Bioethics & Professionalism Honors Program
SSOM 2021 Class

**Note: These students received a distinction for their capstone projects.**

Hermon Abera

**Title:** "The Social Media Mentor: How Social Media is Transforming the Mentor Relationship and Why Underrepresented Minorities in Medicine Stand the Most to Gain"

**Description:** This conceptual project is an exploratory study of current literature and methods to increase diversity in medicine. The use of social media in medicine was investigated to determine any benefit over, or in addition to, traditional pipeline programs to increase diversity in medicine. By identifying the utility and utilization of social media by physicians, residents, medical, and pre-medical students for mentorship and professional networking, this paper also explores ways to intentionally utilize social media platforms as professional networking tools to increase the exposure and retention of underrepresented minorities in medicine.

Piotr Barnas

**Title:** "The Influence of Physician-Led Advance Care Planning Discussions"

**Description:** Piotr collaborated on "The Influence of Physician-Led Advance Care Planning Discussions" with Dr. Paul Hutchison and Stephanie Vereb throughout his time in medical school. The research included a quantitative and qualitative analysis examining effectiveness and themes of discussions during visits at the Advance Care Clinic at the Loyola Outpatient Center. The quantitative portion of the project, which involved developing a pre- and post-visit survey for the patients, was presented by Piotr for the Bioethics Honors Capstone Presentation at the end of his third year. Piotr also analyzed the common themes of the patient scripts in corroboration with his collaborators in the qualitative component of the study.
**Annie Coakley**  
**Title:** "23andMe and You"  
**Description:** "Annie completed a capstone project entitled "23andMe and You" under the mentorship of Dr. McCarthy focused on the bioethical issues surrounding at-home personalized genetic testing. Her presentation included a discussion of patient autonomy, privacy and the informed consent process for research with and individual's DNA. Her passion for this topic and hard work earned her a distinction from the bioethics department for her capstone presentation. We feel confident that her strong background in bioethics will serve as a solid foundation for any ethical challenges she will face as a future physician".

**Alexandria Cummuta**  
**Title:** "Narrative Medicine: Developing a Professional Identity in the Modern Era of Social Media"  
**Description:** Alex worked in collaboration with Dr. Eugene Lee, M.D. to complete her Bioethics and Professionalism Honors Program capstone, “Narrative Medicine: Developing a Professional Identity in the Modern Era of Social Media.” The majority of students enrolled in Dr. Lee’s Narrative Medicine elective reported low confidence levels regarding social media and indicated the potential for future professional usage if they had received more education and engagement on the topic. After extensively researching narrative medicine, professional identity formation, and social media, Alex designed a supplemental education proposal. The proposal utilized various organizational guidelines and protocols, informative multimedia, peer-reviewed articles, recommendations regarding role models, and facilitated discussion and reflection.

**Philip Ghobrial**  
**Title:** "Ethical Considerations for Subject Recruitment in Human Dyad Research"  
**Description:** This project, titled “Ethical Considerations for Subject Recruitment in Human Dyad Research,” analyzed the ethical issues associated with recruitment and withdrawal protocols in research involving paired subjects. This study was pursued due to a lack of published ethical standards to guide the development of such protocols in research that possesses the potential to create interpersonal strain or conflict among subject pairs. A review and critical analysis of the human dyad literature was conducted to identify the ethical criteria used for constructing dyad recruitment and withdrawal protocols, and a case study of an ongoing clinical trial was subsequently performed to analyze the key ethical issues that may accompany dyad research participation. The insights gained from this project are being utilized to develop a framework paper that will provide further analysis of these unique ethical issues and supply investigators with guidelines for improving research design and methodology.

**Laurel Gordon**  
**Title:** "Medical Students' Knowledge of, Experiences with, and Attitudes about Direct-to-Consumer Genetic Testing"
**Description:** The project was entitled “Medical Students' Knowledge of, Experiences with, and Attitudes about Direct-to-Consumer Genetic Testing,” presented by Laurel Gordon. The aim of the project was to better understand students’ attitudes and knowledge of medical genetics and direct-to-consumer genetic testing in order to identify what supplemental material could be added to the curriculum to better prepare students for clinical encounters in these areas. Data was collected through an online survey sent out to all students at Loyola Stritch School of Medicine. Data collected suggested that most medical students do not feel prepared for clinical encounters in medical genetics and do not believe that enough about the field is learned in medical school, supporting the addition of medical genetics information to the curriculum whether it be in the form of a course-related session or an optional elective.

**Chantel Hilliard**

**Title:** "The Ethical Challenges of the African American Infant mortality rate"

**Description:** Despite there being an overall 15% decline in the infant mortality rate from 2005-2014, non-Hispanic, African Americans (Blacks) still have an infant mortality rate that is 2.2 times higher than that of non-Hispanic, Caucasians (Whites). My capstone project consisted of a thorough investigation of the factors contributing to the racial inequalities in the infant mortality rate.

**Madison McKee**

**Title:** "Women in Healthcare Leadership: a call to action and inspiration"

**Description:** This bioethics capstone project involved the creation of a white-paper aimed at providing educational statistics and current literature on women in healthcare leadership along with personal testimonies for inspiration. The objective of the project was to build a platform featuring a diverse array of women physician leaders from Loyola in order to discuss definitions and styles of leadership, various leadership experiences, perceived barriers to seeking leadership, and ways in which to mentor other women to encourage leadership. The project will be circulated by the American Medical Women's Association chapter at Loyola, and some of the project themes include identifying skills to motivate and direct a team, leading by example, supporting strengths of others through mentoring, utilizing social media, and the importance of inclusive equity. Through this piece, women should feel empowered to define their sense of leadership, become involved in leadership, and apply leadership concepts to their current and future healthcare careers.

**Julie Mina**

**Title:** "Incorporating a Mock Ethics Committee into the Stritch Bioethics Honors Program"

**Description:** Julie completed her Bioethics and Professionalism Honors Program capstone, “Incorporating a Mock Ethics Committee into the Stritch Bioethics Honors Program.” Analysis of alumni survey data showed low participation in ethics and ethics-related committees after graduation from the program. After extensively researching student clinical ethics committees, the Joint Commission requirements, and the few programs worldwide that have formed similar
committees among their medical students, Julie designed a student clinical ethics committee session to be included in the Bioethics Honors Program curriculum at Stritch School of Medicine. The eventual goal of its implementation is to make it available for all Loyola graduate and professional students to discuss real clinical ethical cases and represent themselves as stakeholders.

Michael Perrin

Title: "(Re)defining Palliative Care: A Way Forward"

Description: Palliative care is an often misunderstood service by both the public and medical professionals, many times thought of as being synonymous with end-of-life care. Not infrequently, this results in patients and their families losing the opportunity to benefit from palliative care services. The project analyzed both the definitions of both pediatric and adult palliative care and current public and professional views on palliative care in order to inform a discussion of the service’s widespread popular connotation as solely focusing on end-of-life care. The project used the Individualized Care Planning and Coordination Model, which focuses on the importance of a strong, personal patient-provider relationship, to discuss both the possibility of re-defining palliative care in order to make it more accessible to all patients, not just those who are dying, and organizational ways to inform both the public and professionals as to the many benefits of palliative care services.

Supritha Prasad

Title: "Addressing Barriers in Healthcare in Autism Spectrum Disorder: The Development of an Educational Program for Medical Trainees"

Description: For her Bioethics Honors Program Capstone, Supritha completed and presented a project entitled "Addressing Barriers in Healthcare in Autism Spectrum Disorder: The Development of an Educational Program for Medical Trainees". During the first two years, Supritha conducted an extensive literature search to identify barriers to effective healthcare for patients with autism, as well as educational models currently in place to improve healthcare for special needs populations. Utilizing this foundation, Supritha collaborated with over a dozen faculty members in the School of Medicine to design a four-year vertical curriculum for medical students, aimed at deconstructing the communication barrier between healthcare providers and patients with special needs.

Nicolas Semenchuk

Title: "Case Study: Three Components of Ethical and Sustainable Health Disparities Programming"

Description: “Case Study: Three Components of Ethical and Sustainable Health Disparities Programming” presented by Nicolas Semenchuk documents the collaboration between a community health coalition, funded by a nonprofit health system, and an area high school district, which serves communities within the health system’s catchment area. This collaboration engaged school district administrators and staff, community members, parents, and students in the development and promotion of wellness programs and practices, including rewriting the
comprehensive school wellness policy. Challenges and windows of opportunity throughout this process were expanded upon to illustrate the utility of specific participatory research methods, systems thinking elements, and the application of a critical race lens in the development of ethical and sustainable approaches to confronting health disparities.

Michelle Sung

**Title:** "Ethics and Professionalism in Clinical Clerkships"

**Description:** For my Bioethics and Professionalism Honors Program capstone project titled “Ethics and Professionalism in Clinical Clerkships,” I focused on ethics and professionalism during third year clerkships from the perspective of medical students. A need was identified to educate and familiarize Stritch School of Medicine students with approaching challenging ethical scenarios on clerkships recognizing unique factors to be considered by medical students. After devising clinical ethical scenarios and discussion questions, I conducted 2 focus groups with a total of 22 second-year medical students. My study showed that the second-year medical students subjectively benefited from thinking through and discussing challenging ethical clerkship scenarios prefaced with a detailed overview of what to expect on clerkships.

Cristina Taylor

**Title:** "Equipping the Future Generation of Physicians with the Knowledge, Resources, and Skill Set to Enter into the Opioid Epidemic as Competent and Compassionate Providers"

**Description:** This project aimed to fill a gap in the existing medical school curriculum by providing students an opportunity to learn about the practicality and challenges of prescribing opioids within a variety of specialties including OBGYN, surgery, medicine, psychiatry, EM, palliative care, and oncology. In hearing from experienced Loyola attending physicians, students were able to explore what barriers to pain management they might face in their own practices and examine what their future roles might be in fighting the opioid epidemic beyond medical school. This project was designed to set the framework for the development of a future elective that explored the background, current state of, and future directions for combating the opioid epidemic using a mix of workshops, case discussions, simulations, standardized patient scenarios, and lectures. Through these various forums, students would be able to develop the necessary skills to compassionately and effectively communicate with patients, properly manage pain conditions, responsibly prescribe opioids to reduce the prevalence of opioid use disorder, and confidently work with this important and often stigmatized patient population.

Stephanie Vereb

**Title:** "The Influence of Physician-Led Advance Care Planning Discussions on Patient Care Part 2"

**Description:** My bioethics honors presentation was entitled “The Influence of Physician-Led Advance Care Planning Discussions on Patient Care.” This project was a qualitative research project that analyzed how physician led advance care planning (ACP) discussions were different from those led by other members of the healthcare team. Data analysis also focused on how physician-led discussions could improve patient care at the end of life. The project identified an
additional research question regarding how physician-led ACP discussions influenced patient understanding and trust of doctors in end of life scenarios. This additional data analysis and manuscript publication will be completed in my 4th year of medical school, barring any unforeseen delays.

**Julia Witowska**

**Title:** "Crying with a Patient: Patients’ Attitudes towards Physician Displays of Emotion"

**Description:** My Bioethics & Professionalism Honors Program capstone presentation was entitled “Crying with a Patient: Patients’ Attitudes towards Physician Displays of Emotion”, and collaborators included Dr. Danielle Brazel, Dr. Emily Anderson and Michael Wesolowski. This project sought to better understand patients’ views on physician displays of emotion through a survey that was administered to patients at the Loyola University Medical Center. Patients were asked to rate appropriateness of physician crying across six different vignette constructs, as well as answer questions regarding demographics, their own tendencies to cry, and describe a situation in which a physician had cried with them. By better understanding the views of patients on this topic, we may be able to better prepare future physicians for emotionally challenging patient encounters, and further explore strategies for healthy management of emotions and coping in the clinical setting.

**Amir Zakhary**

**Title:** "Humans of Stritch"

**Description:** “9 students ranging from M1-M4’s at the SSOM were interviewed via Zoom by M3 Amir Zakhary about their general wellness habits, COVID-19 wellness practices, what they would implement at Stritch to facilitate wellness, and how they would advise students at SSOM to practice wellness. Students also shared inspirational quotes / figures they found motivational in their life. The goal was to build a ‘culture of ethics’ at Stritch starting with this topic of wellness so that students practice ethics & integrity inside and outside of the classroom. The responses were mixed together and presented to the Department of Bioethics.”