

CCTS 21005 / MED XXXXX (50 Units)
The Challenges of the “Good Physician”:
Virtue Ethics, Clinical Wisdom, and Character Resilience in Medicine

“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 12:00-1:20pm), 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 3rd 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. 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 conscience 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: Priority will be given to those who have been accepted into the Emerging Scholars Cohort in Bioethics (Hyde Park Institute, <https://hydeparkinstitute.org/esc>) and to Bucksbaum Clinical Excellence Scholars. Depending on space availability, other interested students will also be welcome to participate in the course.

Course Requirements and Grading:

Undergraduate students must have already completed the SOSC sequence.

1. Reflective participation (**40%**): Students will participate in Appreciative Inquiry sessions (3 total) during the quarter. Students will write 1–1.5 page personal responses (single spaced; can be longer, but max 1500 words) to any key idea in the course (drawn either from the readings, group discussions, or guest speakers) that is having a formative influence on their vocational aspirations or personal perspectives toward becoming a good physician. Students will then have the opportunity to share these reflections during the class sessions [0 points if no personal response is turned in; 1 point if a personal response is given that exhibits very little integration with course content; 2 points if personal response is given that effectively integrates course content].
2. Final. Students will write a final paper (10-12 pp. double-spaced) (**40%**) that synthesize and evaluate ideas discussed in the course. Students may expand on a previous abstract or address a new question of their own. The paper should have a clear thesis and develop key arguments around it, drawing on readings from the course as well as from outside resources as appropriate.
3. Class attendance (**20%**)

Medical students who are taking the course for Pass/Fail (P/F) can choose to complete either (1) or (2) above and attend 75% of the class sessions to obtain a Pass.

Guest Speakers:

A major component of this course will be practicing physicians who will share their own stories in medicine on how they have navigated through ethical and professional challenges in medicine and promoted character resilience in their own practices.

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, [E-book Link](#))

WEEK 1: Thurs Mar 29th : *Medicine as a Moral Practice?*

- Read Kaldjian Ch. 1: Medicine as a Goal-Directed, Moral Practice
- Guest Speaker: Debra Stulberg, MD (Family Medicine)

WEEK 2: Thurs Apr 5th : *Medicine and the Virtues of the “Good Physician”*

- Read Kaldjian Ch. 2: Virtue Ethics
- Guest Speaker (12:30pm): Neda Laiteerapong, MD (General Internal Medicine)

WEEK 3: Thurs Apr 12th : *The Virtue of Clinical Wisdom*

- Read Kaldjian Ch. 3: Practical Wisdom in Medicine
- Guest Speaker: Zack Loveless, PhD candidate in Philosophy, The University of Chicago

WEEK 4: Thurs Apr 19th : *The Hidden Curriculum and Challenges to Virtue?*

- Read Hafferty, F. W., and R. Franks. "The Hidden Curriculum, Ethics Teaching, and the Structure of Medical Education." *Acad Med* 69.11 (1994): 861-71.
- Guest Speaker: Iris Romero, MD (Obstetrics and Gynecology)

WEEK 5: Thurs Apr 26th : *Medicine as a School for Virtue?*

- Read Leffel GM, Rasinski KA, Curlin FA, Yoon JD. Relevance of the rationalist-intuitionist debate for ethics and professionalism in medical education. *Adv in Health Science Education*. 2014 Oct 16
- Guest Speaker (12:30pm): Helen Te, MD (Gastroenterology and Transplant Hepatology)

WEEK 6: Thurs May 3rd

- Read: Kinghorn, W.A. Medical Education as Moral Formation: An Aristotelian Account of Medical Professionalism. *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine*, Vol. 53, No. 1(2010): 87-105
- Warren Kinghorn, MD, ThD (Psychiatry, Duke University)

WEEK 7: Thurs May 10th : *Socio-cultural Challenges within Medicine*

- Read Kaldjian Ch. 8: Implications of Moral Pluralism for Public Dialogue and Professional Practice
- Guest Speaker: Greg Ruhnke, MD (Hospital Medicine)

WEEK 8: Thurs May 17th : *Character “Stress” Tests: Conscientious Objection in Medicine*

- Read Kaldjian Ch. 9: Conscientious Objection and Conscientious Practice
- Guest Speaker: Lolita (Maria) Alkureishi, MD (Pediatrics)

WEEK 9: Thurs May 24th : *Character “Stress” Tests: The “Difficult” Patient*

- 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](#)]
- Guest Speaker: Michael Hawking, MD (PGY-2 Internal Medicine, The University of Chicago)

WEEK 10: Thurs May 31st: *Concluding Discussion on Clinical Wisdom and the Good Physician*

- Read Kaldjian Ch. 10: An Integrity-Centered Framework for Practical Wisdom in Medicine
- Guest Speaker: Neda Laiteerapong, MD (General Internal Medicine)
- Course Review