Philosophy 3330 Spring 2021
Reading questions #4
Due Tue, Feb 16

Read Chapter 7 of Jacob Stegenga's *Care and Cure* (available on Blackboard). Then answer the following questions. Your answers should be uploaded in Blackboard.

1) A commonly used tool for medical research is the Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT). Explain what an RCT is and explain how it applies to a particular case – for example, imagine you had 1000 patients participating in an RCT of a COVID vaccine. What would make it an RCT?

2) Imagine that you (a 60 year old patient not in great shape) are worried about your chance of a heart attack. Your doctor says, "Great news – drug companies have just run several large trials of the new drug 'safeheart' and it reduces heart attacks by 30%. There are minor side affects in 10% of patients and severe side effects are even rarer." You say, "Oh that's great to hear. How does it work?" They respond, "Funny story – we were actually testing it out to treat diabetes. It turns out not to work for diabetes, but it does reduce the chance of heart attack. We don't really know why. But it has now been tested in thousands of patients so we are pretty sure." What does the black box thesis say about a case like this? What does the mechanista thesis say? Do you think that we know that safeheart works? Would you want to take it?

3) After reading the chapter, come up with a question that you want answered or a topic that you would like to be discussed further. This could be something that the chapter forced you think about or it could be something that you thought was particularly confusing in the chapter.