Most health care ethics focuses on the individual decisions about treatments, but many ethical questions have implications for society at large. The demands that individual health decisions make on the system may create collective problems, and conversely, the needs of society may limit the freedoms that individuals think they should have. Public health ethics then, lie at the intersection of medicine, political philosophy, and public policy. This course will examine the values of health, social needs, and freedom through a systematic examination of situations in which these conflicts arise. We will examine the issues by looking at it through three levels: through theoretical readings in philosophy, through readings in the broad issues of public health, and by considering case studies.

**Required Texts:**
Norman Daniels, *Just Health* (Cambridge)
John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* (Hackett)
Readings on Blackboard

**Course Requirements:**

*Class participation* is worth a significant portion of your grade. The class is based on student discussions, not on lectures. You are expected to come to class, and you are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the readings — if only to ask relevant questions about them. Most of your class participation grade is based on regular, substantive participation in class discussions.

*Reflection papers.* Three times during the term, you will be expected to write a brief one-page reaction paper to the week’s reading, due the day before the first date listed for the assignment at 9:00 p.m. These papers should respond to some specific arguments or position in the readings by explaining why you agree or disagree with it. For these reaction papers, the class is divided into four groups, determined by the first letter of your last name:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group 1</th>
<th>Group 2</th>
<th>Group 3</th>
<th>Group 4</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A to C</td>
<td>D to H</td>
<td>I to O</td>
<td>P to Z</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reflection papers will be submitted using the journal tool on Blackboard: Just click the “Reflections” button, and create a journal entry under your group’s number and the date.

Presentations will be group activities scattered through the course. Each group will be given a problem to address and then to assemble a brief presentation to the class. Each group will collectively present the facts, discuss the ethical alternatives, and argue for a particular solution.

Papers will constitute the major assignments in the course. Twice during the term, I will give you a series of questions about particular texts or about a particular case or both. You will choose one set of questions and write a 6-8 page argumentative paper answering those questions. You will take a position on the issues, construct an argument supporting your position, and then consider and answer objections to it.

For your final assignment, you will write an 8-10 page paper. This paper can be on a topic I give you, or on a subject of your own choosing. The latter option gives you the opportunity to explore an issue of particular interest to you. Before beginning such a paper, however, you must talk to me, so that I can make sure that the topic is suitable and so that I can help you with resources.

The course grade is divided into 610 points, apportioned as shown:

- First paper: Oct 7, 120 points
- Second paper: Nov 7, 120 points
- Final assignment: Dec 12, 150 points
- Presentations: 30 points each
- Reaction papers: 30 points
- Participation: 100 points

Students who get more than 560 points will get an A in the class (not A-, but A). A B requires 509 points; a C, 448 points.

Writing students: Besides the assignments listed above, students taking the course for upper-level writing credit will rewrite the first two papers assignments, due two weeks after the original paper is returned. The rewrite will be graded as a rewrite (so if you turn in the same paper, the grade is a 0). Each rewrite will be worth 100 points. In addition, students will turn in six reactions paper, so the reaction papers will be worth a total of 60 points. The writing students will be divided into two groups for the reaction papers, based on their last names, and they will do reaction papers with the regular students as indicated:

- Group A: A-M, with Groups 1 and 3
- Group B: N-Z, with Groups 2 and 4

Thus, the total number of points for the writing students will be 840 points, and an A will require 770 points.

Schedule of Readings:

This schedule is tentative (especially for topics later in the course). However, any changes will be announced on Blackboard, and an up-to-date copy of the syllabus can always be found on Blackboard. All readings, except those in the required books for the class, are on Blackboard.

Below the date for each week, you will find a number for the group of students is responsible for sending in a reaction paper.
I. Introduction

Sep 3  Introduction

Sep 5  Case study 1: Smoking
       CDC Smoking Facts

II. Public goods and collective goods

Sep 10  Groups 2 and 3 reflection due Sep 9

Sep 12-17-19  Groups 3 and A reflection due Sep 11
Case study 2: Immunizations
       Barbara Loe Fisher, “In the Wake of Vaccines”

Arthur Caplan, David Hoke, Nicholas Diamond, and Viktoriya Karshenboym, “Free to Choose but Liable for the Consequences: Should Non-Vaccinators Be Penalized for the Harm They Do,” *Journal of Law, Medicine, and Ethics* 40 (2012): 606-11

Optional: “Shots in the Dark” from radio show, *This American Life*, 19 December 2008

Sep 24  
Presentations on vaccines
Optional readings: Case study 3: Prevention vs. treatment

III. Public health and individualism

Sep 26  
*Groups 4 and B reflection due Sep 25*
John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*, chs. 1, 3-5 (pp. 1-14, 53-113)

Oct 1-3-  
Mill, chs. 4-5
Oct 8  
• *First paper due, Oct 7, 7:00 a.m. (No class, Oct 3)*
  *Fall break (No class, Oct 8)*

Oct 10  
*Groups 1 and A reflection due Oct 9*
Gerald Dworkin, “Paternalism,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

Oct 15-17  
*Groups 2 and B reflection due Oct 14*
Case study 4: Obesity
CDC on obesity in children

Oct 22-24  Groups 3 and A reflection due Oct 21
Case study 5: Responding to epidemics
World Health Organization, *Ethical Considerations in Developing a Public Health Response to Pandemic Influenza* (2007), chs. 3-4 (pp. 5-11)

Oct 29  Presentations on epidemics

IV. Health Care Justice

Oct 31  Groups 4 and B reflection due Oct 30
John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, sections 1-4, 11-14, 17, 22-26 (pp. 3-19, 47-73, 86-93, 109-39)

Nov 5-7  Groups 1 and A reflection on Nozick and Groups 2 and B reflection on Nussbaum due Nov 4

- Second papers due Nov 7 (No class, Nov 7)

Nov 12-14  
Groups 3 and A reflection due Nov 11
Norman Daniels, *Just Health*, chs. 1-3

Nov 19  
Daniels, chs. 4-5

Nov 21-26-28  
Group 4 and B reflection due Nov 20

Case study 6: Universal health care
- Basics of the Affordable Care Act of 2010
- Ryan plan for Medicare
- *National Federation of Businesses v. Sibelius*

Thanksgiving break (No class, Nov 28)

Dec 3  
Presentations on universal health care

Dec 5-10  
Groups 1 and A reflection due Dec 4

Case study 7: Global health justice

Dec 12  
- Final assignment, due Dec 12 (No class, Dec 12)