7AAN2058 Philosophy of Medicine
Syllabus – Academic year 2013/14

Basic information

Credits: 20  
Module Tutor: Dr Emma Bullock  
Office: TBC  
Consultation Time: TBC  
Semester: One  
Lecture time and venue: Monday, 17:00-19:00 (Room 2A, Strand Building)

Module description (plus aims and objectives)

This module aims to provide an understanding of the central problems of contemporary Philosophy of Medicine. The specific problems under consideration include: concepts of health and disease; health and well-being; mental health and mental illness; genetic disease; genetic enhancement; medical decision making; placebos, and Evidence Based Medicine.

Students completing this module should gain:

- A textually-referenced knowledge of the main problems of contemporary Philosophy of Medicine
- The ability to deploy the philosophical techniques and argumentative strategies that can be used to discuss those problems
- The transferable skill of formulating and evaluating arguments both for and against various other kinds of philosophical positions
- An understanding of the philosophical underpinnings of some problems that arise in the practice of medicine
Assessment methods and deadlines

- **Formative assessment**: one x 1,500-2,000-word essay, due by the end of the semester
- **Summative assessment**: one x two-hour end of year examination

NB Please note that for semester I-only Study Abroad students, assessment requirements may vary. In particular, May exams will be replaced by summative essays to be submitted by the end of term (date TBC)

Outline of lecture topics (plus suggested readings) – see next page
1. Introduction to concepts of Health and Disease: Naturalism and Normativism
   - Boorse (1977) Health as a theoretical concept; *Philosophy of Science*.
   - Kingma (2007) What is it to be Healthy?; *Analysis*.

2. Functionalist accounts of disease
   - Wright (1973) Functions; *Philosophical Review*.
   - Boorse (1976) Wright on Functions; *Philosophical Review*.
   - Neander (1991) Functions as selected effects: the conceptual analyst’s defence; *Philosophy of Science*

3. Normativism
   - Nordenfelt (2007) Establishing a Middle-Range Position in the Theory of Health: a reply to my critics; *Medicine, Health Care and Philosophy*.
   - Cooper (2010) Aristotelian Accounts of Disease; what are they good for?: *Philosophical Papers*.

4. Phenomenology and Theories of Wellbeing
   - Carel (2007) Can I be Ill and Happy?; *Philosophia*

5. Mental health and Mental Illness
   - Wakefield (1992) The Concept of Mental Disorder; on the boundary between biological facts and social values; *American Psychologist*.

6. Genetic disease
   - Smith, K ( 2001) “A disease by any other name: Musings on the concept of a genetic disease” *Medicine, Health Care and Philosophy* 4

7. Enhancement and Eugenics
8. Medical decision making

9. Placebo

10. Evidence-based Medicine
    - Worrall (2002) *What Evidence in Evidence Based Medicine? Philosophy of Science*
Suggested essay questions

Students are requested to formulate their own essay question based on anything relevant to the topics studied in this module. I urge that students approach me with their essay question suggestions for advice and guidance before they start working on their essays. (Emma Bullock).