

**RESOLUTION TO ESTABLISH A PROGRAM LEADING TO
A MASTER OF SCIENCE DEGREE IN BIOETHICS
(SCHOOL OF CONTINUING EDUCATION)**

WHEREAS as our biological knowledge and technology improve, there is a growing need to examine the ethical, legal, and social aspects of biology, and

WHEREAS scientific and technological advances have profound religious, social, and cultural implications, and

WHEREAS Columbia University is home to a vast array of knowledge, research and teaching in and at the intersections of biology, law, medicine, theology, engineering and other relevant fields, and is, through its School of Continuing Education, uniquely positioned to bring together faculty from these fields and disciplines, and

WHEREAS the School of Continuing Education will offer a core of courses that will ground students in the discipline of bioethics, and

WHEREAS the proposed program will focus on law or policy, ethics, and social science methods, and

WHEREAS at the recommendation of the Senate Education Committee, the School of Continuing Education will require a firm foundation in science, and

WHEREAS the School of Continuing Education will conduct a review of the program after three years in order to evaluate overall outcomes and to measure students' success; and

WHEREAS the proposed degree program neither duplicates nor replaces programs already offered at the University; and

WHEREAS there is a clear need for professionally trained bioethicists to work in various capacities in law, medicine, and a range of other professions,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate establish the Master of Science Degree in Bioethics.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Education Committee shall review the program in five years.

Proponent: Committee on Education

M.S. Degree in Bioethics

Program Proposal Overview

Description: The proposed M.S. in Bioethics will be offered through the School of Continuing Education and led by Robert Klitzman, M.D., a leader in the field who is the co-founder of Columbia University's Center for Bioethics and an associate professor of clinical psychiatry at Columbia's College of Physicians and Surgeons and the School of Public Health. The program will prepare students to work as professional bioethicists in a range of sectors.

Advances in biotechnology and biomedicine raise profound ethical dilemmas at the intersections of ethics, law, society, culture, public policy, philosophy, religion, economics, history and language. Front-page stories frequently appear in the New York Times concerning any of a number of issues, including cloning, stem cells, scandals in the pharmaceutical industry, health care reform, epidemics from HIV to avian flu, assisted reproductive technology, genetic testing, end-of-life decisions, privacy of health information, use of steroids in professional sports, and the appropriate role of industry and questions of conflict of interest that arise in research.

Yet scientific and technological advances have far outpaced our ability to understand or make key decisions about these issues. In fact, scientists, health care providers, lawyers, and policymakers throughout the world must address these complex questions. Hence, a critical need exists to equip these professionals with the knowledge and skills to clarify, understand, and make bioethical decisions.

The proposed program aims to provide students with the skills to work professionally on issues in bioethics. This degree program could train students to work in various capacities within the burgeoning research enterprise in the U.S. and abroad or it can serve as a complementary degree to professional training in medicine, science, public health, business, law, public affairs or journalism. The proposed M.S. program will ground students, both theoretically and practically, in historical, philosophical, legal, and social scientific approaches and models for addressing bioethics.

COURSE OF STUDY

The 36 pt. program includes a core of five courses, developed specifically for this program and designed to ground students in the field.

CORE COURSES

BIET K4300 History of Bioethics (taught by Professor James Colgrove)

BIET K4320 Philosophy of Bioethics (taught by Professor Arthur Kuflik)

BIET K4400 Clinical Ethics (taught by Professor Kristina Orfali)

BIET K4450 Research Ethics (taught by Professor Robert Klitzman)

BIET K4440 Global Bioethics (taught by Professor Robert Klitzman)

Subsequent course work includes six electives, of which two will be in law or policy, one in ethics, one in social science methods, and two in these or related areas, allowing students to widen their foundational work or lend focus to their studies. These six electives will be chosen from the University course offering at large. In addition, students will be required to complete a master's thesis, for 3 credits, working closely with one of the program's core faculty and potentially with other affiliated faculty.

The program will require a firm foundation in science and will encourage students with limited backgrounds in science to use their electives to study science, and will ensure through careful advising that students select science courses at a suitable level.

Intended students: The M.S. Program in Bioethics will attract three kinds of students:

- Students who are currently enrolled in another graduate degree program and wish to study bioethics coincidentally.
- Students who are currently employed and wish to return to school to earn a degree part-time in order to enhance their professional practice. Such individuals will typically come from the health care professions or related industries.
- Recent undergraduates who plan to work in health care and concentrate on bioethical issues. These students may aspire to work in those sectors of the industry preoccupied by bioethics (for example, IRBs) or may wish to use their study of bioethics to enhance additional work in another field.

Professional options for graduates:

- Work as bioethicists in within the burgeoning research enterprise in the U.S. and abroad.
- Work as a bioethics expert within another profession, such as law, journalism, business, or public affairs, to name a few.

Related programs in the Northeast:

Many universities, including NYU, Yeshiva University and the University of Pennsylvania, have established or newly created M.S. degree programs in the field. Johns Hopkins offers only a doctoral degree in bioethics. Harvard offers a Ph.D. in health policy.

Nonetheless, Columbia has much to offer. Of all the schools presently offering M.S. degrees in the field, none has the depth of resources found at Columbia with its Schools of Medicine, Law, Journalism, Social Work, Public Health, International and Public Affairs, Theology, and the Arts and Sciences. Columbia is uniquely positioned to offer a multidisciplinary degree program that prepares students to focus on their area of professional concentration. Only Harvard has a comparable range of schools and departments, but it only offers the doctoral degree.

In addition, none of the above masters programs has a focus on global issues, which will be a trademark of Columbia's program.

Specifics:

- Director – Robert Klitzman, M.D. Co-founder of Columbia University's Center for Bioethics and is an associate professor of clinical psychiatry at Columbia's College of Physicians and Surgeons and the School of Public Health.
- Hosting School – Continuing Education
- Initial enrollment – 12 students; 60 in first 5 years