

PHIL 4321: Philosophy of Medicine

Spring 2020 – Syllabus

Course and Instructor Information

Meeting Time Mon & Wed, 5:30pm-6:45pm

Meeting Location AD 2.232

Instructor Professor Matthew J. Brown

Email mattbrown@utdallas.edu

Office Phone 972-883-2536

Office Hours Mon & Wed, 4-5pm

Schedule an appointment outside office hours <https://doodle.com/mattbrown>

Course Description

Philosophy of medicine explores fundamental questions about medical care and medical knowledge. It explores questions about the aim of medicine, our concepts and theories of health and disease, medical evidence and diagnosis, the patient-physician relationship, and a variety of ethical, political, and values questions about medical research and practice. These explorations touch on and draw from the tools of metaphysics, epistemology, philosophy of science, ethics, and political philosophy. We will try to both understand as well as to critically evaluate common conceptions and expert consensus on the status of medical knowledge and the norms of medical care.

Textbook

- Jacob Stegenga, *Care and Cure: An Introduction to Philosophy of Medicine*

All other readings to be provided by PDF.

Student Learning Objectives

1. Students will articulate and employ basic methodologies of philosophical inquiry and textual engagement.
2. Students will demonstrate an ability to make and defend, as well as recognize and critique, philosophical claims and arguments.
3. Students will engage with central philosophical concepts and ideas, and make effective use of them in addressing contemporary problems in the philosophy of medicine and health.
4. Students will demonstrate a knowledge of the contemporary field of philosophy of medicine.

Schedule by Week

First day of the week in parenthesis following topic title.

1. Introduction & Concepts: Health (1/13)
 - Read [CC]: Introduction & Chapter 1; Reiss & Ankeny, “Philosophy of Medicine”
2. Concepts: Health (cont’d) (1/20)
 - Read [CC]: Chapter 1; Boorse, “Health as a theoretical concept”
 - *No class on Monday*
 - Reflection on Personal Goals due 1/25
3. Concepts: Disease (1/27)
 - Read [CC]: Ch 2; Cooper, “Disease”
4. Concepts: Death (2/3)
 - Read [CC]: Ch 3; McMahan, “The metaphysics of brain death”
5. Models and Kinds: Causation and Kinds (2/10)
 - Read [CC]: 4; Broadbent, Alex. 2009. “Causation and models of disease in epidemiology.”
 - *No class on Wednesday*

6. Models and Kinds: Holism and Reductionism (2/17)
 - Read [CC]: 5; Lloyd, “Reductionism in Medicine: Social Aspects of Health”
7. Models and Kinds: Controversial Diseases, Culture, and Medicalization (2/24)
 - Read [CC]: 6; Sean Valles, “The challenges of choosing and explaining a phenomenon in epidemiological research on the ‘Hispanic Paradox.’”
 - Guest visit: Sean Valles
 - Midterm Self-Assessment due 2/29
8. Evidence and Inference: Evidence in Medicine (3/2)
 - Read [CC]: 7; Goldenberg, Borgerson, & Bluhm, “The Nature of Evidence in Evidence-Based Medicine”; Jukola, “Meta-Analysis, Ideals of Objectivity, and the Reliability of Medical Knowledge”
9. Evidence and Inference: Objectivity and the Social Structure of Science (3/9)
 - Read [CC]: 8; Douglas, “Inductive Risk and Values in Science”
10. *Spring Break - No Class* (3/16)
11. Evidence and Inference: Inference (3/23)
 - Read [CC]: 9; McClimans, “The role of measurement in establishing evidence”
12. Evidence and Inference: Effectiveness, Skepticism, and Alternatives (3/30)
 - Read [CC]: 10; Borgerson, Kirstin. 2005. “Evidence-based alternative medicine?”
 - Watch Jacob Stegenga, Medical Nihilism and Gentle Medicine
13. Evidence and Inference: Diagnosis and Screening (4/6)
 - Read [CC]: 11; Ashley Graham Kennedy, “Evaluating diagnostic tests” and “Differential Diagnosis and the Suspension of Judgment”
 - Guest visit: Ashley Graham Kennedy

14. Values and Policy: Psychiatry: Care or Control? (4/13)

- Read [CC]: 12; Tabb, “Psychiatric Progress and the Assumption of Diagnostic Discrimination.”

15. Values and Policy: Policy (4/20)

- Read [CC]: 13; Brown, “Politics, Method, and Medical Research”

16. Values and Policy: Public Health (4/27)

- Read [CC]: 14; John, “Why the Prevention Paradox Is a Paradox, and Why We Should Solve It: A Philosophical View.”

Last day to turn in Research Papers and Final Self-Assessments is (5/4).

Assignments and Grades

1. *Attendance and participation*
2. *Reading Responses*
3. *Research Paper*
4. *Self-Assessment Reflection Papers*

Attendance and Participation

Our class is a knowledge-building community that does much of its work in class through discussions and activities. As such, attendance is a non-optional part of fulfilling the expectations of the class. That said, if for your health and well-being or that of your classmates, if you need to stay home or be elsewhere during class, do what is best.

Likewise, you will best fulfill your learning through regular participation in class activities and discussions. That said, there are many ways to participate in the class, and general group discussion is not everyone’s strong suit. Participation in online discussions and other activities may be your approach. You will have opportunities to define what participation means for you.

Reading Responses

Reading responses are due at 3:30pm on Mondays and Wednesdays via eLearning. These responses should represent your *engagement with* and above all your *struggle* with the reading. It should *not* be a mini-paper, a book

report, or a summary of the readings; the intention is not to demonstrate to me your “mastery of the material.” You can write about what you are *trying* to understand or what you half-understand but are unsure of. Focus on what is perplexing, provocative, challenging, or exciting, and try to dig deeper into that point. You can write about how this week’s reading connects with the previous readings or with ideas from previous discussions or responses. You can problematize, question, critique, or extend, as long as you do so with empathy and the attempt to understand. Reading responses should be substantive but not too long, 500+ words. (You do not have to do a response every time.)

Research Paper

The research paper is process-driven, and has the following components: (1) topic proposal, (2) annotated bibliography of at least 5 academic sources, (3) paper outline (2 pages max, complete sentences, at most 2 levels of hierarchy), (4) paper draft (1500+ words), (5) final paper (2500+ words). The components do not have set due dates, but must be turned in one at a time, in order, and you must wait for feedback on the previous item before turning in the next item. Optionally, you may submit revised versions of any elements.

Self-Assessment Reflection Papers

You will have three self-assessment reflection papers:

1. Reflection on Personal Goals (due 1/25)
2. Midterm Self-Assessment Reflection (due 2/29)
3. Final Self-Assessment Reflection (due 5/4)

Details will be provided on eLearning. I may ask for revisions to these assessments at my discretion.

Feedback and Grades

My focus in looking at the work you turn in will be engagement and feedback. I will respond to your ideas and make suggestions to improve. I will not evaluate your work using a quantitative grade. Instead, you should use the following general guidelines for final grades:

- Passing with a C
 - 1-2 reading responses per unit (total of 6+)
 - Paper draft submitted meeting all requirements
 - All Self-Assessments submitted on time
 - Miss no more than 5 classes
 - Occasional participation
- Grade of A
 - 2-3 reading responses per unit (total of 10+)
 - Final paper of proficient quality, incorporating previous feedback well
 - All Self-Assessments submitted on time, nuanced discussion of performance
 - Miss no more than 3 classes
 - Regular, meaningful participation that enhances learning of others

Intermediate grades will reflect performance between these two levels. Midterm grades should reflect work completed up to that point, based on the amount of time that has passed.

Course and Instructor Policies

Contacting the Instructor and Classmates

Before you contact me, I suggest checking the syllabus, course website, and all handouts to see if the answer to your question is there. For more complex questions, you should see me in office hours or make an appointment. You can send me an email, but this is not a good way to get in touch with me about either trivial matters (which are almost certainly on the syllabus or best discussed in class) or difficult issues (which should be discussed in person). I will not accept work or provide feedback via email. Email has generated many unreasonable expectations in our lives that we should all think more critically about, and I encourage you to do so. Of course, you should feel free to email me to remind me about something, or if you need to contact me urgently (if, for instance, you will miss an assignment due to a dire medical issue). If I do not reply to your email within 48 hours, please send me a reminder. Get the email addresses or phone numbers of a couple of students in case you need to find out what you missed.

Classroom expectations

You are expected to have **read the assignments *before* class**, and it would be to your benefit to also read them again after class. You are expected to **bring a copy of assigned readings** for each day's class, and have them available to refer to. You are expected to **listen respectfully** to the professor and your fellow students, and **participate** in class discussions and activities. Use laptops, tablets, and other technology in a **non-distracting, respectful** fashion, if at all. Consider using paper copies and note-taking implements.

Late Work, Make-Up, and Completion

When work has a due date, no late work or make-up exams will be allowed without consent of the professor *prior to* that date, except in situations where University policy requires it, or in case of truly dire circumstances, where evidence can be provided. If you anticipate trouble meeting a deadline, it is much more likely that I can accommodate you if you come to be before the deadline than after.

What to Call Me, Other Faculty, and TAs

I prefer to be called "Matt," "Matthew," "Professor Brown," or "Dr. Brown." My preferred pronouns are he/him/his. Faculty members regardless of gender should be referred to by title or degree, "Professor X" or "Dr. X," unless they specifically tell you otherwise. Visitors or teaching assistants who have not obtained a doctoral degree or hold a relevant academic title should be referred to as "Mr. Y" or "Ms. Z," never using "Miss" or "Mrs." unless you are explicitly told otherwise.

Concealed Handguns on Campus

As of August 1, 2016, concealed handgun license holders are permitted to carry their weapons onto the campus and into the general buildings of the University. Unlicensed individuals may not do so, and unconcealed weapons are not allowed. You are not required to disclose whether your status as licensed carrier, nor whether or not you are carrying a handgun at any particular time, to me or anyone other than an official peace officer. Nevertheless, I ask that you voluntarily refrain from bringing weapons into the classroom. Furthermore, I will designate my office as an exclusion zone, prohibiting the

concealed carry of a handgun in that space. You will be provided with oral notification to that effect upon visiting my office.

University Policies

The information contained in the following link constitutes the University's policies and procedures segment of the course syllabus: <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies>

A syllabus is a living document. This descriptions, timelines, and policies contained in this syllabus are subject to change in the interest of improving the quality of the course, at the discretion of the professor. Adequate notice will be provided for any changes, and in many cases they will be discussed with the class.