Program Description
To complete the MA degree in Bioethics, students must do a practicum in a health or environmental organization in the greater New York area or beyond, studying and reporting on the ethical issues that are addressed or neglected in the work of the organization. With the assistance of advisers and other members of the Center, students will make contacts with institutions to arrange a practicum, including the starting date, frequency of meetings, and duration. Examples of practicum include:

- “Shadowing” a hospital palliative care physician or team and examining moral and epistemic issues of assessing patients’ pain, prognoses, and needs to be transferred to hospice care in the hospital or home;
- Assisting in a green-roof promotion project in a city neighborhood and investigating citizens’ individual and collective environmental health responsibilities and related educational efforts.

By the end of the Practicum, students will have hands-on experience with real-life ethical issues arising out of medical and environmental settings and will learn about how to think through these issues by applying knowledge acquired from the other courses in the MA program.

Students are expected to enroll in the practicum course (GPH-GU 3555) during their final semester of the program.

Sites
Students looking for practicum opportunities are strongly advised to periodically consult the Opportunities page of our blog for listings of various paid and unpaid opportunities that satisfy the practica requirements. Click here for a list of previous practicum sites. All sites must be approved by the practicum adviser before a commitment is made to the site supervisor. Once the practicum site is finalized, students are expected to complete a practicum prospectus form.*

Practicum Hours
Students enrolled in the practicum course for 2, 3, or 4 credits and are required to complete a weekly minimum of 2-3, 4-5, or 5-6 hours at their practicum site respectively.**

Short Reports
As the practicum progresses, students should write up short reports every two weeks, detailing their experiences at the practicum site, in particular, ethical issues that they have encountered. They should submit these reports to their advisers on a regular basis.

Seminar
Students are required to attend two seminars during the semester in which they plan to complete their practicum. In the first seminar, students will share and discuss their experiences and findings thus far with their fellow practicum students. Students will be asked to a) identify an actual ethical issue that they have encountered that is of interest; b) provide analysis of the issue and c) explain how they have responded to the issue. In the second seminar, students will present work-in-progress material that will form the basis of their Final Practicum Essay.

Final Essay
As the practicum progresses, students, in consultation with their advisers, will decide whether their practicum is suitable to be written up as a single extended Master’s essay (c. 12-15,000 words). Suitability is determined by whether the ethical issues encountered in the practicum are of sufficient theoretical interest.

* Students are allowed to participate in paid practica positions permitting that the practicum is approved by their program advisers and not within the NYU Center for Bioethics. The prospectus form must be signed by your advisor and submitted to bioethics@nyu.edu.

** Students may begin to acquire practicum hours BEFORE enrolling in the practicum course. Students are advised officially to register for the Practicum Course the semester they wish to submit their Final Practicum Essay for examination.
Final Essay, cont.

If the practicum proves not to lend itself to this elaboration, then in consultation with their advisers, students can choose either a) to develop an essay from a prior course in the light of critical commentaries and further reading and thought; or b) to write a new essay. In either case, the essay should be c. 10,000 words. Students who opt for either of these two options will also be responsible for submitting a shorter, final summary of their practicum work (c. 5000 words). All students are required to submit an abstract (250-500 words maximum), which may be posted on the Bioethics webpage.

Assessment

This is a Pass/Fail course. A grade of ‘Pass’ is given to students who meet the requirements stated above and perform to the satisfaction of the site supervisor. Students, in consultation with their advisers, will determine a schedule of when to submit the Biweekly Short Reports to their advisers. Students will submit a draft of their essay at least two weeks before the Last Day of Classes for those planning to graduate that semester. Students will then submit a final draft of their essay on the Last Day of Classes. During the Final Exam Period, students are expected to give a final oral presentation to their adviser and one other faculty reader. They will meet with the student to discuss the final essay and either accept it or ask for revisions before the grade deadline.

Questions?

bioethics@nyu.edu