Georgetown University Law (LLM)

Fall Semester 2016
Professor Jared Silberman
Course--Bio-Security --Thursdays, 11:10-1:10

To contact professor:  
Office hours: by appointment

Course Description

Using case studies and real world exercises this course explores the issues surrounding Bioethics. We will begin with historical examples dating to the Middle Ages, and proceed to more recent biological threats stemming from Plague, Smallpox, Polio, Cholera, Anthrax, MERS, and SARS, as examples. Finally, we will examine the most recent bio-threats posed by Ebola and the Zika viruses.

The course will analyze the legal foundations and courses of action necessary in response to biological threats including quarantine, cordon sanitaire, mandatory vaccinations, administration of medicine and equipment when supplies are limited, and the legal issues surrounding population control as threats occur. This course will also examine the biological threats associated with acts of terrorism including the 1995 Tokyo subway attack by the Aum Shinrikyo cult using SARIN gas.

Classes will consist of lectures, discussions and exercises. The exercises are designed to probe how attorneys and administrators are likely to react and plan as a biological threat advances on a population center. We will examine applicable law and attempt to fashion appropriate “legal” relief to the threatened community. On occasion we will view actual video documentation of affected biologically threatened communities to better understand the enormity of the events.

Course Objectives

Students will accomplish and understand:
1. The legal and ethical responsibilities within biosecurity;
2. Application of law and ethical theories using exercises designed to test effective utilitarianism with established law;
3. The challenges of new frontiers with established legal boundaries involving global issues concerning bio-threats and bio-terrorism.

Course Structure
This course meets once weekly and involves dedicated readings, class lectures, discussions, and participation in class assigned group exercises. There will be one assigned major or final paper on a topic germane to Biosecurity. The major or final
paper topic must be discussed and approved by the instructor and an outline of the proposed paper should be submitted for approval at approximately four weeks into the course, or no later than October 6, 2016. There will also be assigned short (two page limit) electronic postings of paper topics throughout the course.

Grade breakdown by percentage
Weekly Assignments: 15%
Engagement (electronic forums and class discussions): 15%
Course Paper: 70%

**Announcements**

Announcements will be posted on Canvas on a regular basis. Be sure to check the class announcements regularly as they will contain important information about class assignments and other class matters.

**Discussion Forums**

Discussion forums are an excellent way for you to engage with the course material and with your peers. The course module will have an accompanying discussion board question posted. You are expected to read the discussion boards and engage in thoughtful discussions. I will read all discussion posts and provide content clarification and feedback when necessary.

**Readings**

Course readings will be posted in Canvas. Most lectures will be derived from the course readings so advance reading is crucial to class preparation and expected for meaningful discussion.

**Class 1: Sept. 1, 2016 Introduction—“Biosecurity Where We Are Today and Challenges To Go Forward”**

Overview of “Outbreaks, Protecting Americans From Infectious Diseases” Lecture will cover notable examples of past biological threats and pandemics.

**Class 2: Sept. 8, 2016, “Tracking a “No-Notice” Biosecurity Threat (Earthquake)”**. Discussion of trigger points and the legal analysis necessary
for command and control of the situation. Students will be divided into small
groups to facilitate legal strategy and logistical responses.

Readings will center on the Biological Weapons Convention, Chemical Weapons Convention, and the history leading to the Geneva Conventions outlawing biological and chemical weapons. We will also consider the legal uses of non-lethal or less-lethal weapons.

Class 4: Sept. 22, 2016, “Defending the pandemics” A history of pandemics and the use of quarantine and other social restrictions to counter disease.
Class discussion will cover Typhoid Mary and the past threats of tuberculosis and cholera within large urban areas.

Class 5: Sept. 29, 2016, “Just how was polio controlled and conquered?”
Examination of the attempts to conquer both the fears accompanying polio and the disease itself.

Class 6, Oct. 6, 2016, The real ‘Hot Zone”” Analysis of the Ebola pandemic and the difficulties in conquering one of the world’s deadliest scourges.

Class 7: Oct. 13, 2016, “Anthrax and the synthetic biological threat,”

Class 8: Oct. 20, 2016, “Biological mind games and threats to society” How LSD and other experimental drugs framed a biological threat.

Class 9: Oct. 27, 2016, “Putting the nose to work—How the olfactory sense may be used to advantage within a legal framework.” This lecture will explore both detection mechanisms from a biosecurity perspective and advanced diagnosis techniques.

Class 10, Nov. 3, 2016, “Biological and the cyber issues”—What could go wrong with a cyber attack in the biological realm?

Class 11, Nov. 10, 2016 TBD

Class 12, Nov. 17, 2016 Oral presentations of course written assignments (final paper)

Nov. 24 (Thanksgiving Holiday)

Class 13, Dec. 1, 2016, Presentation of remainder of course final papers.