



**Proposal for a 4<sup>th</sup> Year Advanced Competency,<sup>1</sup>The Ohio State University College of Medicine:**

***Medical Ethics After the Holocaust***

**Ashley K. Fernandes, MD, PhD**

**2016**

Between 1933 and 1945, the Nazis established a “biocracy” which ultimately murdered millions of innocent persons. Physicians sworn to uphold the Hippocratic Oath turned from healers to killers through active or passive collaboration with a “science” that subjugated the dignity of certain “cancerous” persons to the health of the Race. Laws for racial hygiene and medical apartheid were upheld and implemented by physicians and other health care professionals, following the most cutting edge science of the day. Aryan doctors abandoned their ethical norms for professional and economic gain. As part of civic society they succumbed to the idea that “Race” was more important than the person. Physicians readily embraced a slippery slope in following Third Reich policies concerning the “disposition” of disabled patients, “humane” gassing, and medical experimentation.

These facts have serious implications for bioethics today, including issues such as the interplay of law and morality, the dignity of persons, the physician as “double agent,” conscientious objection for physicians, the depersonalizing culture of medicine, professional ethics, research ethics, and the philosophy of biomedical science.

Utilizing a mixture of readings, didactics, multi-media, clinical experience, field trips, and live guests (survivors and liberators), a principal goal of the course is to apply the lessons of the *Shoah* to bioethics—but not in a way which narrows the students’ focus only to a particular time or people. How can the past help us to navigate the future of medical practice, with critical issues such as dignity, euthanasia, rationing, disabilities, conscience, and research at stake?

**1. Title:**

*Medical Ethics After the Holocaust* (proposed)

**2. Director:**

Ashley K. Fernandes, MD, PhD

Associate Director, Center for Bioethics and Medical Humanities, Associate Professor of Pediatrics

**3. Length:**

a. Longitudinal

i. Approximately 150 hours of content for 4 weeks of AC credit

**4. Number of students:**

<sup>1</sup> Advanced Competencies (AC) are intended to provide experiences for medical students that encompass activities that offer more depth, organization, and knowledge than previously designated electives but are specific in their breadth and can establish expertise in order to establish competence in a specific area. Achieving an advanced certificate or a similar recognition is encouraged.



- a. 15-20 students maximum, proposal to screen interested persons with short paragraph describing their interest.

**5. Specific Requirements:**

- a. Goals and Objectives:
  - i. Utilize an understanding of the historical evolution of medical ethics under the Nazis to analyze various issues in medical professionalism and ethics.
  - ii. Integrate an understanding of the philosophy of science and medicine into contemporary ethical controversies in medicine, including research ethics.
  - iii. Reflect (through oral and written) means on the implications of clinical or personal exposure to patients in historically vulnerable populations.
- b. Assessment:
  - i. Written journals, grade for leading live session, participation/attendance in class, completion and evaluation of clinical/service hours, completion of guardianship program

**6. Curriculum for Medical Ethics After the Holocaust:**

1. <b>Classes:</b> 10 in-person classes (3 hrs each), with 3 hours pre-reading. Each student is responsible for leading the discussion for one class (60-70 hrs):		
		a. Philosophy of Medicine: Why An Oath? Why the Holocaust? b. Philosophy of Science: Eugenics & the Objectivity of Science c. Medical Education in Wartime: Belsinitis & Pernkopf's Atlas d. Research Ethics: Learning from Nazi, Japanese, and Soviet Research Abuse e. Anti-Semitism: Persons as "Others" in Medicine f. Children & the Disabled: Euthanasia, pediatric, & disability ethics g. The Final Solution: Philosophical Anthropologies & the Impact on Medicine h. Christians, Conscience, & Cooperation: Moral Principles of Cooperation & Responsibility i. Theodicy: Medicine & Spirituality j. Nuremberg & the Liberation: Can we change medicine? k. Aftermath: Lessons Learned
2. <b>Films:</b> <i>Night &amp; Fog</i> , <i>Obedience &amp; the Milgram Experiments</i> , <i>Saviors in the Night</i> , <i>Doctors of the Dark Side</i> (8 hrs)		
3. <b>Book:</b> Additional Required Reading: <i>Night</i> , Elie Wiesel (3 hrs)		
4. <b>Field Trips:</b> Synagogue tour/service, Columbus, OH (TBA); last class to visit Ohio Statehouse Holocaust Memorial (5 hrs)		
5. <b>Voluntary Guardianship Program:</b> every student must be trained and enrolled in the voluntary guardianship program, becoming a legal decision maker for incompetent elderly/adults for medical decision making (30 hrs)		

**6. Clinical/Service Experience with Vulnerable Population (40 hrs, minimum):** Student must set up their own clinical or service experience with an “historically vulnerable population” (targeted in the Holocaust): Jewish, disabled (adults or children), Jehovah’s witness, LGBT, alcoholic/drug addicted, homeless, migrant/immigrant, religious (but not their own denomination)

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	<b>7. Writing:</b> Students must keep a written journal with essays/entries (1 page minimum) based on reflection prompts for each session. (10 hrs)
	<b>8. Guests:</b> survivors, liberators, and scholars will be invited to speak to the class when they are available. Attendance is mandatory for these sessions.
	<b>9. Center for Medicine After The Holocaust Online:</b> Students must complete a minimum of 5 lectures or content modules (5 hrs.) online at <a href="http://www.medicinaftertheholocaust.org/curriculum/">http://www.medicinaftertheholocaust.org/curriculum/</a>

**7. Selected References:**

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