7AAN4096 Topics in the Philosophy of Medicine
Syllabus – Academic year 2012/13

Basic information

Credits: 40
Module Tutor: Dr David Galloway
Lecturer (semester one): Dr Elselijn Kingma
Office: Room PB803
Consultation time: Wednesday 12-1pm
Semester: Whole year (semester one and two)
Lecture time and venue: Semester one – Mondays, 13.00-15.00 (Room 306, Philosophy Building)
Semester two – Monday 17.00-19.00 (Room 306, Philosophy Building)

Module description (plus aims and objectives)

This module aims to provide an understanding of the central problems of contemporary Philosophy of Medicine.

The syllabus falls into two parts. The first, taught in the first semester (by Elselijn Kingma), looks at topics including the concepts of health and disease, medicine and the mind-body problem; placebos, and Evidence Based Medicine.

The second part, taught in the second semester (by David Galloway), deals with some of the metaphysical and ethical issues that constitute the framework within which discussions of death and of killing take place.

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:** three x 2,000-word essays
- **Summative assessment:** one x three-hour end of year examination in May/June.

Deadlines for formative essays to be confirmed by your module tutor.
Outline of lecture topics (plus suggested readings)

**SEMESTER ONE**

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*.
   - Wakefield (1992) The Concept of Mental Disorder; on the boundary between biological facts and social values; *American Psychologist*.
   - Neander (1991) Functions as selected effects: the conceptual analyst’s defence; *Philosophy of Science*.

3. Normativism I
   - Cooper (2002) Disease; *Studies in the history and philosophy of biological and biomedical sciences*
   - Cooper (2010) Aristotelian Accounts of Disease; what are they good for?; *Philosophical Papers*.

4. Normativism II
   - Nordenfelt (2007) Establishing a Middle-Range Position in the Theory of Health: a reply to my critics; *Medicine, Health Care and Philosophy*.

5. Phenomenology
   - Carel (2007) Can I be Ill and Happy?: *Philosophia*
   - Kirkengen (2008 MCPH)

6. Medicine & the Mind/Body Problem

   Questions to prepare:
   - assignment: all think of and bring an example of a particular medical example/condition where some form of mind/body thinking is involved.
   - what is medicine’s view of the relation between body and mind?
   - Is it consistent?

7. Placebo
   - Turner: Placebo & the logic of placebo comparison. *Biology and Philosophy* (forthcoming)

Questions to prepare: write down what you think placebo and placebo effect is BEFORE doing the reading.
Outline of lecture topics (plus suggested readings) – continued

8. Evidence Based Medicine I: The Hierarchy of Evidence and External Validity


Questions: how characterize EBM best? (from your own experience and from readings)
Questions: how do Cartwright and Worrall’s critiques differ?

9. EBM II [Guest Session Dr Tania Gergel]
- Goldenberg (2007) 'On Evidence and Evidence Based Medicine: lessons from the philosophy of science' *Social Science and Medicine*
- Greenhalgh and Worrall (1997) 'From EBM to CSM: the evolution of context-sensitive medicine' *Journal of Evaluation in Clinical Practice*
- Pannesse (2011) 'The 'I' of the beholder: studying the 'self' across he humanities and neuroscience'

10. Evidence Based Medicine III: Randomisation and wrap-up:
- Worrall (2007) Why there is no cause to randomise. *BJPS*
- Papineau (1994) The virtues of Randomisation. *BJPS*

SEMESTER TWO

Principal readings only are given here. More detailed notes and readings appear separately on the Keats system.

**Week 1** (14th January 2013): Williams on the Macropulos Case
Principal reading:
The article can be downloaded free on line from the Cambridge UP web site:

**Week 2** (21st January 2013): Hedonism and comparativism
Principal reading:

**Week 3** (28th January 2013): Some theories of value

**Week 4** (4th February 2013): One life

**Week 5** (11th February 2013): Immortality and boredom
Principal reading:
Williams, op. cit.
Outline of lecture topics (plus suggested readings) – continued

**Week 6** (25th February 2013): When killing is wrong, why is it wrong?
Principal reading:

**Week 7** (4th March 2013): The doctrine of double effect
Principal reading:

**Week 8** (11th March 2013): More on double effect

**Week 9** (18th March 2013): Autonomy
Principal reading:

**Week 10** (25th March 2013): More on autonomy
Principal reading:
John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* (many editions, but the Oxford Classics one edited by John Gray is cheap and good.)
Harry Frankfurt, ‘Freedom of the will and the concept of a person’, in *The Importance of What we Care About* (Cambridge: CUP 1987)
(David Galloway) My *strong* preference is for students to come up with their own suggestions for essay topics, although I will make suggestions on an individual basis if it is really necessary (you will have to ask). You are free to write about anything relevant to the topics studied in this module, but you *must* run your ideas by me before getting down to serious writing.