, 10:59PM Central Standard time. The 2 peer posts are due by Sunday, 10:59 PM Central Standard Time.

Week 2	Readings	Due Date
Week 2 Reproductive Issues and Nursing Ethics, Infant and Child Nursing Ethics, Adolescent Nursing Ethics, and Adult Health Nursing Ethics	**Readings** Butts & Rich Chapters 4, 5, 6 & 7. Review Slides 4, 5, 6, and 7.	**Ethical Dilemma Paper due** in D2L Assignments by Sunday 10:59 PM Central Standard Time.

12/10/2026

Week	Weekly Objectives (To be completed as independent study, building upon prior knowledge. Self-determined competence)	Due Date
Week 3 Ethics and the Nursing Care of Elders and Ethical Issues in End-of-Life Nursing Care	**Readings** Butts & Rich Chapters 8 and 9. Review Slides Chapters 8 and 9. Watch Video: The Conversation Project Video Review The Conversation Materials The Conversation Project Materials Watch Video: My Sister's Keeper Trailer	**Discussion for week 3** Initial discussion post due by Friday, 10:59PM Central Standard Time. The 2 peer posts are due by Sunday, 10:59PM Central Standard Time.
Week 4 Psychiatric /Mental Health Nursing Ethics Public Health Nursing Ethics	**Readings** Butts & Rich, Chapters 10 and 11. Review Slides 10 and 11.	**Assignment 2 Hospital Case Essay due in D2L Assignments by Sunday 10:59 PM Central Standard Time**
Week 5 Ethics in Organizations and Leadership and ANA Code of Ethics	**Readings** Butts & Rich Chapter 12. Review Slide Chapter 12. Watch You Tube Seven Signs of Ethical Collapse	**Discussion for week 5** Initial discussion post due by Friday 10:59PM Central Standard Time. The 2 peer posts are due by Sunday 10:59PM Central Standard Time.

Week	Weekly Objectives (To be completed as independent study, building upon prior knowledge. Self-determined competence)	Due Date
Week 6 Psychiatric/Mental Health Nursing	**Readings Article:** a)PMH Nursing and Ethics, b)Importance of Ethical Committees.	**Assignment 3 Case Study Paper due** in D2L Assignments by Sunday 10:59 PM Central Standard Time.
Week 7 Informed consent	**Readings** *Study/Review Articles:* a) Ethics Committee Case b) Emotional support for health care professionals: A therapeutic role for the hospitals ethics committee. c) Breathing life back into a medical ethics committee	**Discussion for week 7** Initial discussion post due by Friday 10:59PM Central Standard Time. The 2 peer posts are due by Sunday 10:59PM Central Standard Time.
Week 8	**Readings** Read/Review: Appendix B of textbook ICN Code of Ethics pages 343-347 **Watch Video** Nursing Ethics: Moral Distress In Nursing	**Reflective Discussion Board Post.** Initial discussion post due by Friday 10:59PM Central Standard Time. No peer posts are due