History of Medicine: HPS 2563 99/2

Course Description: We examine selected issues and events in the history of medicine with the intention of providing both an historical framework into which modern medicine can be fitted and to offer some of the riches of historical scholarship which have a bearing on specific ethical issues in society today. Topics covered include the history of debates over the need and legitimacy of dissection, vivisection, and human experimentation, social and scientific aspects of attempts to control human fertility, and differing conceptions of disease. We examine aspects of the history of public health and the organization of medical care, the medical profession and the hospital.

Aims of the Course: (1) To develop an historical perspective on issues of importance to students of medical ethics. (2) By examining medical issues and concepts in contrasting historical contexts to expose the changing and culturally dependent aspects of medical knowledge and practice. (3) To bring out the students' critical and probing faculties.

Prerequisites: none.

Grading: Seminar participation and presentation 20%, one mid-term paper 40%, one end term paper 40%.

Recitations: none

Class Size: maximum 15

Time: Wednesdays, 1 to 3.30 pm. Place: CL G28


Schedule of Seminars: The accompanying bibliography is intended as a resource. Texts to study for the seminars will be selected from it and other sources listed can also be used in the preparation of papers.


A. Concepts of Disease


B. The Physician-Patient Relation


[Guest Speaker: Professor Acker [Carnegie Mellon]

Spring Break March 10 No class

C. Clinical Research, Experiment and the Use of Humans


D. Reproduction


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6. Death:


B. Infanticide, medical and legal aspects.(e.g., the flotation test) [Andrew Wilson, refs. to be supplied]