

# Philosophy 2330: Science and Society Philosophy of Medicine

Fall 2022

## Instructor Info



E-mail: [joel.velasco@ttu.edu](mailto:joel.velasco@ttu.edu)

My Office: 251C Eng/Phil

Office Hours: Tue, Thu, Fri  
11:00-12:00 or by appointment



## Course Info

Class meets Tu, Th 9:30-10:50  
in English 301

Course website:

[http://joelvelasco.net/  
teaching/2330](http://joelvelasco.net/teaching/2330)

## Course Description



What is the field of modern medicine and how does it work? First, we will look at fundamental concepts in medicine: What exactly is the nature of health and disease? How does medical classification work? What is death? Next, we will look at evidence in medicine: How does causal and statistical reasoning work in medicine? What counts as a good explanation? Finally, we will look at medicine in the broader social context: How do values play a role in the practice of medicine? Is race a medically relevant category? What are the appropriate roles of public health and the specialized treatment of individuals?



This is a philosophy course, a core curriculum course, and an honors first year experience course. As such, it has many distinct goals. First and foremost, I aim to introduce you to philosophy – and in particular, to the philosophy of medicine. In this way, you should begin to see what it is like to be a scholar – to think about things deeply in the pursuit of truth. Whether or not you end up pursuing life as a scholar or as a researcher, it is important to be able to think and reason about the world around you for whatever line of work you pursue and perhaps most importantly, to think critically about the issues that affect your life as a private citizen.

# Expected Learning Outcomes

- 1) The student will be able to identify key considerations in answering questions such as what it means to provide successful medical treatment.
- 2) The student will understand the philosophical issues that underlie medical research and practice and be prepared to identify and contextualize philosophical claims when they bear on topics in medicine.
- 3) The student will be able to analyze and evaluate related philosophical claims and assumptions.
- 4) The student will be able to develop and defend an original philosophical argument in writing.

# Grades

- Class Participation (11%): Effective class participation is based on coming to class prepared to engage in class activities, especially exercises in which you work together in groups with other students to invent an example or solve a puzzle that illustrates central concepts for that day. The best way to prepare for class is to read and think about the material indicated on the syllabus before coming to class.
- Tutorials (11%): Three times during the semester we will cancel class and instead, you will meet with me in small groups of three for an active tutorial.
- Short Essays (18%): Periodically throughout the semester (see due dates marked on the course schedule), you will be asked to write short essays (roughly two pages). There will be 3 short essays in all.
- Midterm Exam (20%): There will be one midterm examination covering roughly the first five weeks of the course.
- Long(er) Essays (40%): There will be two longer essays (roughly five pages).

## Rough Grading Scale:

98-100% ⇒ A+	92-97% ⇒ A	90-91% ⇒ A-
88-89% ⇒ B+	82-87% ⇒ B	80-81% ⇒ B-
78-79% ⇒ C+	70-77% ⇒ C	65-70% ⇒ C-
50-64% ⇒ D	0-49% ⇒ F	

## Late Assignments Policy

In the absence of a documented excuse, late assignments will be docked 20% per day.

# Class Participation

Philosophy is a communal enterprise: the ability to make valuable contributions to philosophical discussions can be as important as the ability to write well. Moreover, since the written assignments will force the students to think carefully about very specific topics, participation in class discussion is an important way for students to demonstrate a broader competence with the material than is possible in the papers alone. Students are encouraged to continue class discussions immediately after the class is over, by meeting with me in person some other time, or continuing the discussion over e-mail with me. Of course discussion with each other outside of class is strongly encouraged as well. Students who for any reason have difficulty speaking up in class are especially encouraged to (and must!) pursue these options. It should go without saying that attendance is an absolutely essential component of class participation.

## Religious holy days

A student who intends to observe a religious holy day should make that intention known in writing to the instructor prior to the absence. A student who is absent for the observance of a religious holy day shall be allowed to take an exam or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time after the absence.

## ADA Statement

Any student who, because of a disability, may require special arrangements in order to meet the course requirements should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make any necessary arrangements. Students should present appropriate verification from Student Disability Services during the instructor's office hours. Please note: instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodations to a student until appropriate verification from Student Disability Services has been provided. For additional information, please contact Student Disability Services in West Hall or call 806-742-2405.

## Academic Integrity:

Academic integrity is taking responsibility for one's own class and/or course work, being individually accountable, and demonstrating intellectual honesty and ethical behavior. Academic integrity is a personal choice to abide by the standards of intellectual honesty and responsibility. Because education is a shared effort to achieve learning through the exchange of ideas, students, faculty, and staff have the collective responsibility to build mutual trust and respect. Ethical behavior and independent thought are essential for the highest level of academic achievement, which then must be measured. Academic achievement includes scholarship, teaching, and learning, all of which are shared endeavors. Grades are a device used to quantify the successful accumulation of knowledge through learning. Adhering to the standards of academic integrity ensures grades are earned honestly. Academic integrity is the foundation upon which students, faculty, and staff build their educational and professional careers. [Texas Tech University ("University") Quality Enhancement Plan, Academic Integrity Task Force, 2010].

# Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB)

## Language, Philosophy, and Culture

### Description and Objectives

Courses in this category focus on how ideas, values, beliefs, and other aspects of culture reflect and affect human experience.

Courses involve the exploration of ideas that foster aesthetic and intellectual creation in order to understand the human condition across cultures.

1. **Critical Thinking Skills:** to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information
2. **Communication Skills:** to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication
3. **Personal Responsibility:** to include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making
4. **Social Responsibility:** to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities

### TTU Language, Philosophy, and Culture Student Learning Outcomes

1. Identify methodologies of historical, literary, philosophical, and/or aesthetic research and recognize their applicability to everyday life.
2. Develop analytical arguments in written and/or oral forms.
3. Evaluate events, ideas, and artistic expressions in terms of multiple cultural contexts and value systems.
4. Demonstrate ways in which the humanities are fundamental to the health and survival of any society.

**TTU College-Level Core Competence Statement:** Students graduating from Texas Tech University should be able to: think critically and to evaluate possible multiple interpretations, cultural contexts, and values.

# COVID-19 STATEMENT

The University will continue to monitor CDC, State, and TTU System guidelines concerning COVID-19. Any changes affecting class policies or temporary changes to delivery modality will be in accordance with those guidelines and announced as soon as possible. Students will not be required to purchase specialized technology to support a temporary course modality change, though students are expected to have access to a computer to access course content and course-specific messaging as needed.

If you test positive for COVID-19, report your positive test through TTU's reporting system:

<https://www.depts.ttu.edu/communications/emergency/coronavirus/>  
Once you report a positive test, the portal will automatically generate a letter that you can distribute to your professors and instructors.

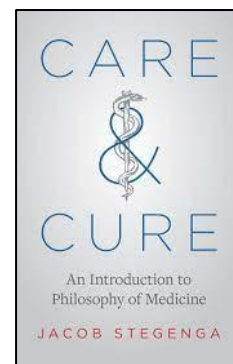
The university's COVID-19 resource page is here:

<https://www.depts.ttu.edu/communications/emergency/coronavirus/>

THECB OBJECTIVES	TTU S.L. OUTCOMES	ASSESSMENT METHODS
<p><b>Critical Thinking Skills</b> include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information</p>	<p>Identify methodologies of historical, literary, philosophical, and/or aesthetic research and recognize their applicability to everyday life.</p>	<p>Short essays, tutorials, midterm exam, longer essays</p>
<p><b>Communication Skills:</b>to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication</p>	<p>Develop analytical arguments in written and/or oral forms.</p>	<p>Short essays, tutorials, midterm exam, longer essays</p>
<p><b>Personal Responsibility:</b> to include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making</p>	<p>Demonstrate ways in which the humanities are fundamental to the health and survival of any society.</p>	<p>Short essays, tutorials, midterm exam, longer essays</p>
<p><b>Social Responsibility:</b> to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities</p>	<p>Evaluate events, ideas, and artistic expressions in terms of multiple cultural contexts and value systems.</p>	<p>Short essays, tutorials, midterm exam, longer essays</p>

## Required books:

*Care and Cure: An Introduction to Philosophy of Medicine* by Jacob Stegenga. University of Chicago Press, 2018.



An updated course schedule and access to all readings and assignments will be kept on the course website here:

<http://joelvelasco.net/teaching/2330>

## Rough Course Schedule

	Reading	Topic	Assignments due
Weeks 1-5	Stegenga Ch1,2,3, 6 Plus articles	Health and Disease, Death, psychiatric classification	Short essay 1
Week 6		First five weeks	Tutorial, in-class exam
Weeks 7-10	Stegenga Ch 7-11	Evidence and Inference in Medicine	Short essay 2, tutorial 2, long essay
Weeks 11-16	Stegenga Ch 12-14 plus additional reading	Ethics and Public Policy in Medicine	Short essay 3, tutorial, final essay