

University of California, Davis
Department of Philosophy
PHILOSOPHY OF BIOLOGY - COVID-19 version
PHI 208, Spring 2020
2275 SSH, Tues 3:10-6 PM

Contact information

Instructor: Professor Roberta Millstein

Office: 2287 Social Sciences and Humanities (aka SSH, Death Star: corner of 3rd and A)

Office Hours: Wed 2-3 PM and by appointment - **via Zoom**

E-mail: RLMillstein@UCDavis.edu (*the best way to reach me*)

Phone: 530-754-0715 (not a good way to reach me)

Required readings

Required (and optional) readings available on course website on Canvas, <https://canvas.ucdavis.edu/>

Course description

This philosophy graduate seminar will focus on the concept of *health* as it has been analyzed for humans, non-human organisms, and ecosystems. In other words, what is “health”? For example, is it simply “absence of disease,” or is there a more positive account to be given? We will explore whether there is one concept of health that works for all three of these domains, or whether different concepts are needed for each domain or even within one domain. We will also consider whether there are things that each domain’s analysis of health concepts can learn from the others. As a way in, we will begin with the “One Health” paradigm, which suggests that health in all three domains is interconnected, before delving into the literature on humans, followed by non-humans and finally ecosystems.

Course requirements

Your grade will be based on the following:

10% - In-class participation

10% - Online participation

20% - Coordination of seminars

60% - Term paper - Sketch due by **11 PM Sat, May 30**, Final version due by **11 PM on Sat, June 13**

In-class participation - You are expected to come to all classes **via Zoom (see the Zoom area on the Canvas site)** having done the readings and you are expected to participate regularly in class discussions. **That being said, I recognize that (even more than usual) personal circumstances may prevent you from participating, so please just keep me in the loop so that I know what is going on with you if you have to miss class. I plan to record our discussions.**

Online participation - Post to the Canvas Discussion area **by 1 PM before every seminar** concerning the readings for the day – ask questions, raise objections, give reflections, etc.

Coordination of seminars: You will coordinate at least one seminar using a visual aid such as handout or PowerPoint-type slides **distributed before class**. Your job as coordinator is to stimulate and lead discussion; *this is not a presentation*. So, you should **1) Give enough of a summary of the readings to**

stimulate discussion, but don't attempt a point-by-point summary (we can always turn to the article during discussion if necessary). Be sure to provide an overview of the overall argument. Seek out additional references if necessary. And, **2)** raise issues for discussion (not simply, "what did you think about that?"). As coordinator, it is OK if there are parts of the articles that you didn't understand; ask those questions for group discussion.

You will also present an overview of your term paper for class discussion in week 10 (see schedule below).

Term paper sketch: This is meant to be *informal*; the point is to give me enough of an idea of what you plan to write on so that I can approve, redirect, make suggestions, etc., before you spend a lot of time in a possibly unproductive direction. This can be done with an outline, talking to me in my **Zoom** office, etc.

Term paper: Your paper may analyze any of the readings discussed in class, any of the optional readings, or offshoots of those readings (follow the citations of class readings or look for papers that cite the class readings). Contact me if you wish to do something other than the above. Be sure to follow "General guidelines for writing and discussion" (see Files area of Canvas). Prepare your paper (more or less) in the style of a *Philosophy of Science* article. Your paper should be approximately 5000 words (the length of a Philosophy of Science Association conference paper).

Important note on plagiarism/cheating: It is a violation of the [UC Davis Code of Academic Conduct](#) to turn in work that is not your own. This includes: turning in the work of another student with your name on it, buying/copying a paper off the Internet, using the words *or* ideas of others without proper quotation and citation. The Code states "**if academic misconduct is admitted or is determined by adjudication to have occurred, instructors may assign a grade penalty no greater than 'F' for the course in question**"; *I will follow this, and all other policies outlined in the Code*. If you have trouble with the class material or have personal issues that prevent you from doing your work, come talk to me.

Tentative Schedule - All dates and readings are subject to change.

| Date | Topic | | Article | Coor |
|--------|--------------|---|--|------|
| Apr 1 | Introduction |  | Zinsstag, Jakob, Esther Schelling, David Waltner-Toews, and Marcel Tanner. "From "one medicine" to "one health" and systemic approaches to health and well-being." <i>Preventive veterinary medicine</i> 101, no. 3-4 (2011): 148-156. | RLM |
| Apr 8 | Humans |  | Boorse, Christopher. "Health as a theoretical concept." <i>Philosophy of science</i> 44, no. 4 (1977): 542-573. | |
| | |  | Whitbeck, Caroline. "Four basic concepts of medical science." In <i>PSA: Proceedings of the Biennial Meeting of the Philosophy of Science Association</i> , vol. 1978, no. 1, pp. 210-222. Philosophy of Science Association, 1978. | |
| Apr 15 | Humans |  | Wakefield, Jerome C. "The concept of mental disorder: on the boundary between biological facts and social values." <i>American Psychologist</i> 47, no. 3 (1992): 373. | |
| | |  | Kingma, Elselijn. "Paracetamol, poison, and polio: why Boorse's account of function fails to distinguish health and disease." <i>The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science</i> 61, no. 2 (2010): 241-264. | |

| Date | Topic | | Article | Coor |
|--------|----------------------------|---|---|------|
| Apr 22 | humans (population health) |  | Arah, Onyebuchi A. "On the relationship between individual and population health." <i>Medicine, health care and philosophy</i> 12, no. 3 (2009): 235-244. | |
| | |  | Valles, Sean. "Health as a life course trajectory of complete well-being in social context." in <i>Philosophy of Population Health</i> , (2018): 57-78. | |
| Apr 29 | non-humans |  | Matthewson, John, and Paul E. Griffiths. "Biological criteria of disease: Four ways of going wrong." <i>Journal of Medicine and Philosophy</i> 42, no. 4 (2017): 447-466. | |
| | |  | Döring, Thomas F., Marco Pautasso, Maria R. Finckh, and M. S. Wolfe. "Concepts of plant health—reviewing and challenging the foundations of plant protection." <i>Plant Pathology</i> 61, no. 1 (2012): 1-15. | |
| May 6 | non-humans | couldn't find pic! | Nielsen, N. Ole. "Ecosystem health and veterinary medicine." <i>The Canadian Veterinary Journal</i> 33, no. 1 (1992): 23. | |
| | |  | Vaarst, Mette, and Hugo F. Alrøe. "Concepts of animal health and welfare in organic livestock systems." <i>Journal of agricultural and environmental ethics</i> 25, no. 3 (2012): 333-347. | |
| May 13 | ecosystems |  | Leopold, Aldo - Three short essays focused on land health: "Biotic Land Use," "Conservation: In Whole Or in Part?" and "The Land-Health Concept and Conservation" | |
| | |  | Newton (now Warren), Julianne, "A New Kind of Conservation," in <i>Aldo Leopold's Odyssey</i> , (2006): 316-351. | |
| May 20 | ecosystems |  | Costanza, Robert. "Toward an operational definition of ecosystem health." <i>Ecosystem health: New goals for environmental management</i> (1992): 239-256. | |
| | |  | Lehman, Hugh. "Ecosystem health as a moral requirement." <i>Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics</i> 12, no. 3 (2000): 305-317. | |
| May 27 | ecosystems |  | McShane, Katie. "Ecosystem health." <i>Environmental Ethics</i> 26, no. 3 (2004): 227-245. | |
| | |  | Odenbaugh, J., 2010. On the very idea of an ecosystem. In <i>New waves in metaphysics</i> (pp. 240-258). Palgrave Macmillan, London. | |
| Jun 3 | | | <i>Present overview of term paper</i> | |