

Bridging the gap: Focused, in-depth and practical short courses in bioethics and health law

Courses offered by the Steve Biko Centre for Bioethics, School of Clinical Medicine, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

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Many healthcare professionals feel ill-equipped to deal with the numerous ethical and legal challenges they confront in their daily practice. Not all of them have been provided with much formal education or training in bioethics and health law, and the occasional talk or seminar, as helpful or relevant as it may, cannot provide health professionals with the knowledge and skills to negotiate the often complex ethico-legal issues they face.

As few practitioners have the resources and the time available to enrol in demanding degree programmes, there is clearly a need for practical, applied, accessible training in this field – more focused and in-depth than the average talk or seminar, but less onerous and demanding than a degree course.

The Steve Biko Centre for Bioethics at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg is therefore offering a series of short courses in bioethics and health law in 2013. Each course will be run over a week, Monday to Friday, for full days. The courses are open to all qualified healthcare professionals, as well as other graduates interested in attending. For the Research Ethics course, members of Research Ethics Committees and researchers in the health field are especially welcome to apply. Candidates who successfully complete the evaluation component of the course will be awarded a University of the Witwatersrand Certificate of Competence.

Details of the courses offered:

Foundations of Bioethics (28 January - 1 February 2013)

This course is designed to enable students to analyse and evaluate issues in bioethics within the context of a solid ethical framework.

Major moral theories and ethical principles are taught. The course intends to provide a foundational understanding of the relationship between concepts; logic and argumentation; and fallacies of reasoning, as practically applied to bioethical issues.

Foundations of Health Law (4 - 8 February 2013)

This course covers sources of South African law, the Constitution, and statutory and common law in the context of health. It explores criminal, civil and family law and their interaction with health. International law in relation to health is included in this course.

Research Ethics: Conducting Research Ethically (11 - 15 February 2013)

This course introduces and explains a number of topical ethical issues in research ethics, including what constitutes unethical research, researcher integrity and scientific misconduct. It outlines the role and *modus operandi* of research ethics committees, and provides clearly articulated standards of good clinical practice in research relevant to local realities and contexts. The course will also explore research governance from a local and an international perspective in detail.

Advanced Health Ethics (18 - 22 February 2013)

This course addresses a number of important issues in bioethics and health law critically and in depth. The issues to be focused on relate to ethical and medico-legal issues in clinical contexts, reproductive health, policy and public health, resource allocation, genetics, health and human rights, and environmental bioethics, among other areas. Students will learn how to apply moral theories, ethical and legal principles, and critical and analytical skills to specific ethical and medico-legal questions.