



# **10<sup>th</sup> International Bioethics, Multiculturalism and Religion Workshop and Symposium**

**An Interreligious and Multicultural Perspective  
on  
The Nature of Medicine and the Role of  
Physicians**

**Madrid, Spain  
December 17-19, 2024**

**UNESCO Chair in Bioethics and Human Rights**  
[www.unescobiochair.org](http://www.unescobiochair.org)



## Madrid 2024 Workshop: Significance & Aims

With the rapid advancement of medical science and technology, the discipline of medicine has been radically changed in recent years, and the role of physicians has also been transformed accordingly. Therefore, it is important to discuss and understand the redefinition of the medical field through the lens of different cultural and religious traditions.

The 2024 Madrid workshop and symposium under the auspices of the UNESCO Chair in Bioethics and Human Rights is the world's foremost multicultural and interreligious academic bioethics conference.

### **PAPER GUIDELINES**

Recognized thought leaders from diverse religions and cultures will be invited to analyze, write a paper and discuss these bioethical questions and their anthropological implications:

- Use authoritative texts from their religious and/or cultural traditions and beliefs.
- Organize their discourse around the workshop's featured leading questions.
- Frame the issues within the global bioethics paradigm of human rights and duties, as articulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the UNESCO Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights (2005).
- Engage the issues in accordance with the mission of the Bioethics, Multiculturalism & Religion Project.

### **KEY QUESTIONS**

1. How does your cultural/religious tradition conceive medicine as a discipline? Consequently, how does it approach concepts of health, disease, and mortality?
2. How does your cultural/religious tradition perceive the role of the practitioners in the art and science of healing?
3. How does this conception influence, in particular, the physicians' relationship with patients, their families, and healthcare provision?
4. How has traditional medicine reacted to the advance of modern medicine?
5. How has your tradition interacted with medical ethics and deontology?

### **WORKSHOP METHODOLOGY**

1. The following papers will be commissioned:
  - a. Keynote papers:
    - i. Some presentations will be given on the first day of the workshop, addressing and framing the issues at stakes that are not necessarily pertinent to any tradition.
    - ii. They could be topics on the current state of science, law, human rights, philosophy, and interreligious dialogue.



- b. Dialogic paper panels
  - i. Author A from one of the traditions or religions will write and present a paper (approx. 10 pages) that should be submitted 3 months before the workshop addressing the leading questions as much as possible.
  - ii. Author B will be assigned to respond to the above paper (approx. 10 pages) and submit it 1 month before the workshop.
  - iii. Author A may then respond to the critique further with a paper (approx. 4-5 pages) and submit it for publication.
2. During the three-day workshop, the language is English. Physical participants of the workshop include:
  - a. Scholars from the various religions who have written and submitted the papers. They must read the others' papers before attending the workshop. During each workshop session, they will give a 15-minute summary of their papers followed by ample discussion, clarification, and questions from other authors.
  - b. Other academics interested in the workshop may also participate in the sessions after the organizing committee approves (send requests to [agarcia@unescochair.org](mailto:agarcia@unescochair.org)). They can raise questions only after the group above has completed its discussions.
  - c. The workshop may be open to Zoom participation depending on the local facilities.
3. Before submission for eventual publication, authors may modify their papers considering the dialogue of our three-day meeting. Hopefully, these discussions will provide a clear and thorough understanding of each tradition's understanding of the topic in the light of human rights.

#### GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE AUTHORS

**Author A:** The general idea is that the scholar in a tradition will explain and demonstrate how their tradition would approach the bioethical issues. It is understood that the scholar will have a position on what their tradition says that is not necessarily universally shared by other experts. We do not expect the author to recapitulate all the arguments to support their position in this short paper. That being said, the author must assume the responding Author B may know little about the Author A's native tradition, and that the paper will be a learning moment for the respondent. Author A should adequately footnote their paper, and explain complex positions that otherwise might be summarized in a word or reference that another expert would know.

**Author B:** The responding scholar should approach the main paper as though they are visiting a sacred site with curiosity and respect. They are not expected to do more than try to understand what they are seeing and respond from their position. This may involve asking questions, and thus the two authors are expected to engage in dialogue as the respondent digests and understands what Author A means. It is especially important that Author A be willing to explain basic or advanced things about their tradition to the respondent, and vice versa. Although the main metaphor is an outsider visiting and learning about another tradition, like in all good conversations the host will want to know about the visitor's perspectives and reasons. Some respondents will have significant understanding of the main



expert's tradition, and in those situations the authors should still engage each other, but at their respective levels, and write accordingly.

When writing, the authors should

- Use authoritative texts from their religious and/or cultural traditions and beliefs.
- Organize their discourse around the workshop's featured leading questions.
- Frame the issues within the global bioethics paradigm of human rights and duties, as articulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the UNESCO Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights (2005).
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## Public Symposium

As a means of dissemination, publicity and involvement of multiple and diverse scientific, medical and university communities and the public, we suggest organizing during the week **an event open to the public** on topics related to bioethics issues in the light of human rights in a multicultural and interreligious environment.

In this event, experts in the workshop and others suggested by the hosting university will provide academic lectures or presentations for educational purposes and dissemination of knowledge on bioethics and human rights. We will encourage the participation of the outside community, including public authorities, doctors, other healthcare personnel, patients, teachers, university scholars and students, and anyone interested in these relevant topics. The workshop and conference are primarily academic and apolitical, even though we encourage all participation.

The language for this event can be decided locally by the hosting university, providing simultaneous translation into English (for foreign participants) if needed.

## Organising Committee

Alberto García, *UNESCO Chair in Bioethics and Human Rights, Rome.*

Joseph Tham, LC, *Regina Apostolorum Pontifical Ateneo, Rome.*

Chris Durante, *Saint Peter's University, New York.*

John Lunstroth, *University of Houston, Texas.*

Elena Postigo, *Francisco de Vitoria University, Madrid.*

María Lacalle, *Instituto Razón Abierto, Francisco de Vitoria University, Madrid.*