

**Philosophy 3330: Philosophy of Science
Spring 2021, Long Paper Assignment #3**

Due Saturday, May 8 (11:59pm)

Purpose: The purpose of our class as a whole is to think about the nature of science. Since our last essay assignment, we have read chapters 6 and 11-15 in Jacob Stegenga's *Care and Cure: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Medicine*, which focus on controversial diseases, diagnosis and screening, and questions of values and policy as they arise in medicine.

The standard unit of philosophical analysis is the argumentative essay. Writing is an extension of thinking. It allows you (and forces you!) to think more deeply about a topic than you are able to do by keeping things 'in your head.' Exposition of someone else's views (including careful description of those ideas, issues, terms and scope) allows you to understand them better, and it is then much easier to critically evaluate these views. Laying out your own argument or that of someone else often forces you to be explicit about connections which can reveal weaknesses in your own thinking which must be acknowledged so they can then either be fixed or can lead to better views overall. Thus the purpose of assigning an essay is both as an effective way to evaluate your learning and progress in the class and to help improve your philosophical skills.

Instructions: You are to write an argumentative paper on some topic relevant to any of Chapters 6 or 11-14 in Stegenga or about the nature of medicine and science as a whole. The paper should be between roughly 1300 and 1800 words. If you double space and have natural fonts and margins, your essay would be about 4-6 pages.

Due Date: Your essay should be uploaded into Blackboard before **Saturday, May 8 at 11:59pm.**

Grading: This paper will be worth 20 points (20% of your final grade).

Guidelines: An argumentative essay is a reasoned defense of some particular claim. A general guideline for a paper like this is that you should spend about half of your time in exposition and half your time in evaluation.

Here are some useful guides to writing philosophy papers:

https://philosophy.fas.harvard.edu/files/phildept/files/brief_guide_to_writing_philosophy_paper.pdf (from Harvard College's Writing Center)

<https://www1.cmc.edu/pages/faculty/akind/Intro01s/Writing.htm> (from Amy Kind)

<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html> (from Jim Pryor)

http://joelvelasco.net/teaching/120/How_to_Write.pdf (from Chris Hitchcock)

Topic:

You may choose to write about any topic relevant to these chapters. For example, here are some sample questions that might help stimulate your thinking.

1. Is medicine a science? Is what we learned about the nature of science in Ladyman relevant to the practice of medicine?
2. Are culture bound diseases real? Are they natural kinds?
3. Are there western only culture bound diseases? Why or why not?
4. Does the logic of diagnosis show that we should not trust medical diagnoses? Or that we should in certain circumstances?
5. Is widespread preventative screening a good idea? Why or why not?
6. Are psychiatric illnesses just defined by their symptoms? Is that a problem? What about the idea that a diagnosis should explain the symptoms?
7. When are things like anxiety, depression, and fears genuine disorders as opposed to merely a normal part of life?
8. Are categories like 'autism' or 'ADHD' natural kinds? Or socially constructed categories? What about 'introvert' or 'neurotic'?
9. What is the difference between false beliefs and delusions? Are religious beliefs delusions?
10. How should medical research time and money be distributed? In a more libertarian or more socialist fashion? (See chapter 13 in Stegenga)
11. Are patents in medical research a good idea? Or is the system harmful overall?
12. Public health questions from chapter 14 (almost anything about philosophy and COVID-19 could fit in here).
13. Is addiction best thought of as a disease along the lines of the biomedical model? Or is it better to think of it as a series of choices as in the moral model? Is it different for different substances?