

Philosophy of Medicine

Lower-Level Undergraduate Course

Sample Syllabus

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This sample syllabus for philosophy of medicine is designed for a lower-level undergraduate course. Please also see my syllabus titled 'Philosophy of Medicine Upper-Level Seminar' which is designed for an upper-level undergraduate course or graduate-level seminar. Both syllabi are based around my textbook *Care and Cure: An Introduction to Philosophy of Medicine*, published by the University of Chicago Press. Both syllabi are designed for a fourteen week semester. Please use and freely modify these syllabi to suit your teaching. Please also feel free to contact me with any comments, questions, or suggestions.

Description

Medicine is among our most important institutions. Though its aim is practical, medicine is shot through with conceptual commitments and theoretical assumptions, its basic tools rely on causal hypotheses supported to varying degrees by inductive inferences, and medical research is developed in a complex political and economic nexus. Thus medicine is a prime subject for philosophical analysis.

Reading

- Required text: Stegenga, Jacob, *Care and Cure: An Introduction to Philosophy of Medicine*, University of Chicago Press.
- Select articles provided online

Schedule

Week 1: Health

Required reading: Stegenga, *Care and Cure*, Chapter 1

Additional reading:

- Boorse, C. 1977. "Health as a theoretical concept." *Philosophy of Science* 44 (4):542-573.
- Alexandrova, Anna. Forthcoming. "Can the science of well-being be objective?" *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science*.
- Kingma, Elselijn. 2007. "What is it to be healthy?" *Analysis* 67 (294):128-133.

Week 2: Disease

Required reading: Stegenga, *Care and Cure*, Chapter 2

Additional reading:

- Cooper, Rachel. 2002. "Disease." *Stud Hist Philos Biol Biomed Sci* 33:263-282.
- Ereshefsky, Marc. 2009. "Defining 'health' and 'disease'." *Stud Hist Philos Biol Biomed Sci* 40:221-227.
- Lemoine, Maël. 2013. "Defining disease beyond conceptual analysis: an analysis of conceptual analysis in philosophy of medicine." *Theor Med Bioeth* 34(4): 309-325.

Week 3: Death

Required reading: Stegenga, *Care and Cure*, Chapter 3

Additional reading:

- Nagel, Thomas. 1970. "Death." *Noûs* 4(1): 73-80.
- Williams, Bernard. 1973. "The Makropulos Case: Reflections on the Tedium of Immortality." in *Problems of the Self*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- McMahan, Jeff. 1995. "The metaphysics of brain death." *Bioethics* 9(2): 91-126.

Week 4: Causation and Kinds

Required reading: Stegenga, *Care and Cure*, Chapter 4

Additional reading:

- Broadbent, Alex. 2009. "Causation and models of disease in epidemiology." *Stud Hist Philos Biol Biomed Sci* 40 (4):302-11.
- Green, Sara, and Henrik Vogt. 2016. "Personalizing Medicine: Disease Prevention *in silico* and *in socio*." *Humana.Mente Journal of Philosophical Studies* 30:105-145.
- Lange, Marc. 2007. "The End of Diseases." *Philosophical Topics* 35(1/2): 265-292.

Week 5: Holism and Reductionism

Required reading: Stegenga, *Care and Cure*, Chapter 5

Additional reading:

- Schaffner, Kenneth F. 2006. "Reduction: The Cheshire Cat Problem and a Return to Roots." *Synthese* 151 (3): 377-402.
- Andersen, Holly. 2014. "A Field Guide to Mechanisms: Part I." *Philosophy Compass* 9(4): 274-283.

Week 6: Controversial Diseases

Required reading: Stegenga, *Care and Cure*, Chapter 6

Additional reading:

- Hacking, Ian. 2010. "Pathological withdrawal of refugee children seeking asylum in Sweden." *Stud Hist Philos Biol Biomed Sci* 41(4): 309-317.
- Holton, Richard and Berridge, Kent. 2013. 'Addiction Between Compulsion and Choice' in *Addiction and Self-Control*, Oxford University Press

- Pickard, Hanna. 2015. "Psychopathology and the Ability to Do Otherwise." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 90(1): 135-163.

Week 7: Evidence in Medicine

Required reading: Stegenga, *Care and Cure*, Chapter 7

Additional reading:

- Worrall, John. 2002. "What Evidence in Evidence-Based Medicine?" *Philosophy of Science* 69:S316-S330.
- Goldenberg, M., Borgerson, K., and Bluhm, R. 2009. "The Nature of Evidence in Evidence-Based Medicine: Guest Editors' Introduction." *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine* 52(2): 164-167
- Stegenga, Jacob. 2011. "Is Meta-Analysis the Platinum Standard?" *Stud Hist Philos Biol Biomed Sci* 42: 497-507.
- Clarke, B., Gillies, D., Illari, P., Russo, F., and Williamson, J. 2014. "Mechanisms and the Evidence Hierarchy." *Topoi* 33(2): 339-360.
- Howick, Jeremy. 2011. "Exposing the vanities - and a qualified defense - of mechanistic reasoning in health care decision making." *Philosophy of Science* 78 (5):926-940.

Week 8: Objectivity and the Social Structure of Science

Required reading: Stegenga, *Care and Cure*, Chapter 8

Additional reading:

- Douglas, Heather. 2000. "Inductive risk and values in science." *Philosophy of Science* 67 (4):559-579.
- Biddle, Justin. 2007. "Lessons from the Vioxx debacle: what the privatization of science can teach us about social epistemology." *Social Epistemology* 21 (1):21-39.
- de Melo-Martin, Immaculada, and Kristen Intemann. 2011. "Feminist Resources for Biomedical Research: Lessons from the HPV Vaccines." *Hypatia* 26 (1):79-101.
- Pinto, Manuela. 2015. "Commercialization and the Limits of Well-Ordered Science." *Perspectives on Science* 23(2): 173-191.

Week 9: Inference

Required reading: Stegenga, *Care and Cure*, Chapter 9

Additional reading:

- Urbach, Peter (1985). "Randomization and the design of experiments." *Philosophy of Science* 52(2): 256-273.
- Fuller, Jonathan and Flores, Luis (2015). "The Risk GP Model: the standard model of prediction in medicine." *Stud Hist Philos Biol Biomed Sci* 54: 49-61.
- McClimans, Leah. 2013. "The role of measurement in establishing evidence." *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy* 38 (5):520-538.

Week 10: Effectiveness, Skepticism, and Alternatives

Required reading: Stegenga, *Care and Cure*, Chapter 10

Additional reading:

- Borgerson, Kirstin. 2005. "Evidence-based alternative medicine?" *Perspect Biol Med* 48(4): 502-515.
- Holman, Bennett. 2015. "Why Most Sugar Pills Are Not Placebos." *Philosophy of Science* 82 (5):1330-1343.
- Stegenga, Jacob. 2015. "Effectiveness of Medical Interventions." *Stud Hist Philos Biol Biomed Sci* (54): 34-44.
- Stegenga, Jacob. 2015. "Medical Nihilism, Today?" *Insights*.

Week 11: Diagnosis and Screening

Required reading: Stegenga, *Care and Cure*, Chapter 11

Additional reading:

- Plutynski, Anya. 2012. "Ethical issues in cancer screening and prevention." *J Med Philos* 37 (3):310-23.
- Plutynski, Anya. 2017. "Safe, or Sorry? Cancer Screening and Inductive Risk." In *Exploring Inductive Risk*, Oxford University Press.
- Kennedy, Ashley. 2016. "Evaluating diagnostic tests." *Journal of Evaluation in Clinical Practice* 22(4): 575-579.

Week 12: Psychiatry: Care or Control?

Required reading: Stegenga, *Care and Cure*, Chapter 12

Additional reading:

- Tabb, Kathryn. 2015. "Psychiatric Progress and the Assumption of Diagnostic Discrimination." *Philosophy of Science* 82(5): 1047-1058.
- Tsou, Jonathan. 2011. "The Importance of History for Philosophy of Psychiatry: The Case of the DSM and Psychiatric Classification." *Journal of the Philosophy of History* 5 (3):446-470.
- Murphy, Dominic. 2010. "Explanation in Psychiatry." *Philosophy Compass* 5(7): 602-610.

Week 13: Policy

Required reading: Stegenga, *Care and Cure*, Chapter 13

Additional reading:

- Brown, James. 2008. "Politics, Method, and Medical Research." *Philosophy of Science* 75 (5):756-766.
- Biddle, Justin. 2014. "Can patents prohibit research?" *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science* 45:14-23.

Week 14: Public Health

Required reading: Stegenga, *Care and Cure*, Chapter 14

Additional reading:

- Hausman, Daniel. 2007. "What's wrong with health inequalities?" *Journal of Political Philosophy* 15(1): 46-66.
- John, Stephen. 2011. "Why the Prevention Paradox Is a Paradox, and Why We Should Solve It: A Philosophical View." *Preventive Medicine* 53(4-5): 250–252.
- Lewens, Tim. 2010. "What are 'Natural Inequalities'?" *The Philosophical Quarterly* 60(239): 264-285.