

Philosophy 221A: MEDICAL EPISTEMOLOGY
Winter Quarter 2018
Syllabus

Day & time: Wednesday 4 - 6:50 pm. **Room:** HIB55

Instructors:

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Office hours: Wednesday noon-2pm in HIB 77

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Course Description: This course provides students with an overview of the exciting field of medical epistemology. Based on case-studies drawn from contemporary medical practice, the course will be themed around nine key topics: 1) & 2) Testimonial and hermeneutical injustice in the medical context. 3) The role of trust in the medical context. 4) Expert disagreement in the medical context. 5) Transformative experiences in the medical setting. 6) Epidemiology and disease classification. 7) Hierarchies of evidence in EBM. 8) Vaccine skepticism. 9) Placebo effect. 10) Epistemic value, medical diagnostics and ignorance.

Prerequisites: There are no prerequisites. The course does not presuppose prior knowledge in epistemology, medical or otherwise.

Medical Humanities Emphasis: This seminar is designed to enrich the range of graduate seminars that contribute to the Graduate Emphasis in Medical Humanities, within the School of Humanities. It is open to graduate students in all the disciplines for which the emphasis in Medical Humanities is designed.

Grading: Grading will be based on class attendance, weekly questions, discussion participation, and final paper assignments.

- **Class Attendance (10%):** Attendance is required. The format is a graduate seminar that requires active participation and discussion. Class attendance is an important part of your learning, and therefore, your grade. Throughout the course, you should be developing your ability to compare and contrast different perspectives; to recognize when patterns of evidence support or challenge assumptions and hypotheses; to consider how research findings might be applied; to identify methodological problems in research studies and generate ideas for future research; to think critically. There will be no way to make up for the loss of points incurred by missing class meetings.

- Weekly Questions (10%): Generating one question/comment per each assigned reading is required. This assignment will help you to think critically as you complete the assigned readings and serve as your prepared contribution to subsequent class discussion. To obtain credit for completing this class requirement, you need to email your questions to the instructors before class. There will be no way to make up for the loss of points incurred by missing or late weekly questions. Late questions can be used for class discussion but will receive zero points.
- Discussion Participation (20%): All students will be assigned to lead the discussions on one of the weekly readings. Discussion lead assignments are chosen randomly, although effort is made to distribute longer and shorter readings evenly. Discussion is central to the class. Everyone must come prepared to discuss readings. It is also imperative that everyone show courtesy toward fellow classmates at all times. Do not interrupt others and seek to handle disagreements in a respectful manner. On a more general note, all students are expected to conduct themselves during the class in a manner that does not interfere with the educational experience of other students in the course. That means arriving for class on time and turning off cellular phones, pagers, and other electronic devices that might disrupt class discussion. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.
- Final paper (60%): Students will write a paper due Friday March 16, 2018. Papers should be 10-12 pages in length, analyzing a topic relevant to the course. Paper must include a framework that includes, in part or wholly, ideas from the course readings. The paper is to be in the style of a journal article or book chapter.
- Undergraduates write five short analytic papers (3-5 pages each) discussing one week's readings. The five short papers replace the final paper. Students can select which weeks' readings to write papers on. However, papers are due the week of the readings chosen. Each paper should be a critical discussion of the readings for the week rather than a summary. We will have read the assigned readings, and so extensive summary is not necessary. Papers should concentrate on the themes or ideas that weave throughout the readings, how they reinforce each other or contradict each other, or build upon previous readings.

Weekly Reading Schedule:

WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION & TESTIMONIAL AND HERMENEUTICAL INJUSTICE

- Fricker, M. (2007). "Testimonial injustice," "Prejudice in the credibility economy," "Hermeneutical Injustice," *Epistemic Injustice*, OUP, chs. 1, 2, 7.

WEEK 2: TESTIMONIAL AND HERMENEUTICAL INJUSTICE IN THE MEDICAL CONTEXT

- Kidd, I.J., Carel, H. (2017). "Epistemic Injustice and Illness," *Journal of Applied Philosophy*

34: 172-190.

- Carel, H., Kidd, I.J. (2014). "Epistemic Injustice in Healthcare: A Philosophical Analysis," *Medical Health Care Philosophy* 17: 529-540.

Presentation: Rena Goldstein

WEEK 3: TRANSFORMATIVE EXPERIENCES IN THE MEDICAL SETTING

- Paul, L.A. (2014). "Becoming a Vampire," "Transformative Choice," "Life Choices," excerpts from the "Afterword", *Transformative Experience*, OUP, ch. 1, 2, 3, afterword.

WEEK 4: THE ROLE OF TRUST IN THE MEDICAL CONTEXT

- Goldman, A. (2001). "Experts: Which Ones Should You Trust?," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 63: 85-110.
- Schwab, A. (2008). "Epistemic Trust, Epistemic Responsibility, and Medical Practice," *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy* 33/4: 302-320.

Presentation: Steven Norris

WEEK 5: EXPERT DISAGREEMENT IN THE MEDICAL CONTEXT

- Beatty, J. (2006). "Masking Disagreement among Experts," *Episteme* 3: 52-67.
- Solomon, M. (2014). "Expert Disagreement and Medical Authority," in *Philosophical Issues in Psychiatry III: The Nature and Sources of Historical Change*, edited by K. S. Kendler and J. Parnas, OPU, ch. 8.
- Mumpower, J., Stewart, T. (1996). "Expert Judgement and Expert Disagreement," *Thinking and Reasoning* 2: 191-211.

Presentation: Itzel Garcia

WEEK 6: EPIDEMIOLOGY AND DISEASE CLASSIFICATION

- Broadbent, A. (2016). Philosophy of Epidemiology. In *The Routledge Companion to Philosophy of Medicine*, edited by M. Solomon, J.R. Simon, and H. Kincaid, Routledge, pp. 248-255.
- Hofmann, B. (2016). Disease, Illness, and Sickness. In *The Routledge Companion to Philosophy of Medicine*, edited by M. Solomon, J.R. Simon, and H. Kincaid, Routledge, pp. 16-27.
- Keil, G., Stoecker, R. (2017). Disease as a Vague and Thick Cluster Concept. In *Vagueness in Psychiatry*, edited by G. Keil, L. Keuck, and R. Hauswald, OUP, pp. 46-74.
- Kincaid, H. (2016). Classificatory Challenges in Psychopathology. In *The Routledge Companion to Philosophy of Medicine*, edited by M. Solomon, J.R. Simon, and H. Kincaid, Routledge, pp. 170-179.

Presentation: Rachel Cooper

WEEK 7: HIERARCHIES OF EVIDENCE IN EBM

- Andreoletti, M., Teira, D. (2016). Statistical Evidence and the Reliability of Medical Research. In *The Routledge Companion to Philosophy of Medicine*, edited by M. Solomon,

- J.R. Simon, and H. Kincaid, Routledge, pp. 218-228.
- Bluhm, R. (2016). The Hierarchy of Evidence, Meta-Analysis, and Systematic Review. In *The Routledge Companion to Philosophy of Medicine*, edited by M. Solomon, J.R. Simon, and H. Kincaid, Routledge, pp. 209-217.
 - Gardiner, G. (forthcoming). The Burden of Proof and Statistical Evidence. In *The Routledge Handbook of Applied Epistemology*, edited by D. Coady and J. Chase, Routledge.
 - Worrall, J. (2010). Evidence: Philosophy of Science Meets Medicine. *Journal of Evaluation in Clinical Practice* 16: 356-362.

Presentation: Matthew Dean

WEEK 8: VACCINE SKEPTICISM

- Goldenberg, M.J. (2016). Public Misunderstanding of Science? Reframing the Problem of Vaccine Hesitancy. *Perspectives on Science* 24: 552-581.
- John, S. (2011). Expert Testimony and Epistemological Free-Riding: The MMR Controversy. *Philosophical Quarterly* 61: 496-517.
- Leslie, A., Knobe, J., Cohen, A. (2006). Acting Intentionally and the Side-Effect Effect: 'Theory of Mind' and Moral Judgment. *Psychological Science* 17: 421-427.

Presentation: Nicholas Smith

WEEK 9: PLACEBO EFFECT

- Chiffi, D., Zanotti, R. (2017). Knowledge and Belief in Placebo Effect. *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy* 42: 70-85.
- Holman, B. (2015). Why Most Sugar Pills are not Placebos. *Philosophy of Science* 82: 1330-1343.
- Miller, F.G., Brody, H. (2011). Understanding and Harnessing the Placebo Effect: Clearing away the Underbrush. *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy* 36: 69-78.

Presentation: Brandon Richardson

WEEK 10: EPISTEMIC VALUE, MEDICAL DIAGNOSTICS AND IGNORANCE

- Cohen, S. (2011). The Gettier Problem in Informed Consent. *Journal of Medical Ethics* 37: 642-645.
- Hofman, B. (2016). Incidental Findings of Uncertain Significance: To Know or not to Know - that is not the Question. *BMC Medical Ethics* 17: 13.
- Kennedy, A.G. (2016). Evaluating Diagnostic Tests. *Journal of Evaluation in Clinical Practice* 22: 575-579.
- Lijmer, J., Bossuyt, P. (2009). Various Randomized Designs can be used to Evaluate Medical Tests. *Journal of Clinical Epidemiology* 62: 364-373.

Presentation: Dylan Popowicz