Legal and Ethical Issues in Nursing  
NRS 420 (3 credits)  
Legal and Ethical Issues in Health Care  
HIS 310 (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. Examine the role of institutional policies and protocols with legal decision making for nurses  
2. Explain liability in relationship to nursing practice, including situations in which liability is shared by employers and supervisors  
3. Identify specific issues that can constitute malpractice and discuss the nurse’s responsibility in relationship to them  
4. Appraise the concepts of ethics and morality and how they are applied in the healthcare field  
5. Explore ethical theories that may be used to guide ethical decision making  
6. Analyze the controversial bioethical issues surrounding the delivery of healthcare
Learning Strategies to Accomplish Course Objectives

Learning Objectives will be attained through:
1. Weekly discussion of course objectives through Blackboard
2. Weekly reading assignments found in Blackboard related to course objectives
3. Obtaining current literature utilizing nursing databases or media articles
4. Discussion in Blackboard and in class regarding current literature
5. Discussion in Blackboard and in class of current research articles and literature that apply to local nursing practice
6. Written research paper regarding legal/ethical issue of interest
7. Interviews with colleagues as directed by course objectives found in Blackboard

Class Attendance:
Students are expected to participate weekly in the on-line discussion topics as part of the grade for the course. Students are expected to attend class on those designated dates. Please inform the instructor prior to class if you are unable to attend.

We will meet the first night of class for an introduction and orientation to the course. Other nights for scheduled class will be determined on the first class meeting day.

Grading:
Grades for the course will be determined by the following:
1. Completion of the weekly reading and or research assignments in Blackboard
2. Participation in the weekly on-line and class discussions that occur.
3. Submission of a legal/ethical research paper using APA format

You will be given a rubric to follow for the on-line discussions. You will be given a rubric to follow for the legal/ethical issue paper. References for this paper should be within the last 5 years. Using a reference beyond 5 years is permissible but must be approved by the course instructor.

A grade of 77% must be attained in order to pass the course. Grades will not be scaled. Later papers and assignments will not be accepted for course credit.

The legal/ethical paper is worth 50 points
Each on-line discussion is worth 9 points, three for the initial post and six for two subsequent posts to other students. Accumulated points result in the following letter grades:

A (93-100%) 236 -254 points
B (92-85%) 216-235 points
C (84-77%) 196-215 points
D (76-70%) 178-195 points
F (69% or less) 177 points or less

1. 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.