Ethical and Conceptual Problems in Veterinary Medicine

SYLLABUS

VM704,  Fall 2007          Drs. Rollin and Knight

General Information

To be successful, this course requires your interaction. For this reason, we expect you to have read all the material before each class and to come in with well thought-out questions and comments so we can have discussion. This includes both the reading material and the cases. Each week, about half the hour will be devoted to discussion of the text material in response to your questions, and the other half to issues about the cases.

Drs. Knight and /or Rollin will also be available after class if anyone wishes to speak to us one on one, by appointment.

Requirements:

1) Two cases to be analyzed in writing. They will be distributed a week before they are due.

2) A final examination
Course Outline

**Please read Veterinary Medical Ethics, pages 1-27 immediately to gain a synoptic vision.**

**Week 1: August 23 - Introductory Discussion**
Introduction: Historical and social background; the changing role of the veterinarian; rationale for this class; emerging issues; goals, objectives, and procedures; need for general education; ethical issues you have encountered.

**Week 2: August 30**
**Topics:** The nature of ethics and philosophy; recognizing ethical issues, perceiving with one’s expectations. Ethics, and ethics; social ethics, personal ethics and professional ethics; criticizing ethics rationally, the five ethical pulls on veterinarians.
**Cases:**
- Case 2, Substandard Husbandry for Sheep
- Case 4, Farmer Uses Illegal Growth Promotant
- Case 16, Spaying Farm Cats
- Case 26, Vet Discovers Violations in Religious Slaughter
- Case 12, Euthanasia of Treatable Horse for Insurance
- Case 20, Dairy Farmers Using Unauthorized Feed Additive
- Case 39, Referral Practice—Stealing Clients
- Case 82, Can Annual Vaccinations be Justified?

**Week 3: September 6**
**Topics:** Why veterinary medicine ignored ethics for most of its history; scientific ideology and “value-free” science; the denial of animal pain and consciousness; ethical discussions, not all decisions are dilemmas; ethical perspectives; the parallels between science and ethics; ethical change, judo, sumo and recollection.
**Readings:** Vet Med Ethics, pp. 19-27; “The Concept of Illness in Veterinary Medicine” from JAVMA.
**Cases:**
- Case 7, Farmer Requests Fetotomy
- Case 38, Improperly Labeled Prescription
- Case 11, Euthanasia of a Cat Who Sprays
- Case 51, Female Veterinarians Offended by Colleagues’ Humor
- Case 54, Previous Practitioner Leaves a Sponge in Dog
- Case 56, Misreading of Radiograph
- Case 50, Female Vet Receives Unwelcome Attention
- Case 83, An Organic Farmer who won’t use Antibiotics for Foot Rot

**Week 4: September 13**
**Topics:** Euthanasia methods. (Dr. Knight)
**Readings:** Report of the AVMA Panel on Euthanasia
**Cases:**
- Case 28, Pig Farmer Asking for Euthanasia
- Case 72, Improving Rural Euthanasia
- Case 44, Euthanizing Sick Animals Without Owner Permission
- Case 52, Client Refuses Euthanasia for Sick Cat
- Case 25, Neonatal Buck Kids
- Case 99, Producer Unwilling to Euthanize Sick Pigs
- Case 84, Using Wood Chippers to Kill Chickens

**Week 5: September 20**
**Topics:** Ethical theory; examples of classical ethical theories—Plato, Kant, Mill.
**Readings:** No new readings.
**Cases:**
- Case 23, Clients Refuse to Euthanize Cancer Dog
- Case 27, Alternative Surgical Training
- Case 17, Cat Breeder Requests Anesthetic
- Case 32, Veterinary Liaison with Pet Store Providing Poor Animal Care
Case 61, Poor Air Quality in a Swine Barn
Case 47, Conflict of Interest
Case 96, Finding Animals for Continuing Education
Case 91, Technicians Performing Management Procedures on Farm
Case 94, Raw Diet

First Written Case Due

Week 6: September 27 - Lecture by state veterinarian
Topics: The legal status of animals today; the cruelty laws; cruelty and the veterinarian.
Cases: Case 41, Should Vets be Required to Report Animal Abuse?
       Case 8, Suspected Dog Fighting
       Case 58, Injured, Unowned Animal
       Case 42, Two Cases of Found Dogs
       Case 69, Suspected Poisoning
       Case 103, Elderly Couple Adopting Many Animals
       Case 89, How Do Veterinarians Respond to Clients with Too Many Animals?

Week 7: October 4
Topics: The fundamental question of veterinary ethics—the moral status of animals, the changing social ethic for animals.
Readings: Vet Med Ethics, pp. 27-41
Cases: Case 1, Cow with Cancer Eye
       Case 33, Freeze Firing of Race Horses
       Case 3, Fracture Fixation
       Case 19, Marketing a Heartworm Regimen
       Case 36, Annual Rabies Vaccination
       Case 30, Veterinarian Seeking Maternity Leave
       Case 97, Should Veterinarians Support Activist Groups?

Week 8: October 11
Topics: Animal Ethics (con’t), Philosophical Articulation of the new social ethics, animals rights and animal welfare
Cases: Case 78, Confidentiality in the Case of a Client Selling Sick Animals
       Case 64, Confidentiality and Employee Drug Abuse
       Case 5, Client Sells Known BVD Shedders
       Case 40, Confidentiality and Breeder Perpetuating Dogs with Seizures
       Case 80, Reporting a Dog Being Used to Carry Drugs
       Case 79, Conflict in Obligation to Peer and Client
       Case 93, Animal Welfare Versus Animal Rights

Week 9: October 18
Free-Wheeling Discussion of the New Ethic and Its Philosophical Underpinnings

Second Written Case Due

Week 10: October 25
Topics: The new ethic and companion animals; convenience euthanasia; cosmetic surgery; genetic disease; behavior.; The movement for “guardianship” and for raising the economic value of animals; quality of life issues.
Readings: Vet Med Ethics, pp. 49-64; “Convenience Euthanasia” (from JAVMA) and letters; “The Customized Companion Dog” Joan and Eric Dunayer, (from Agenda); B Rollin, “Euthanasia and Moral Stress”
Cases: Case 6, Client Requests Dog Euthanasia Because She is Moving
       Case 9, Docking and Cropping Dobermans
       Case 15, Euthanasia for Overbite
       Case 35, Irresponsible Veterinarian
       Case 44, Should a Biting Dog be Adopted Out
Case 65, Convenience Euthanasia Without Permission
Case 21, Vet’s Responsibility When a Dog is Suspected to be Overly Aggressive
Case 52, Client Refuses Euthanasia for Sick Cat
Case 87, “Good” versus “Natural” Death
Case 100, Veterinarians and Laws Banning Pit Bulls
Case 104, The Ethics of Killing Healthy Animals

Week 11: November 1
Topics: Continuation of Companion Animal Discussion
Readings: Vet Med Ethics, The Ethics of Critical Care, pp. 77-83; The Ethics of Alternate Medicine, pp. 93-103
Cases: Case 85, Should Shelters Place Animals in Less than Perfect Homes?

Week 12: November 8 -- Lecture by Dr. Hellyer
Topic: Pain and Distress
Cases: Case 22, Painful Research Designed Without Analgesia,
Case 70, Euthanasia of Research Animals Without Researcher’s Permission;
Case 82, A Cat Who Fractures Both Legs After Surgery.
Case 71, Anorexic Client Not Feeding His Dog
Case 31, Surgical Procedures Performed by Technicians
Case 45, Partner’s Misdiagnosis
Case 49, Homeopathic Treatment
Case 60, Negligence of an Emergency Clinician
Case 74, Bull Mastiff with Osteosarcoma.

Week 13: November 15
Free-Wheeling Discussion of Pain and Distress
Cases: Case 101, Giving Analgesics to Mask Pain in Horses
Case 102, Are Animals Raised in Confinement Happy in Confinement?

Week 14: November 29
Topics: Farm Animals
Readings: Vet Med Ethics, pp. 41-49.
Cases: Case 14, Supernumerary Teat Removal
Case 18, Penicillin Residue in Milk
Case 34, Performing Cat Castrations on the Farm
Case 37, Government Policy Preventing Export of Breeding Swine
Case 46, Heavy Metal Toxicosis and Slaughter for Food
Case 48, Rabies Vaccine for Livestock
Case 53, Should Vets Prescribe Drugs to Increase Productivity?
Case 55, Importation of Boar Semen
Case 77, Farmer Asking Advice of “Experts”
Case 30, Veterinarian Seeking Maternity Leave
Case 86, Why Should We Worry about Suffering Right Before Death?
Case 88, Is it wrong to Modify Animals to Fit Production Systems?
Case 95, Using an Elastrator on Older Bulls

Week 15: December 7
Lecture by Dr. Temple Grandin