

## **Final Presentation/Paper Assignment**

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of the assignment is to force you to pick some issue or discussion in the field of medicine, to think philosophically about it, and to organize your thoughts about it enough to present the issue and your thesis to the class in a short presentation and in a longer paper format to me. This assignment will serve to cement your understanding of the topic and relevant portion of the class and to help all of us see the value of philosophical thinking about medicine in general.

### **Tasks:**

1) Pick a topic/question - and find at least one source outside of the assigned readings (more if appropriate).

- The topic or question must be relevant to the class. That means it is related to medicine (broadly understood). And your thesis should be a philosophical one, not a historical, informational, political, or any other kind of thesis or analysis (though these can be partially relevant). This assignment is partially to demonstrate your engagement with the class so should be the kind of thing that displays a connection to what we have been talking about. You are welcome to extend something we have discussed in class (is Autism Spectrum Disorder a natural kind with lots of specific information about Autism) but the goal is to move beyond what we have done in class directly (so your final paper cannot be an argument that mental disorders in general are natural kinds).
- The sources that you find should be of scholarly quality. Obviously, an article in a philosophy or medical journal is relevant. It is also highly relevant if you find journalists reporting on medical studies or advertisers selling pharmaceuticals. But any such non-scholarly sources should be connected to scholarly sources or discussion and should not be your only sources. Note that Stegenga counts as scholarly so for example, a presentation on a policy question raised in Chapter 13 or a public health question raised in Chapter 14 is perfectly appropriate.
- I have created an optional assignment (not for credit) in Canvas so that you can submit a discussion topic and list any sources you are looking at. I will respond in Canvas about the appropriateness of this topic and make any immediate recommendations I have.

2) Prepare a presentation of up to five minutes in length for the class aimed at both informing us of the issue or question and presenting your philosophical analysis or thesis. Your presentation will take place on Saturday, December 6th during our scheduled final exam period. You are encouraged (not required) to use a handout, slides, a poster, audio or video recordings, or other props or tools to enhance your presentation. Please upload any necessary materials (such as slides or a handout) into canvas by Friday, Dec 5th so that I can assemble everything together to minimize transition time on presentation day. If you anticipate being absent for an excused

reason on the 6th (going to the football games counts, watching it at home does not) you must make arrangements with me and record your presentation ahead of time.

3) Submit a philosophical (argumentative) essay defending your thesis. Depending on exactly what your presentation was like, this can be a somewhat minimal extension of your presentation, or it could be a full, stand-alone essay where your presentation was merely the bullet-point highlights of the paper.

- Your essay should be uploaded into Canvas by Thursday, December 11th.
- I would expect a good paper might be between 1500 and 2000 words. This is flexible.
- Sources should be cited appropriately. I don't care about the particular format - any source should be as easy as possible for me to find. For example, MLA style (<https://www.depts.ttu.edu/provost/uwc/resources/citationstyles.php>)
- Advice for writing philosophy papers:
  - [https://web.archive.org/web/20240324183533/https://philosophy.fas.harvard.edu/files/phildept/files/brief\\_guide\\_to\\_writing\\_philosophy\\_paper.pdf](https://web.archive.org/web/20240324183533/https://philosophy.fas.harvard.edu/files/phildept/files/brief_guide_to_writing_philosophy_paper.pdf) (from Harvard College's Writing Center - past version utilizing the internet archive)
  - <https://www1.cmc.edu/pages/faculty/akind/Intro01s/Writing.htm> (from Amy Kind)
  - <https://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html> (from Jim Pryor)
  - [https://joelvelasco.net/teaching/120/How\\_to\\_Write.pdf](https://joelvelasco.net/teaching/120/How_to_Write.pdf) (from Chris Hitchcock)