



PHIL*4140 Current Debates in Philosophy of Science

Winter 2020

Section(s): C01

Department of Philosophy

Credit Weight: 0.50

Version 1.00 - January 02, 2020

1 Course Details

1.1 Calendar Description

Each offering of this course will focus on a specific issue or set of related issues that are now being debated in Philosophy of Science. Readings will be contemporary works.

Pre-Requisites: 1.00 credits in Philosophy at the 3000 level or 12.50 credits

1.2 Course Description

Philosophy of Population Health: The New Public Health

Something big has been happening in the world of public health science: an effort to revise, reform, and revolutionize how we think about and practice health promotion for groups of people. Commentators call this shift in public health science "population health science", "the population health approach", or "public health 3.0", while others choose to characterize the shift as what good contemporary public health ought to be (and so no new name is needed). Population health science (or whatever you want to call it) is defined as:

a research program that confronts the structural forces that place individuals at risk, creates distributions of health and disease unequally across socially defined groups, and focuses on embedding biological pathways within social interactions that develop across the life course and across generations (Keyes and Galea 2016: 634).

The goals of population health science are to reconstruct the theory and practice of how to promote the health of populations, in reaction to the lessons learned from 20th century public health and health care. The insights and interventions into health promotion eschew the individualistic and reductive tendencies of 20th century biomedicine. Population health science also embraces an expansive view of the social determinants of health (i.e. access to healthy food, safe housing, effective gun policy, freedom from stigma) that has previously unnerved public health scholars because of concerns about medical hegemony (where all social ills are medicalized). Lastly, population health science rejects the common view that science and activism must be kept apart. Public Health Science's comparative approach to population health, where scholars seek to determine "why are some people healthy and others not?" (Evans et al. 2014), invites activism directed at promoting health equity and justice.

The development of this new theoretical and practical field of population health promotion over the past few decades has taken place in various public health and related disciplinary journals and books, with little attention from philosophy. The main text for this course, *Philosophy of Population Health* (2018), now offers a first philosophical analysis of population health science and the associated population health approach. The text draws from philosophy of medicine, philosophy of biology, and public health ethics to analyze and synthesize what is philosophically novel or notable about the shift, to show how population health science's fragmentary theoretical and methodological pieces do indeed fit together, and to consider how population health science addresses some philosophical problems that have challenged public health science and the study of social determinants of health. For example, how do we define health? How do we conceptualize the causes of health and illness? How do health equity values fit into the science and practice of population health promotion?

These questions will be addressed in this class.

Citations:

Evans, R. G., Barer, M. L. and Marmor, T. R. 1994. *Why Are Some People Healthy and Others Not? The Determinants of Health of Populations*. New York: Aldine De Gruyter.
 Keyes, K. M. and Galea, S. 2016. Setting the agenda for a new discipline: Population health science. *American Journal of Public Health* 106, 633–634.
 Valles, S. A. 2018. *Philosophy of Population Health: Philosophy for a New Public Health Era*. New York: Routledge.

1.3 Timetable

Monday Wednesday 1:00-2:20pm

ROZH 107

1.4 Final Exam

There is no final exam

2 Instructional Support

2.1 Instructional Support Team

Instructor:	Maya Goldenberg
Email:	mgolden@uoguelph.ca
Telephone:	+1-519-824-4120 x56367
Office:	MCKN 334

3 Learning Resources

3.1 Required Resources

Philosophy of Population Health (Textbook)

Valles, Sean A. 2018. Philosophy of Population Health: Philosophy for the New Public Health Era. London and Chicago: Routledge.

Additional readings available on courselink (Article)

All articles and book chapters available on Courselink

4 Learning Outcomes

4.1 Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. Orally articulate and defend a position on a philosophical topic, in class discussion and in a presentation, that is clear, accurate and well-reasoned.
2. Develop research methods for gathering a wide range of primary and secondary source materials, and synthesize these materials and evaluate their credibility.
3. Demonstrate independence in articulating an original approach to a significant philosophical topic.

4. Write clearly and cogently on complex problems in philosophy.
 5. Read extensively and systematically in a specialized area of philosophical research.
-

5 Teaching and Learning Activities

5.1 Lecture

Mon, Jan 6

Topics: Introduction to the course

Wed, Jan 8

Topics: **What is health?**

References: Metzl, J.M. (2010) Introduction: Why 'against health'? In J. Metzl and A. Kirkland (eds), *Against Health: How Health Became the New Morality*. New York: New York University Press, pp. 1–11.

Klein, R. (2010) What is health and how do you get it? In J. Metzl and A. Kirkland (eds), *Against Health: How Health Became the New Morality*. New York: New York University Press, pp. 15–25.

Class preparation: write up an answer to the question "what is health?" that considers the answers offered in the readings.

Mon, Jan 13

Topics: **What is population health?**

References: Frank, John W. (1995) "Why 'Population Health'?" *Canadian Journal of Public Health* 86(3): 162-4.

Kindig, David and Greg Stoddart (2003) "What is Population Health?" *American Journal of Public Health* 93(3): 380-383.

Evans, Robert G. "Introduction." *Why are Some People Healthy and Others Not?* Eds. Evans, RG., et al. London and New York: Routledge, pp. 3-27.

Class preparation: prepare an answer to the question, what is population health? Take note of similarities and differences between the authors' answers. Be ready to discuss your findings in class.

Wed, Jan 15

Topics: **Blue print of a philosophy of/for population health**

References: Valles, *Philosophy of Population Health*, chapter 1

Mon, Jan 20

Topics: **A social concept of health**

References: Valles, *Philosophy of Population Health*, chapter 2 (up to p. 47)

Wed, Jan 22

Topics: **A social concept of health**

References: Krieger, Nancy. 2011. Chapter 5 of *Epidemiology and the People's Health* (2011), pp. 126-162.

Class preparation: prepare some notes on the main features of the biomedical model in contrast to what Krieger calls the "ecosocial theory of disease" in other publications (but this is what she describing in the second half of the chapter)

For more on ecosocial theory, see Krieger Nancy (1994). Epidemiology and the Web of Causation: Has Anyone Seen the Spider? *Social Science and Medicine* 39(7): 887-903.

—. 2017. Ecosocial Theory. Encyclopedia of Health and Behavior. Ed. NM Anderson. New York: SAGE.

Mon, Jan 27

Topics: **Group Presentation:
A Social Concept of Health: Case Study of the Standing
Rock Sioux Water Protectors**

References: Valles, *Philosophy of Population Health*, pp. 48-56.

Wed, Jan 29

Topics: **Health as a life course trajectory of complete well-being in social context**

References: Valles, *Philosophy of Population Health*, chapter 3 (until p. 71)

Mon, Feb 3

Topics: **Health as complete well-being including social well-being? Criticisms of the WHO definition of health**

References: Callahan, Daniel. (1973) "The WHO definition of "health." *Hastings Center Report* 1, 77-87.
Daniels, Norman. (2006) "Equity and population health: Toward a broader bioethics agenda." *Hastings Center Report* 36, 22-35.
Kukla, Rebecca. (2010). The ethics and cultural politics of reproductive risk warnings; A study of California's Proposition 65." *Health, Risk, & Society* 12, 323-334.

Class preparation: characterize the main objections to the WHO definition of health. Are these objections justified?

Wed, Feb 5

Topics: **Group Presentation
Health as Life Course Trajectory: Case Study Addressing Disparities Between Aboriginal Australians and Settler Australians**

References: Valles, *Philosophy of Population Health*, pp. 71-75.

Mon, Feb 10

Topics: **Causes and Effects: Expanding the Boundaries of Population Health**

References: Valles, *Philosophy of Population Health*, chapter 4 (up to pp. 98)

Wed, Feb 12

Topics: **Health in All Policies? The Boundary Problem in Public**

Health

- References:**
- Arah, Onyebuchi A. (2009) On the relationship between individual and population health. *Medicine, Health Care and Philosophy* 12, 235–244.
- Rothstein, Mark A. (2009) The limits of public health: A response. *Public Health Ethics* 2, 84–88.
- Goldberg, Daniel S. (2009) In support of a broad model of public health: Disparities, social epidemiology, and public health causation. *Public Health Ethics* 2, 70-83.
- Rudolph, L., Caplan, J., Ben-Moshe, K. and Dillon, L. (2013) *Health in All Policies: A Guide for State and Local Governments*. Washington, DC: American Public Health Association and Public Health Institute.

Mon, Feb 24

Topics: **Group Presentation**
Expanding Boundaries of Population Health: Case Study of Global Climate Change

References: Valles, *Philosophy of Population Health*, pp. 98-105.

Wed, Feb 26

Topics: **Prioritizing the right causes and effects of population health**

References: Valles, *Philosophy of Population Health*, chapter 5 (up to pp. 123)

Prepare notes and come ready to discuss causes of causes and causes of genesis; salutogenesis vs. pathogenesis

Mon, Mar 2

Topics: TBA

References: TBA

Wed, Mar 4

Topics: **Group Presentation**
Prioritizing the right causes and effects: Case Study of Brazil's AIDS response

References: Valles, *Philosophy of Population Health*, 123-127.

Mon, Mar 9

Topics: **Health equity: Managing the trade-offs in population health practice**

References: Valles, *Philosophy of Population Health*, chapter 6 (up to pp. 152)

Wed, Mar 11

Topics: **Group Presentation**
Health equity and managing trade-offs: Case Study in the Heterogeneous Health of Migrants

References: Valles, *Philosophy of Population Health*, pp. 152-157.

Mon, Mar 16

Topics: **Ethics and evidence in the population health equity debates**

References: Valles, *Philosophy of Population Health*, chapter 7 (up to pp. 173).

Wed, Mar 18

Topics: **Group Presentation**
Population health equity: Case Study in Investigating Racism and Racial Health Disparities

References: Valles, *Philosophy of Population Health*, pp. 173-177

Mon, Mar 23

Topics: **Humility as the way forward**

References: Valles, *Philosophy of Population Health*, chapter 8

Wed, Mar 25

Topics: Research proposals

Mon, Mar 30

Topics: Research proposals

Wed, Apr 1

Topics: TBA

6 Assessments

6.1 Assessment Details

Case study presentation (20%)

Date: In class, see syllabus

Groups of 3 present the case study that appears at the ends of chapters 2-7 of the main text (Valles 2018). Further research into the case may be needed. Make links between the main themes of the chapter and the case study

Write-Up of Case Study (35%)

Date: Due 2 weeks after presentation

Presenters of the case study will write up the case study, adding additional research and reflecting on the philosophical issues that arose in the related chapter and in other course readings. These papers are written individually.

Final Essay (45%)

Date: Tue, Apr 7, Mackinnon 334 12:00pm

Research essay on your chosen topic in philosophy of population health science.

Topic will be approved and outline will be reviewed by the professor

7 University Statements

7.1 Email Communication

As per university regulations, all students are required to check their e-mail account regularly: e-mail is the official route of communication between the University and its students.

7.2 When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons please advise the course instructor (or designated person, such as a teaching assistant) in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. The grounds for Academic Consideration are detailed in the Undergraduate and Graduate Calendars.

Undergraduate Calendar - Academic Consideration and Appeals

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-ac.shtml>

Graduate Calendar - Grounds for Academic Consideration

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/index.shtml>

Associate Diploma Calendar - Academic Consideration, Appeals and Petitions

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/diploma/current/index.shtml>

7.3 Drop Date

Students will have until the last day of classes to drop courses without academic penalty. The deadline to drop two-semester courses will be the last day of classes in the second semester. This applies to all students (undergraduate, graduate and diploma) except for Doctor of Veterinary Medicine and Associate Diploma in Veterinary Technology (conventional and alternative delivery) students. The regulations and procedures for course registration are available in their respective Academic Calendars.

Undergraduate Calendar - Dropping Courses

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-drop.shtml>

Graduate Calendar - Registration Changes

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/genreg-reg-regchg.shtml>

Associate Diploma Calendar - Dropping Courses

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/diploma/current/c08/c08-drop.shtml>

7.4 Copies of Out-of-class Assignments

Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

7.5 Accessibility

The University promotes the full participation of students who experience disabilities in their academic programs. To that end, the provision of academic accommodation is a shared responsibility between the University and the student.

When accommodations are needed, the student is required to first register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS). Documentation to substantiate the existence of a disability is

required; however, interim accommodations may be possible while that process is underway.

Accommodations are available for both permanent and temporary disabilities. It should be noted that common illnesses such as a cold or the flu do not constitute a disability.

Use of the SAS Exam Centre requires students to book their exams at least 7 days in advance and not later than the 40th Class Day.

For Guelph students, information can be found on the SAS website
<https://www.uoguelph.ca/sas>

For Ridgetown students, information can be found on the Ridgetown SAS website
<https://www.ridgetownc.com/services/accessibilityservices.cfm>

7.6 Academic Integrity

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity, and it is the responsibility of all members of the University community—faculty, staff, and students—to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff, and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that encourages academic integrity. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection.

Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor.

Undergraduate Calendar - Academic Misconduct
<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-amisconduct.shtml>

Graduate Calendar - Academic Misconduct
<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/index.shtml>

7.7 Recording of Materials

Presentations that are made in relation to course work - including lectures - cannot be recorded or copied without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a student, or guest lecturer. Material recorded with permission is restricted to use for that course unless further permission is granted.

7.8 Resources

The Academic Calendars are the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies, and regulations that apply to undergraduate, graduate, and diploma

programs.

Academic Calendars

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/academics/calendars>
