

# Faith Integration in the context of an Undergraduate Cadaver Lab

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National Meeting

July 21, 2013

# Faith Integration at APU

- What are the challenges to faith in your discipline?
- Describe how your faith has led you to think about the nature and practice of your discipline.
- Describe how your disciplinary training has led you to think about your Christian faith and your faith tradition.

# Student perspective on anatomy

“Nancy” – typical pre-nursing anatomy student

- First semester freshman
- Getting into nursing is very competitive
- Needs strong grades in anatomy, chemistry, and algebra to get into nursing program
- Adjusting to college life (new eating & sleeping habits, away from family, adjusting to roommate, adjusting to independent living)
- Anatomy has exams every 2 weeks in lab & lecture
- Within 1 ½ weeks of school starting will look at a cadaver as she begins anatomy

# “How do I handle a cadaver experience?”

- Smell & sight
- How do I see beyond the “human-ness” to look at the structures?
- How do I act in the lab around the cadaver (i.e. can I laugh if something funny happens?)

# Student Orientation

- Human Anatomy Lab Safety Contract & Release
  - General lab safety – clothing, no food & drink, etc.
  - Cadaver specific policies
    - How we care for the cadaver
    - How to act around the cadaver
    - No photography in the anatomy lab
    - Access only for enrolled anatomy students, staff, and faculty
  - Students sign the form and promptly forget most of the content

# Challenges to discipline

- Confidentiality and privacy of patients or cadavers
  - Our faith informs our view of how we treat the cadavers
- Common problems with cadaver care
  - Talking about cadavers in public places
  - Inappropriate access to cadaver lab
- Similar issues related to patient care in a hospital
  - Privacy & confidentiality
  - professionalism

# Professionalism

- Difficult to relate these issues to students in a cadaver lab
- Easier understood in the context of a clinical experience
- Use three published case studies
  - Demonstrate potential problems in patient care
  - Situations that could develop in the anatomy lab

# Challenges in the discipline

- Case Study #1 – “Student’s vulgar blog post leads to lawsuit.”
  - Nursing student at Louisiana State University
  - posted comments about an OB/GYN rotation on MySpace
  - Called newborns “demons....from hell” and “the new Creep”
  - Was dismissed from the nursing program
  - Sued the school based on first amendment rights
  - Won the lawsuit and was reinstated
  - Courts ruled she didn’t violate patient confidentiality or privacy in her comments and didn’t violate the school’s code of conduct
  - Hannigan, 2009



# Challenges to the discipline

- Case Study #2 – “You make the call: Student ousted over Facebook pic”
  - Nursing students at Johnson County Community College OB/GYN rotation
  - Asked instructor for permission to take image of a placenta
  - Instructor gave them permission as long as nothing in the image identified the patient
  - Told instructor they would put it on Facebook
  - Instructor replied, “Oh, you girls.”
  - Students posted image, were dismissed from the program
  - Sued the school on first amendment rights
  - Won suit and were reinstated
  - Courts ruled the posting did not violate patient confidentiality or privacy
  - Hannigan, 2011

# Challenges to the discipline

- Case study #3 – “No free speech rights to dissected cadavers”
  - Mortician student at University of Minnesota
  - Clipped portion of cadaver’s hair
  - Said on Facebook “Who knew the embalming lab could be so carthartic.”
  - Said she wanted to use a dissecting tool to stab “a certain someone in the throat”
  - Police were called, but determined there was no threat
  - She failed the course, was required to take an ethics course, and had to undergo psychiatric evaluation
  - Courts ruled she violated the code of conduct signed at the beginning of the semester
  - Leigh Jones, 2011

# Discussion

- Was confidentiality or privacy of the patients or cadavers compromised in the case studies?
- Did these students act in an ethical or professional manner by their postings on Facebook or MySpace?
- What does the Bible speak about “care for one’s neighbor?” Cite at least two verses, one from the Old Testament and one from the New Testament and explain what responsibility, if any, we have to care for our neighbor. Are cadavers our “neighbors” in the biblical sense?

# Discussion

- Where (and with whom) is it appropriate to discuss events that take place in the anatomy lab?
- What character traits could guide you in choosing how to handle sensitive information about patients or the cadaver?

Themes for this talk:

- Students need to be self-reflective on their behavior in their profession
- develop virtue ethics as a way to develop character traits that can guide good decisions and actions

# Response to Challenges

- Social learning
  - Roots from Vygotsky
  - Effects of social interaction on learning
  - Environment, culture also impact learning
- Prominent theme in medical training (Spilg, 2012)
  - Problem based learning – small group learning
  - Communities of practice (CoP)
- Self-regulated learning in health care personnel (Brydges, 2012)
  - Identify areas where they need to learn
  - Find ways to ask for help or get to resources they need
  - Develop and reach educational goals

# Response to Challenges

- Why virtue ethics?
  - “A virtue is a trait of character or intellect which is in some way praiseworthy, admirable, or desirable.” (Porter, 2001)
  - Stable or effective disposition
- For Greeks and Romans, virtue was a way to develop eudaimonia, a flourishing life (Porter, 2001; Hauerwas, 2011)
  - a virtuous life was an achievement
  - A goal one earned

# Why cardinal virtues?

- Mental health and competitive academic programs
  - Fall 2009 we moved into a new science building
    - Rapid increase in student enrollment in anatomy
  - After economic downfall in 2008, interest in nursing careers increased
  - Competition within anatomy to get into nursing escalated
  - Unhealthy behaviors and perceptions of a cut-throat, back-stabbing environment

# Why cardinal virtues?

- Cardinal virtues echo student experience through the semester (Porter, 2001)
  - **Courage (fortitude)**: “shapes the irascible passions in such a way as to resist obstacles to attaining what is truly good.”
  - **Practical wisdom (prudence)**: “enables the agent to choose in accordance with her overall conception of goodness”
  - **Temperance**: “shapes the passions of desire in such a way that the agent desires what is truly in accordance with the overall good.”
  - **Justice**: “orients the will toward the common good”



# Journaling through the virtues

- Theme for each month
- Students journal 2-3 times each month
- Each journal entry is one paragraph
  - Activity they did related to that virtue
  - Bible verse related to the virtue
  - How that verse develops the virtue

# Virtue in the biblical metanarrative

- Virtue (character)
  - Comes from God's character
  - Greeks and Romans sought to develop virtue to become a better person
  - Christians don't seek virtue; we seek to know God and reflect his character
  - For a Christian, virtue is a "fruit of the spirit"; a sign of God's presence in a community or individual

# Genesis story

- Genesis 1:27
  - We were made in God's image
  - God “shared” part of his character so that humans could be his agents on earth (Fretheim, 1994)
  - In Eden, Adam and Eve were in communion with God
- After the fall
  - Sin damaged the relationship between God and humans
  - Becoming closer to God's spirit was more difficult, took effort, and could not be complete

# Wisdom is a part of God's character

- Old Testament
  - Law – “black-and white” of life (Hayes, 2000; Coogan, 1990)
  - Wisdom literature (Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes, Psalms, Song of Solomon) – “gray areas” of life (McCreesh, 1990; van Leeuwen, 1997)
    - May seem contradictory – “many advisors make victory sure” (Prov 11:14); but “a man's steps are directed by the Lord. How then can anyone understand his own way?” (Prov 20:24). Context is very important
    - Many purposes given for wisdom; includes making the right choices, and for training and teaching
  - Joshua 1:9; **courage** needed is to obey the law (Rossier, 2013)
  - New Testament – Paul talks about courage to keep “running the race” (Heb 12:1)

# Virtue in the New Testament

- Christ's death and resurrection “reset” creation (Hayes, 1990)
  - Sense of **justice**
  - Secular sense – “get what you deserve”
  - Christian sense – we get much better than we deserve
  - For God, **justice** is harmony – creating conditions that allow our relationship with him to be healed
- Holy Spirit now guides us in God's character
- Galatians 5:20 – “fruits of the spirit”
  - Evidence of God's spirit at work
  - Moderation (**temperance**) is one of those
    - Not just moderation of alcohol, caffeine, etc.
    - Also moderation of jealousy and strife

# Virtue and our Christian walk

- sign of God's presence in his community (Fitzmyer, 1994).
- goal of the Holy Spirit is to make the church a loving, supportive, and disciplined community (Hayes, 1990; Fitzmyer, 1994).
- As Christians we don't seek virtue for the sake of being virtuous
- Reflecting on the presence of virtue in our life can guide us as to God's (and the Holy Spirit's) presence in our life

# Summary assignment for anatomy course

- NPR article: “Origins of Exhibited Cadavers Questioned”, (Ulaby, 2006)
  - Body Worlds and Bodies....the Exhibition
  - Informed consent by donors is not always clear
- A Proposal for a Policy on the Ethical Care and Use of Cadavers and Their Tissues, Thomas Champney, 2011
  - How should cadavers be treated?
    - Property
    - same consideration as animals
    - Same consideration as living people
  - How much informed consent should be required
  - Universal set of standards for cadaver and donor tissue use

# Applying virtue to ethical issues

- How are these public displays similar to the student who posted the placenta picture on Facebook? How are they different?
- Identify one cardinal virtue discussed this semester that you used to answer question #4. Explain how this virtue helped you develop your answer.



# Conclusion

- Pilot study
- Developing an IRB proposal to do a formal study
- teaching medical ethics
  - Theoretical discussions in a class room do not mirror the way in which students engage in ethical issues in clinic
  - Clinics have a high stress environment with fast decision-making and hierarchy of authority
- Goal of these assignments is to guide students
  - See and act out virtue in their every day lives
  - Reflect on God's presence in all aspects of their lives and professions

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# Acknowledgements

- Ethics Conference, Azusa Pacific University, May 2011
- Integritas, Undergraduate Faith Integration Discussion led by Dr. Steve Wilkens
- Department of Biology and Chemistry
- College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
- Students!