Course Description
Public health policy is always the product of controversy. Scientific considerations blend with political and ethical conflicts in public health. Questions of autonomy, liberty, individual rights, power, coercion, justice, discrimination, stigma, community and the common good are central to public health policy and practice. This seminar will explore (Part I) how paradigms of political/moral discourse—libertarian liberalism, contractarian rights theory, egalitarian liberalism, utilitarianism, and communitarianism—intersect with paradigms of public health legitimacy and practice—the statist/“police powers” model, the human rights model, and the civic model. The seminar will then discuss (Part II) the “application” of ethics and political theory to selected public health issues, such as: the social determinants of illness, the social construction of the experience of illness, infectious disease control and emergency planning, health promotion and behavior modification, justice and access to health care, public health genomics, and climate change.

Course Objectives
Upon successful completion of this course students will: (1) understand the theoretical basis for ethical and political controversies in public health policy and practice; (2) comprehend professional ethical norms and standards in public health; (3) critically evaluate the theoretical foundations and principles of public health ethics; (4) critically and systematically apply ethical theories and principles to practical decisionmaking issues in public health policy and practice, and (5) be able to demonstrate skills of ethical reasoning and decisionmaking in written form and in verbal argumentation.

Course Requirements
Students will write three papers and make at least one class presentation. Two of the papers will be short analytic papers (6-8 pp.) one on the pros and cons of utilitarianism as an ethical theory based on a discussion of a novel, Charles Dickens, *Hard Times*, and the second on the moral and human questions raised by a public health emergency based on a discussion of a novel. For this paper the student may select either Albert Camus, *The
Plague or José Saramago, Blindness. Not both. Each of these novels is readily available in an inexpensive paperback edition.

The third paper will be a somewhat longer paper on the ethical aspects of a selected public health policy or practice issue, such as those selected for class discussion in the course (see below) or on a topic of the student’s choosing, in consultation with the instructor.

Students will also be asked to prepare oral presentations for various class sessions. These presentations will be provide short summaries and pose critical questions about selected assigned readings for the course.

Finally, class attendance and active participation in seminar discussion are very important parts of the educational goals of this course, and will be taken seriously. There will be no exams.

The course grade will be based on a combination of the paper grades (~70%) and class participation (~30%), including the class presentation(s), which will not be graded separately.

**Course Readings**

Course readings will be drawn principally from the books listed below, and from material that can be downloaded from the course website [cited as YC*V2 Resources]. These materials include the manuscript of my new book, Civic Health.


Two books should be purchased:

1. Lawrence O. Gostin, ed. *Public Health Law and Ethics: A Reader* [Available from Amazon.com for approximately $35.00 paperback. Ships in 1-2 days.]

2. Stephen Holland, *Public Health Ethics* [Available from Amazon.com for approximately $25.00 paperback. Ships in 24 hours.]

(Used copies of these books can also be purchased through Amazon.com for considerably reduced prices.)
Course Schedule and Reading Assignments

September 14  Overview of the Course

Readings:  G. Hardin, “The Tragedy of the Commons,” [YC*v2 Resources]
G. Hardin, “Extensions of The Tragedy of the Commons,” [YC*v2 Resources]
Holland, Public Health Ethics, pp. vi-7.
M. Boylan, “The Moral Imperative to Maintain Public Health” [YC*v2 Resources]

Part I:  Conceptual Landscape for Ethics and Public Health

September 21  Normative Frameworks in Public Health

Readings:  Holland, Public Health Ethics, pp. 7-59.
“Ten Things to Know about Health” [YC*v2 Resources]

Readings for presentation:
Jennings, Civic Health, pp. 19-43 [YC*v2 Resources]

September 28  Three Models of Public Health: Statist, Human Rights, and Civic

Gostin, Public Health Law and Ethics, pp. 161-229 (Statist)
Gostin, Public Health Law and Ethics, pp. 95-126 (Human Rights)
Gostin, Public Health Law and Ethics, pp. 67-81 (Civic)

Readings for presentation:
Jennings, Civic Health, pp. 1-17 [YC*v2 Resources]
A. Cudd, “Contractarianism,” [YC*v2 Resources]

October 5  Utilitarianism and Liberalism: The Millian Paradigm

Readings:  John Stuart Mill, On Liberty, chs. 1, 4,5, [YC*v2 Resources]
John Stuart Mill, Utilitarianism, chs. 1-2 [YC*v2 Resources]

Readings for presentation:
Jennings, Civic Health, pp. 94-117 [YC*v2 Resources]

October 12  Community and the Common Good

Readings  Jennings, Civic Health, pp. 66-92; 118-175 [YC*v2 Resources]

Readings for presentation:
Norman Daniels, Bruce P. Kennedy, and Ichiro Kawachi, “Justice is Good for Our Health,” in Gostin, Public Health Law and Ethics, pp. 82-94
D. Bell, “Communitarianism,” [YC*v2 Resources]

FIRST PAPER on Hard Times DUE—October 16

Part II:  Ethics and Tragic Choices in Public Health

October 19  Surveillance and Privacy

Holland, Public Health Ethics, pp. 160-188

October 26  Controlling Infectious Disease: Individual Rights and the Common Good—Vaccination, Social Distancing, and Quarantine

Readings:  Gostin, Public Health Law and Ethics, 295-328
Gostin, Public Health Law and Ethics, pp. 377-83; 390-414
Holland, Public Health Ethics, 135-159.

Reading for presentation:
R. Bayer, “Ethics and Infectious Disease Control” EPHMC, Module 5

November 2  Health Promotion and Behavior Modification

Readings:  Gostin, Public Health Law and Ethics, pp. 335-376
Holland, Public Health Ethics, pp. 87-134

Reading for presentation:

November 9  No class

SECOND PAPER on The Plague or Blindness DUE November 13
November 16  Looming Issues in Public Health Ethics

*Public Health Genomics*

**Readings:** Gostin, *Public Health Law and Ethics*, pp. 467-486
Jennings, *Civic Health*, pp. 233-276 [YC*v2 Resources]

*Emergency Planning*

**Readings:** Gostin, *Public Health Law and Ethics*, pp. 456-468
Jennings, *Civic Health*, pp. 277-297 [YC*v2 Resources]

*Climate Change/Environmental Problems*


November 23  Fall Recess; No class

November 30  Health System Reform

**Readings:** M. Garland and J. Stull, “Public Health and Health System Reform, EPHMC, Module 9
Crowley, *Connecting American Values with Health Reform* [YC*v2 Resources]
Jennings, *Civic Health*, pp. 298-336 [YC*v2 Resources]

**Reading for Presentation**
http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/19/magazine/19healthcare-t.html?_r=3&ref=magazine&pagewanted=print

December 7  Reading Period Begins

**THIRD PAPER DUE—December 18**