

**BEMH**  
Biomedical Ethics &  
Medical Humanities  
Scholarly Concentration  
Stanford University School of Medicine

Contents:

What is BEMH?

Directors and Advisory Committee

BEMH Requirements

FAQ

Attachments:

Mentor List

Sample Elective Courses

Arts & Humanities Medical Scholars:

Student Projects

# What is BEMH?

The Biomedical Ethics and Medical Humanities Scholarly Concentration is part of the new initiative at Stanford University School of Medicine to enable medical students to study a chosen area in depth as a complement to the breadth of knowledge and skills gained by general medical education. BEMH is an opportunity for interested students to reflect on, analyze and contribute to the meaning of medicine by focusing on one (or more!) of the diverse fields that contribute to bioethics and/or the arts and humanities as related to medicine.

BEMH students will be able to examine the ethical and humanistic dimensions of research and practice, and focus on issues that they will confront whether at the laboratory bench or at the bedside. We define “Biomedical Ethics” as broadly encompassing the examination of the ethics of all biomedical research, medicine, and health care. We envision the “Humanities” to include the traditional humanities fields of literature, philosophy, history, religion, and the arts (visual, theatre, media), as well as humanities-oriented social sciences (including anthropology and sociology).

Here are examples of topics within BEMH: the impact of medical and technologic advances (such as genomics, stem cell research, etc); neuroethics; history of medicine; issues of health care access and public health policy; doctor-patient relationship and communication; end-of-life issues; medicine and the media; medicine and society; literature and medicine; medical anthropology; empathy and the experience of illness; the arts and medicine. There are many more.

BEMH is a richly interdisciplinary concentration. For example, a student who wishes to do a film on choices in the neonatal intensive care unit would study filmmaking and editing, communication, family interactions, neonatology, issues of limited resources, ethics of medical advances, informed consent issues, etc.

BEMH is a union of the Stanford Center for Biomedical Ethics <http://scbe.stanford.edu/> and the Arts and Humanities Medical Scholars Program <http://arts-hum-med.stanford.edu> In addition, due to the medical school’s ideal location on the same campus as the University, medical students in BEMH benefit from multiple opportunities for interdisciplinary work across the campus.

# Directors of BEMH

David Magnus, Ph.D. Director BEMH  
Associate Professor  
Director, Stanford Center for Biomedical Ethics  
email: [dmagnus@stanford.edu](mailto:dmagnus@stanford.edu)

Linda Hogle, Ph.D. Associate Director BEMH  
Senior Research Scholar, Stanford Center for Biomedical Ethics  
email: [lhogle@stanford.edu](mailto:lhogle@stanford.edu)

Audrey Shafer, M.D. Associate Director BEMH  
Associate Professor of Anesthesia  
Staff Anesthesiologist, Veterans Affairs Palo Alto Health Care System  
Chair, Arts and Humanities Medical Scholars Committee  
email: [ashafer@stanford.edu](mailto:ashafer@stanford.edu)

## BEMH Advisory Committee

LaVera Crawley, M.D.  
Lecturer, Stanford School of Medicine  
Stanford Center for Biomedical Ethics  
email: [lcrawley@stanford.edu](mailto:lcrawley@stanford.edu)

Ramona Doyle, M.D.  
Associate Professor, Pulmonary and Critical Care  
email: [rldoyle@stanford.edu](mailto:rldoyle@stanford.edu)

Carl Feinstein, M.D.  
Professor, Department of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences  
Division of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry  
email: [carlf@stanford.edu](mailto:carlf@stanford.edu)

Maren Grainger-Monsen, MD  
Filmmaker-in-Residence  
Senior Research Scholar, Stanford University Center for Biomedical Ethics  
email: [mmonsens@stanford.edu](mailto:mmonsens@stanford.edu)

Sarah Hilgenberg, SMS II  
email: [shilgenberg@stanford.edu](mailto:shilgenberg@stanford.edu)

# BEMH Requirements

The minimum of 200 hours of work in the BEMH scholarly concentration is divided into four components: required gateway courses for the concentration; independent study, scholarly work and research; bioethics and medical humanities meetings; and elective courses. The minimum time commitment for each of these components is listed below.

## Required Courses

Three gateway courses are required. Ideally, these are taken during the first year. These courses are open to all students, not just students interested in the scholarly concentration.

Med 255. *Responsible Conduct of Research* (1 unit)

Course Director: [staff]

Winter Quarter, Thursday 5:30-6:30

New Course: *The Human Condition* (2 units)

Course Director: Larry Zaroff, MD, PhD email: [Larryz33@aol.com](mailto:Larryz33@aol.com)

Spring Quarter, Thurs 2:15-4:05

New Course: *Biomedical Ethics* (2 units)

Course Director: Linda Hogle, PhD

Spring Quarter, [tentative schedule: Wednesday afternoon]

Total time commitment for required gateway courses: 50

## Independent Study, Scholarly Work and Research

To accomplish an independent project (required for all students in the concentration), students can enroll in directed reading with faculty, complete a medical scholars project, or do independent study outside of academic credit. Each student must discuss plans with his or her advisor. A student in the investigative option may elect to do this work during the preclinical years, such as autumn and winter quarters of their second year.

Alternatively, an approved Medical Scholars project could be planned for the summer after the first year of medical school, and the student could still complete the investigative option scholarly concentration requirements and medical school in four years. Scholarly work can also be done in the clinical years during periods without clerkships, if compatible with graduation plans (as approved by a dean or advisor).

All students in the Original Research program are expected to invest significant time commitments for their projects and these students would need to extend their medical school years beyond four.

Time commitment: variable, minimum 80 hours for investigative option

**Biomedical Ethics and Medical Humanities Meetings**

Students in the concentration are expected to attend bioethics grand rounds, the Jonathan King Lecture, the Medicine and the Muse Symposium and other similar events. In addition, meetings and seminars of students and faculty in the concentration will occur to enable student presentation of work in an informal setting.

Time commitment: 10 hours

**Elective Courses**

Each student must review the course selection with his or her advisor. Each student's course pathway is individualized according to his or her interests. Students are encouraged to take elective courses related to their field of independent study in order to improve the depth of understanding in that field.

Students must take a minimum of 6 units of elective coursework in addition to directed reading or other independent study courses. These units can be divided in multiple courses (such as one 4 unit and two 1 unit courses). Note that this is a minimum and students are encouraged to enroll in more coursework, particularly if the original research option is chosen. Furthermore, methodology coursework will be necessary for most students in the original research option.

# FAQ

*Can I be in BEMH?*

If you are a Stanford medical student who is matriculating in fall 2003 or later, then yes!

*Can I be in BEMH and finish med school in four years?*

Yes, in the investigative option.

*Do I have to do the gateway courses before my elective courses?*

No. You can do the coursework in any order. Preferably students will finish the two gateway courses and the research ethics course by the end of first year, but this is not necessary.

*Do I have to be in BEMH to take the gateway courses?*

No. These courses are open to all students, as is the research ethics course.

*Can I apply for a Medical Scholars project related to ethics, arts or humanities and not be in BEMH?*

Yes. However, funding priorities are still being worked out by the medical school. All students are encouraged to consider applying for BEMH-related medical scholars projects. Please contact David Magnus ([dmagnus@stanford.edu](mailto:dmagnus@stanford.edu)) for application advice.

*I came to Stanford to do science research, but I am interested in BEMH as a concentration. Can I do both?*

Yes. Stanford students have a variety of interests and talents. The Medical Scholars Program is designed to help students obtain research experience, and BEMH students are eligible to apply for science med scholars. Students gain much insight into medicine and science by participating in lab or clinical research. Such experience may spark an interest in an ethical or humanistic issue related to the research, and a student may want to pursue that issue as a BEMH project. Check with one of the directors of BEMH, as well as with the Med Scholars Program (e.g., Pat Cross [pat.cross@stanford.edu](mailto:pat.cross@stanford.edu)), for your particular questions.

*I came to Stanford to be a cardiac surgeon. What does concentrating in BEMH do for me?*

The tools, insights and perspectives gained from concentrating in BEMH apply to any field of study or career path. For example, a student passionate about a career in

cardiac surgery may want to pursue a project in ethics of transplant or the use of the heart as a metaphor in various cultures. Furthermore, many students change career goals during medical school. Concentrating in BEMH allows great flexibility as these shifts occur.

*I want to take an elective course as one of my BEMH courses, but it's not on the elective course list. Does it count?*

The elective course list is a sample of the kinds of courses that would count towards the minimum 6 units of elective courses necessary for this concentration. But it is not an exclusive list. Each student in BEMH or considering BEMH will have an advisor to discuss plans, including elective course choices. As long as you can justify how the course fits into your overall study plans, it should count.

*I found a Stanford faculty member who wants to mentor me in a BEMH project, but I don't see his/her name on the mentor list. What now?*

We expect the mentor list to grow as our program grows. You are welcome and encouraged to seek mentors in the University who are not on the mentor list, and, if that faculty member agrees, we are happy to add him/her to our list.

*Speaking of mentors, I found this really great guy who would be perfect to mentor me in my project but he's not affiliated with Stanford. How come he can't mentor me?*

You are welcome to have mentors outside of Stanford *in addition to* a Stanford faculty mentor. Please discuss particulars with your BEMH advisor.