

BIOETHICS AND HEALTH STUDIES, B.A.

Saint Louis University's bioethics and health studies major asks students to analyze the ethical questions raised by advances in medical and scientific technology. It examines these questions both in the clinical context and in health policy. Well-known bioethical topics include abortion, euthanasia and stem-cell research. But the field's area of study has grown dramatically in recent decades in keeping with the rapid pace of biotechnological advances. More recent bioethical work addresses developments in genetics, neuroscience, public health and various emerging fields in the biomedical sciences.

SLU's bioethics and health studies major gives students the tools to understand these developments. It does so through an interdisciplinary curriculum that fuses the humanities with the social sciences. It pairs this holistic education with unique service-learning opportunities in health care settings and a capstone project designed to guide students in their transitions to health care careers.

Through their coursework, students majoring in bioethics and health studies learn to think across the University and mobilize their knowledge in the world.

A particular focus of the bioethics and health studies major at SLU is the relationship among religion, health care and social justice. Students are exposed to a broad range of ideological and professional perspectives on health care dilemmas. This will prepare them to collaborate with others across professional and political divides. It will also help them clarify their views on topics that are often complex and highly personal.

The bioethics and health studies major provides a foundation for post-graduate study and employment in many health-related fields. Beyond that, it provides students with tools for addressing the ethical dilemmas they will face, not just on the job but in the voting booth and in their own lives. When coupled with a strong commitment to social justice and intellectual diversity, this integrated approach to health care makes the major particularly reflective of Saint Louis University's Jesuit mission (<https://www.slu.edu/about/catholic-jesuit-identity/>).

Curriculum Overview

SLU's bioethics and health studies major requires 36 credits of coursework spread over three broad distribution areas: foundational courses, disciplinary frameworks, and advanced issues and practice in health care ethics.

Except for the major's introductory course, HCE 2010 Foundations in Clinical Health Care Ethics, these courses do not have to be taken in strict order. Students can choose from many courses to satisfy their requirements for disciplinary frameworks and advanced issues and practice in health care ethics. Courses taken for the bioethics and health studies major requirements may also fulfill core requirements for the College of Arts and Sciences. The major's flexible progression and course requirements give students a high degree of freedom in tailoring it to their interests and timeframe.

SLU's bioethics and health studies major offers a pre-med track for students pursuing medical school.

Fieldwork and Research Opportunities

SLU's bioethics and health studies major has a service-learning requirement. Students can choose from several service-learning courses that each take place in a distinct health care setting. Students can also receive credit for completing an internship in a professional setting related to health care ethics.

The major offers students opportunities to study abroad in Ireland and Spain.

Careers

The bioethics and health studies major provides an excellent foundation for professional education in many areas, including:

- Medicine
- Law
- Public health
- Health care administration
- Public policy
- Divinity school
- Various graduate programs in the humanities and social sciences

Through their service-learning courses and capstone, students will gain practical experience that will help them transition to employment in a wide range of health-related fields.

Admission Requirements

Begin Your Application (<https://www.slu.edu/apply.php>)

Saint Louis University also accepts the Common Application and the Coalition Application.

Freshman

All applications are thoroughly reviewed with the highest degree of individual care and consideration to all credentials that are submitted. Solid academic performance in college preparatory coursework is a primary concern in reviewing a freshman applicant's file.

To be considered for admission to any Saint Louis University undergraduate program, applicants must be graduating from an accredited high school, have an acceptable HiSET exam score or take the General Education Development (GED) test.

Transfer

Applicants must be a graduate of an accredited high school or have an acceptable score on the GED or HiSET.

Students who have attempted fewer than 24 semester credits (or 30 quarter credits) of college credit must follow the above freshmen admission requirements. Students who have completed 24 or more semester credits (or 30 quarter credits) of college credit must submit transcripts from all previously attended college(s).

In reviewing a transfer applicant's file, the Office of Admission holistically examines the student's academic performance in college-level coursework as an indicator of the student's ability to meet the academic rigors of Saint Louis University. Where applicable, transfer students will be evaluated on any courses outlined in the continuation standards of their preferred major.

International Applicants

All admission policies and requirements for domestic students apply to international students along with the following:

- Demonstrate English Language Proficiency (<https://catalog.slu.edu/academic-policies/office-admission/undergraduate/english-language-proficiency/>)
- All academic records must include an English translation. An official course-by-course transcript evaluation may be required and accepted.

Tuition

Tuition/Fee	Cost Per Year
Undergraduate Tuition	\$58,960
University Fees	\$1,000

Additional charges may apply. Other resources are listed below:

Information on Tuition and Fees (<https://catalog.slu.edu/academic-policies/student-financial-services/tuition/>)

Miscellaneous Fees (<https://catalog.slu.edu/academic-policies/student-financial-services/fees/>)

Information on Summer Tuition (<https://catalog.slu.edu/academic-policies/student-financial-services/tuition-summer-current/>)

Scholarships and Financial Aid

There are two principal ways to help finance a Saint Louis University education:

- **Scholarships:** Scholarships are awarded based on academic achievement, service, leadership and financial need.
- **Financial Aid:** Financial aid is provided through grants and loans, some of which require repayment.

Saint Louis University makes every effort to keep our education affordable. In fiscal year 2025, 99.6% of first-time freshmen and 92% of all students received financial aid (<https://www.slu.edu/financial-aid/>) and students received more than \$517 million in aid University-wide.

For priority consideration for merit-based scholarships, apply for admission by Dec. 1 and complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) by Feb. 1.

For more information on scholarships and financial aid, visit the Office of Student Financial Services (<https://www.slu.edu/financial-aid/>).

Learning Outcomes

1. Graduates will be able to apply bioethical methodologies.
2. Graduates will be able to synthesize humanities and social science methods.
3. Graduates will be able to evaluate the impact of disparities in identity categories on health care access and quality.
4. Graduates will be able to justify recommendations for resolving complex ethical health care dilemmas.
5. Graduates will be able to integrate bioethical knowledge into patient care.

Requirements

Bioethics and health studies students must complete a minimum total of **36 credits** for the major.

Code	Title	Credits
University Undergraduate Core (https://catalog.slu.edu/academic-policies/academic-policies-procedures/university-core/)		32-35
Major Requirements		36

Major Foundation Courses

The Foundational Courses Requirement introduces students to the ethical dimensions of health care practice both in the U.S. and from an international perspective as well as the several methodological frameworks for addressing bioethical dilemmas. It also introduces students to differences in race, gender, disability, sex, national origin, religion, socioeconomic class, and other differences that can lead to disparities in health care. Finally, students are introduced to an interdisciplinary approach to bioethics as a field, which will help them transition to, and more effectively draw from, the "Disciplinary Frameworks" courses.

HCE 2010	Foundations in Clinical Health Care Ethics	3
Students should select at least two of the following:		
HCE 2050	Patients as Persons	
HCE 2070	Health Care Across Difference	
HCE 2090	Bioethics in an Interdisciplinary Perspective	

Major Disciplinary Frameworks Courses

The Disciplinary Frameworks Requirement exposes students to diverse disciplinary approaches to promoting ethical discourse and social justice in the health care system.

Students select one course in each of the following attribute categories: Humanities; Philosophy/Theology; Social Sciences; Professional. The list of courses within each attribute will be updated each semester. Listed below are some sample courses that would count for each attribute.

Humanities (p. 3)	<i>Literature, History, or Fine Arts Courses with Humanities Attribute</i>	
Theology/Philosophy (p. 3)	<i>Theology or Philosophy course with Theology/Philosophy</i>	
Social Science (p. 3)	<i>Sociology, Anthropology, Political Science, Psychology, African American Studies, or Women's and Gender Studies course with a Social Sciences Attribute</i>	
Professional (p. 3)	<i>Public Health, Social Work, Criminology and Criminal Justice, or Communication course with a Professional attribute</i>	

Advanced Issues & Practice in Health Care Ethics

The Issues and Practice Requirement engages students in current and emerging ethical challenges of 21st century health care and prepares them to recognize, analyze, and facilitate appropriate approaches to resolution in pluralistic and multidisciplinary environments.

Advanced Clinical Problem-Solving (p. 3)		3
A course with a Advanced Clinical Problem-Solving attribute		
HCE 3000/4000 (p. 3)		3-6

At least one HCE course at the 3000/4000 level		
Service Learning (p. 3)		3
A course with a Service Learning attribute		
HCE 4860	Bioethics and Health Studies Capstone	3
University Electives		51-55
Total Credits		120

Continuation Standards

A student must maintain a GPA in coursework for the major in bioethics and health studies of at least 2.00.

Disciplinary Frameworks

These requirements expose students to diverse disciplinary approaches to bioethics and health studies. Students select one course in each of the following attribute categories: humanities, philosophy/theology, social sciences and professional. The list of courses within each attribute will be updated each semester. Listed below are some sample courses that would count for each attribute.

Humanities Attribute (Literature, History, Fine Arts)

Code	Title	Credits
ARTH 2070	Art and the Body	3
ENGL 1900	Advanced Strategies of Rhetoric and Research (Only 'Medical Humanities' section)	3
ENGL 3730	Introduction to Medical Humanities, Literature	3
ENGL 3740	Medicine and Literature	3
FREN 4170	French and the Sciences	3
SPAN 3150	Medical Spanish	3
SPAN 3160	Mental Health and Spanish	3

Theology/Philosophy Attribute

Code	Title	Credits
HCE 1600	Embodiment, Life, and Death in Context	3
HCE 1700	Death, Disability, Disease, and the Meaning of Life	3
PHIL 3360	Medical Ethics	3
PHIL 3600	Science and Religion	3
PHIL 4150	Philosophy of Science	3
PHIL 4280	Biology and Mind	3
THEO 2510	Christian Ethics: Questions, Challenges, and Approaches	3
THEO 3815	Psychology and the Soul	3

Social Sciences Attribute (Sociology/Athropology, Political Science, Psychology, African American Studies, Women's Studies)

Code	Title	Credits
POLS 4840	Global Health Politics and Policy	3
PSY 3100	Brain, Mind, & Society	3
PSY 4330	Psychology of Oppression	3
PSY 4350	Health Psychology	3
SOC 1120	Introduction to Sociology: Diversity and Health Emphasis	3

SOC 2490	Sociology of Medicine	3
SOC 3490	Sociology of Mental Health	3
SOC 3580	Deviant Behavior: Drugs, Alcohol and Addiction	3

Professional Attribute (Public Health, Social Work, Criminology, Allied Health Sciences, Communication)

Code	Title	Credits
CMM 3090	Health Communication	3
CCJ 2050	Multiculturalism for Criminal Justice Professionals	3
CCJ 2150	Criminology: Nature of Crime	3
CCJ 3150	Contemporary Theories of Crime	3
CCJ 3200	Ethics in Criminal Justice	3
CCJ 3600	Mental Health & Crime	3
PUBH 3100	Public Health & Social Justice	3
PUBH 4000	Politics and Public Health Advocacy	3
SWRK 3100	Social Policy for Social Justice	3
SWRK 3200	Dismantling Oppression: Exploring Equity & Inclusion	3

Service-Learning Attribute

Code	Title	Credits
HCE 4240	Ethics and Geriatric Care	3
HCE 4520	Ethics and Practice of Community Mental Health Care	3

Advanced Clinical Problem-Solving Attribute

Code	Title	Credits
HCE 4210	Controversies in Death and Dying	3
HCE 4220	Controversies in Reproductive and Pediatric Ethics	3
HCE 4270	Controversies in Organ Donation	3
HCE 4280	Controversies in Neuroethics	3

Health Care Ethics Electives

Code	Title	Credits
HCE 3010	Ethics in Clinical Medicine	3
HCE 3020	Catholic Theological Bioethics	3
HCE 3030	Disability Studies: Medicine, Ethics, and Policy	3
HCE 3050	Bioethics in Popular Culture	3
HCE 3200	Freaks and the Medical Body	3
HCE 3230X	Race, Gender, and the Ethics of Health Care	3
HCE 3240	Bioethics after Auschwitz	3
HCE 3300	Bioethics + Human Nature Film	3
HCE 4250	Law and Bioethics	3
HCE 4260	Race and Research Ethics	3
HCE 4290	Race, Ethnicity, and Medicine	3
HCE 4500	Ethics in Nursing & Health Care	3
HCE 4980	Advanced Independent Study in Health Care Ethics	3

Roadmap

This roadmap is just one example of a semester-by-semester plan of study for this program. There are other plans students can and do take. The plan of study for each particular student is established in consultation with each student's academic advisor; *this roadmap does not replace academic advising appointments.*

Roadmap notes:

- This Roadmap assumes full-time enrollment unless otherwise noted.
- Courses/Milestones marked with an "!" are critical and must be completed in the semester listed in the Roadmap to ensure a timely graduation.
- Course availability and sequencing are subject to change.

Course	Title	Credits
Year One		
Fall		
CORE 1000	Ignite First Year Seminar	2-3
CORE 1500	Cura Personalis 1: Self in Community	1
CORE 1900	Eloquentia Perfecta 1: Written and Visual Communication	3
HCE 2010	Foundations in Clinical Health Care Ethics (Fulfills Dignity, Ethics, & a Just Society Attribute)	3
General Electives		6
Credits		15-16
Spring		
CORE 3200	Ways of Thinking: Quantitative Reasoning	3
HCE 1600	Embodiment, Life, and Death in Context (satisfies CORE 1600)	3
HCE 2050	Patients as Persons	3
General Electives		6
Credits		15
Year Two		
Fall		
CORE 1200	Eloquentia Perfecta 2: Oral and Visual Communication	3
HCE 1700	Death, Disability, Disease, and the Meaning of Life (satisfies CORE 1700)	3
HCE 2070	Health Care Across Difference (Fulfills Global Interdependence Attribute)	3
General Electives		6
Credits		15
Spring		
CORE 3800	Ways of Thinking: Natural and Applied Sciences	3
HCE 2000/3000/4000	Health Care Ethics Elective	3
Humanities Attributed Course (p. 4)		3
General Electives		6
Credits		15
Year Three		
Fall		
CORE 2800	Eloquentia Perfecta 3: Creative Expression	2-3

Theology/Philosophy Attributed Course (Either HCE 1600 or HCE 1700 fulfills this requirement) (p. 4)	3
Social Science Attributed Course (p. 4)	3
General Electives	7

Credits 15-16

Spring		
Professional Attributed Course (p. 4)		3
CORE 4000	Collaborative Inquiry (Could be fulfilled by HCE 4520 Ethics and Practice of Community Mental Health)	2-3
Advanced Clinical Problem-Solving Attributed Course (p. 4)		3
General Electives		7

Credits 15-16

Year Four		
Fall		
CORE 3500	Cura Personalis 3: Self in the World	1
Service-Learning Attributed Course (p. 4)		3
Health Care Ethics Elective Attributed Course (p. 4)		3
General Electives		8

Credits 15

Spring		
HCE 4860	Bioethics and Health Studies Capstone	3
General Electives		12

Credits 15

Total Credits 120-123

Attributed Courses Disciplinary Frameworks

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HCE 4500	Ethics in Nursing & Health Care	3
HCE 4980	Advanced Independent Study in Health Care Ethics	3

2+SLU

2+SLU programs provide a guided pathway for students transferring from a partner institution.

Bioethics and Health Studies, B.A. (STLCC 2+SLU) (<https://catalog.slu.edu/academic-policies/office-admission/undergraduate/2plusslu/stlcc/bioethics-health-studies/>)

Contact Us

For additional information about this program, please contact hce_info@slu.edu or call 314-977-1060.