Legal and Ethical Issues in Nursing
Nursing 420  (3 credits)

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Course Description:
All nurses in today’s health care environment are faced with multiple ethical challenges which are related either directly or indirectly to cost-conscious hospitals, managed care payment plans, nursing staffing problems, the looming nursing shortage, and complex medical conditions that affect not just individuals but whole communities. This course focuses on the legal and ethical rights, responsibilities, and obligations of the practicing nurse in a rapidly changing health care environment. The Nebraska Health and Human Services Accountability for Professional Conduct of Nurses and the American Nurses Association’s Code of Ethics are used as guides to examine implications for legal and ethical decision-making. Students learn the specific responsibilities and obligations they have to those they serve and develop a professional self-definition as a practitioner of the art and science of nursing.

Required Text:  None

Resource Text:
Text:        Nursing in Today’s World Trends, Issues, and Management
Author:     Janice Rider Ellis and Celia Love Hartley
Publisher:  Wolters Kluwer/Lippincott Williams & Wilkins

Course Objectives:
At the end of this course, the students will be able to identify and discuss the following:
1. Discuss the various approaches to financing and managing costs in health care.
2. Explain why it is important for nurses to be knowledgeable about and to be involved in the political process.
3. Describe the philosophy behind community-based care.
4. Outline the process for establishing an evidence-based nursing practice in an institutional setting or in your own personal practice.
5. Discuss liability in relationship to nursing practice, including situation in which liability is shared by employers or supervisors.
6. Discuss how ethics relate to commitment to the patient, commitment to personal excellence, and commitment to nursing as a profession.
Learning Strategies to Accomplish Course Objectives
Learning Objectives will be attained through:
1. Weekly lecture on course objectives
2. Weekly reading assignments for students related to the course objectives
3. Obtaining current literature utilizing nursing databases or media articles
4. Class discussion regarding current literature
5. Class discussion of current research articles and literature that apply to local nursing practice
6. Class presentations of legal/ethical issue of interest

Class Attendance:
Because of the seminar nature of this class, attendance is required. Students will gain the most from the class through participation in discussions and student interactions. Every student is expected to participate and should be prepared to discuss during the class. Absences are subject to the discretion of the instructor. If you know you are going to be absent, please notify the instructor prior to class.

Grading:
Students will be expected to complete the assigned readings, attend and participate in class discussions, complete a class presentation, and submit the required research articles.

Grades for the course will be determined by the following:
1. Class presentation: Regarding one legal/ethical issue that is pertinent to your nursing specialty of interest  60 points
2. Class attendance:  5 points per class (must be present entire class)  40 points
3. Class participation: 5 points per class  40 points
4. Submission of 4 research articles of particular interest to you and discussion of those articles (15 points each)  60 points
Total points possible  200 points

A +  195-200 points with perfect attendance
A  190-195 points
B  180-189 points
C  170-179 points
D  160-169 points
F  Below 159 points

A grade of 70% must be attained in order to pass the course. Grades will not be scaled. You will be given a rubric to follow for your presentation for the legal/ethical issue. References for this presentation should be within the last 5 years. Using a reference beyond 5 years is permissible but must be approved by the course instructor.
5. **Doane College Academic Integrity Policy**
   a. The Doane College Academic Integrity Policy will be adhered to in this class. All projects and tests will represent your own work. Any use of others’ ideas and words without proper citation of sources is plagiarism and will result in penalties to be determined by the instructor and/or the dean of undergraduate studies.