October was an exciting month for bioethicists, as it marks the month of the annual conference for the American Society for Bioethics and Humanities. This year, the conference was held in Atlanta, Georgia. Faculty from the Center for Ethics and Humanities in the Life Sciences attended, delivered presentations, and presented posters. Read the blog post on the Center’s website to learn more!

On behalf of the BHS faculty and staff, we wish you a happy and safe Thanksgiving holiday. Below are some opportunities to keep in mind as the semester winds down.

This month at the Center for Ethics and Humanities in the Life Sciences:

Brownbag Speaker Series:

This month, our Brownbag Speaker Series featured Dr. Charles Bosk, Professor of Sociology and Professor of Anesthesiology and Critical Care at University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Bosk’s talk, “Medical Sociology as Vocation”, focused on how medical sociology can play a role in understanding the institution of medicine at multiple levels—from the formulation of national policy to the behavior of front-line workers. The lecture took place in C102 East Fee Hall (The “Patenge Room”), from on Wednesday, November 13. To listen to a recording of this talk, click here.

Our last brownbag speaker of the semester will be Deborah Fisch, J.D., who is affiliated with the University of Michigan Program for Sexual Rights and Reproductive Justice, the Human Rights in Childbirth Legal Defense Network, and Legal Advocates for Birth Options and Rights (LABOR). She will discuss medical science, public health, bioethics, consumer advocacy, medico-legal concerns, and reproductive justice in relation to providers refusing to support VBAC (vaginal birth after cesarean). Dr. Fisch supports the argument that most women who give birth by cesarean section can successfully – and safely – give birth vaginally in future pregnancies. Yet in the United
States, most such patients instead undergo repeat c-sections, in large part because of the dearth of institutions and practitioners that offer VBAC (vaginal birth after cesarean). In this presentation, she will address questions of evidence, access, and responsibility in relation to this topic. Join us in person on December 4, 2013, from 12-1 p.m. in Room C102 (The Patenge Room) in East Fee Hall. If you can’t join in person, join us online by following these instructions.

**Bioethics in the News Blog:**

Join our monthly, online discussions on the ethical challenges facing the practice of medicine and the health care system, prompted by blog posts from experts in the fields of bioethics, medical ethics, and the medical humanities. This month, Dr. Sean Valles, Assistant Professor in the Lyman Briggs College and the Department of Philosophy at Michigan State University, shares his interesting insights on climate change and medical risk. Read more at: [Bioethics in the News](#)

**Opportunities in Bioethics:**

**Undergraduate Bioethics Society**

The Undergraduate Bioethics Society (UBS), a registered student organization at MSU, was founded in 2006. The mission of UBS is to increase awareness about ethical issues in health and healthcare, biotechnology, and medical research. The organization was very active in the past; in 2007, members of UBS organized and hosted the 10th Annual National Undergraduate Bioethics Conference (NUBC), with more than 100 people in attendance. Also, through UBS, students were funded to travel to NUBC in subsequent years to present their work. Unfortunately, as of 2012, the organization became inactive due to lack of student leadership and faculty support. In an effort to offer more engaging opportunities to undergraduate students with interests in bioethics, the BHS specialization is seeking motivated students from all majors for general membership as well as for the e-board. If you are interested, please email Monica List at [bhs@msu.edu](mailto:bhs@msu.edu).

**What is the National Undergraduate Bioethics Conference?**

The National Undergraduate Bioethics Conference (NUBC) is an annual event created for, and led by undergraduate students interested in bioethics. Currently in its 16th year, this two-day event, planned and organized completely by students covers issues of current interest within the field of bioethics with discussions led by experts invited by the hosting students. An average of 200 undergraduate students from across the country have attended each of the conferences, which have featured guest speakers, student debates, student essay contests, art exhibits, and film screenings. Topics at previous conferences have included: medical ethics, science in the media, biotechnology-derived products in agriculture, ethics in the penal system, the definition
of disability, the nature of personhood, social responsibility, the ‘war’ on drugs, bioterrorism, profiting in the biotechnology and medical support industries, and genetically based mental health. The 17th Annual National Undergraduate Bioethics Conference will take place at Loyola University Chicago, April 4-6, 2014. Read more at: http://www.asbh.org/meetings/nuc/national-undergraduate-bio-conf.html.

Spring courses and Summer Study Abroad:
Ethical issues in the medical management of intersex children (HM 491, section 731, Spring 2014)

There is still time to enroll in this one credit, online course, which counts as one “B” category course for BHS specialization students. This course explores the challenging bioethical issues presented by the medical management of intersex children. “Intersex” is a term currently used in healthcare for children born with ambiguous genitalia and/or gonads. In the past, intersex children were almost unquestionably subjected to surgery, and often hormonal therapy, in an attempt to “normalize” them as much as possible. However, more recently, the deeper questions that underlie these decisions have been critically examined by academics, advocates, and intersex people themselves. In this course, students will engage with these questions through scholarly articles, personal narratives from intersex people, videos, discussion, and personal reflection. Enrollment is by override only. Interested students should contact Monica List at: bhs@msu.edu

Summer Study Abroad

For those of you thinking about Summer Study Abroad, the holidays are a great time to discuss your plans with your families. Remember that many programs, including our popular Medical Ethics and Health Policy in London program fill up long before the March 1st deadline. For more detailed information on this program, see the full description on the Office of Study Abroad Website, or, contact program faculty Dr. Len Fleck at fleck@msu.edu.

A full list of study abroad programs that count towards BHS credit can be found on our website.