

# Philosophy of Medicine

## Upper-Level Graduate or Senior Seminar

### Sample Syllabus

Jacob Stegenga  
University of Cambridge  
jms303@cam.ac.uk

This sample syllabus for philosophy of medicine is for an upper-level undergraduate course or graduate-level seminar. Please also see my syllabus titled 'Introduction to Philosophy of Medicine' which is designed for a lower-level undergraduate course. 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 study.

#### **Reading**

- Required text: Stegenga, Jacob, *Care and Cure: An Introduction to Philosophy of Medicine*, University of Chicago Press.
- Select articles provided online
- Optional books are noted for further study

#### **Schedule**

Week 1: Health

- Stegenga, *Care and Cure*, Chapter 1
- 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.
- Alexandrova, Anna. 2017. *A Philosophy for the Science of Well-Being*. Oxford University Press.

#### Week 2: Disease

- Stegenga, *Care and Cure*, Chapter 2
- 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

- Stegenga, *Care and Cure*, Chapter 3
- 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.
- McMahan, Jeff. 2001. *The Ethics of Killing*. Oxford University Press.

#### Week 4: Causation and Kinds

- Stegenga, *Care and Cure*, Chapter 4
- 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

- Stegenga, *Care and Cure*, Chapter 5
- 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.
- Carel, Havi. 2016. *Phenomenology of Illness*. Oxford University Press.

#### Week 6: Controversial Diseases

- Stegenga, *Care and Cure*, Chapter 6
- 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.

- Horwitz, Allan, and Jerome Wakefield. 2007. *Loss of Sadness*. New York: Oxford University Press.

#### Week 7: Evidence in Medicine

- Stegenga, *Care and Cure*, Chapter 7
- Worrall, John. 2002. "What Evidence in Evidence-Based Medicine?" *Philosophy of Science* 69:S316-S330.
- Cartwright, Nancy. 2010. "What are randomised controlled trials good for?" *Philosophical Studies* 147: 59-70.
- 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.
- Steel, Daniel. 2007. *Across the Boundaries*. Oxford University Press.

#### Week 8: Objectivity and the Social Structure of Science

- Stegenga, *Care and Cure*, Chapter 8
- Douglas, Heather. 2000. "Inductive risk and values in science." *Philosophy of Science* 67 (4):559-579.
- Elliott, Kevin. 2011. "Direct and Indirect Roles for Values in Science." *Philosophy of Science* 78 (2):303-324.
- 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.
- Solomon, Miriam. 2015. *Making Medical Knowledge*: Oxford University Press.

#### Week 9: Inference

- Stegenga, *Care and Cure*, Chapter 9
- 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.
- Howson, Colin, and Peter Urbach. 1989. *Scientific Reasoning: The Bayesian Approach*. La Salle.
- Mayo, Deborah. 1996. *Error and the Growth of Experimental Knowledge*. University of Chicago Press.

#### Week 10: Effectiveness, Skepticism, and Alternatives

- Stegenga, *Care and Cure*, Chapter 10
- Ioannidis, John. 2005. "Why most published research findings are false." *PLoS Med* 2 (8):e124.
- 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.
- Howick, Jeremy. 2017. "The relativity of 'placebos': defending a modified version of Grünbaum's definition." *Synthese* 194 (4):1363-1396.
- Stegenga, Jacob. 2018. *Medical Nihilism*. Oxford University Press.

#### Week 11: Diagnosis and Screening

- Stegenga, *Care and Cure*, Chapter 11
- 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?

- Stegenga, *Care and Cure*, Chapter 12
- 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.
- Foucault, Michel. 1961. *Madness and Civilisation*.

- Bortolotti, Lisa. 2009. *Delusions and Other Irrational Beliefs*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

#### Week 13: Policy

- Stegenga, *Care and Cure*, Chapter 13
- 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.
- Kitcher, Philip. 2001. *Science, Truth, and Democracy*. Oxford University Press

#### Week 14: Public Health

- Stegenga, *Care and Cure*, Chapter 14
- 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.