

**PHILOSOPHY 348/648: HEALTH, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Fall 2023; TR, 11am-12:20pm; Wean 4623**

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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 3:30-4:30pm, Baker 145L

Wednesdays, 3-4pm, on zoom:

<https://cmu.zoom.us/j/94856587144?pwd=V29OTFQ2anFSRVJEaERXZlI5cjNOdz09>

Grader: Gabe Vasquez-Peterson, GAV16@pitt.edu

Office Hours: Thursdays, 2-3pm, Cathedral of Learning 1009B

COURSE DESCRIPTION & LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Approximately 1 billion people live on less than \$1 a day in a condition the World Bank refers to as extreme poverty. Those who live in extreme poverty frequently lack effective access to proper nutrition, adequate shelter, safe drinking water, and sanitation. As a result, they also bear the greatest burdens of famine and epidemic disease and frequently face social and political conditions of unrest and systematic oppression. This course aims to introduce students to human rights theory and its intersection with global public health. We will ask what constitutes a human right, and on what basis or bases the existence of human rights can be defended. If human rights do exist, whose responsibility is it to see that they are defended, provided for, or not violated, and why? What is the relationship between health deficits and human rights deficits, and what would a “human right to health” look like? Are global institutions such as the protection of strong intellectual property rights consistent with respect for a human right to health?

Students are expected to come away from this course with a strong understanding of competing theories of human rights, the nature and causes of global health deficits, how global health inequalities are related to global institutions of trade and finance, and how to parcel out responsibility for addressing health-related human rights deficits. Students are also expected to come away from the course with improved analytical reading and writing skills and the ability to apply theoretical frameworks considered in class to pressing issues in global public health in persuasive writing. Assignments are therefore structured to emphasize writing and analysis rather than exams. The course will be conducted as a seminar and is intended to be discussion-rather than lecture-based.

Masking Request: Please wear a mask during this class

While masking is not required in CMU classrooms, I politely request that you wear a mask during this class. COVID-19 is an airborne virus that has disproportionately harmful impacts on disabled, chronically ill, and immunocompromised persons. COVID infection itself is extremely unpleasant and will cause you to miss class and fall behind. The risks of long COVID are significant, and the chances of experiencing long-term symptoms increase with each new infection. One-way masking (where only one person wears a mask while others do not) is significantly less effective at preventing the transmission of airborne viruses than when everyone is masked. This means that we cannot provide an equitable and inclusive atmosphere for all members of our campus community unless we protect one another by masking while indoors. **DO NOT ATTEND CLASS IF YOU ARE FEELING UNWELL. IF YOU ARE VISIBLY SICK WHILE IN CLASS, YOU WILL BE ASKED TO LEAVE.**

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The learning curve for reading and writing philosophy is steep, and early feedback will be important to you in improving your work. Class assignments are structured to improve students' reading habits, analytical skills, and writing. If you are struggling with reading or writing, please make use of office hours. During regularly scheduled office hours, no appointment is needed.

Homework and Short Response Pieces – 30%

Over the course of the semester, there will be several short writing assignments and one group presentation. Writing assignments are designed to build your writing skills with an eye towards what you will need to do for your final paper. Assignment specifics are posted on Canvas. Students are responsible for knowing about class assignments and their deadlines.

First Term Paper Draft – 20%

*Each student will write a term paper of approximately 3000 words critically engaging with a topic relevant to the course. The term paper may be a more fully developed version of a short writing assignment, or an independent work. All term paper topics must be approved by me in advance. Further details about the term paper will be provided in class. Your first term paper draft is due **Sunday, November 19th**.*

Peer Review – 10%

*Each student will be required to write a critical review and response to another student's first term paper draft. These reviews should critically but charitably discuss the paper under review, raise questions of interpretation, present worries and objections, and provide alternative possibilities. The goal of the peer review is to provide constructive criticism which will help the recipient to consider new objections and improve their work. Peer reviews are due on **Monday, November 27th**. Peer reviews will be discussed with paper authors on **Tuesday, November 28th on zoom**.*

Term Paper Revisions – 20%

*Graded term papers with substantive comments will be returned to you by Monday, December 4th. Students will revise portions of their term papers in light of the comments received. Paper revisions are due on **Tuesday, December 12th**.*

Attendance & Class Participation – 15%

*There is no attendance policy in this class. However, 15% of your grade consists in participation in in-class discussions of the readings and regular class attendance. You should attend each class having read the assigned material for the day and ready to engage in discussion and critical assessment of those materials. You will be asked regularly to assess your own attendance and participation. Frequent absenteeism, inability to participate in class discussions and activities due to not having completed the readings, and failure to contribute to class discussions will each negatively impact your participation grade. **Do not attend class if you are feeling unwell. If you are visibly sick while in class, you will be asked to leave.***

Important Dates

Oct. 9: Final drop deadline
Oct. 15-21: No class; mid-semester break
Oct. 23: Mid-semester grades turned in
Nov. 2: Group presentations
Nov. 7: No class; election day
Nov. 19: First paper draft due
Nov. 23: No class; Thanksgiving
Nov. 27: Peer review due
Dec. 12: Paper revisions due

CLASS POLICIES

ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION

Do not attend class if you are feeling unwell. If you appear sick in class, you will be asked to leave.

There is no official attendance policy in this class and attendance is not taken. However, you will be asked regularly to assess your own attendance and participation, and a pattern of missed classes will be noticed and will impact your grade. Missing a significant number of class meetings is also likely to impact your grade through your performance on class assignments. If you miss a class, for any reason, it is your responsibility to determine what you missed. It is strongly recommended that you exchange contact information with a few of your peers so that you can easily obtain class notes on missed discussions. **By default, I do not respond to emails asking “what did I miss in class?”**

YOU MUST DO THE READINGS FOR THIS CLASS. Philosophical inquiry is a joint endeavor, and the quality of this course will depend crucially on your thoughtful, considerate engagement with the readings and with each other. In general, I do not devote class meetings to lectures that explain the materials. Rather, class discussion is focused on assessment of core arguments, discussions of the implications of authors’ views, and consideration of potential objections. Students should come to class having closely read and thought about all assigned materials. This requires, *at a minimum*:

- Determining the key point(s) the author is trying to establish or criticize;
- Understanding why the author considers it/them to be important;
- Identifying the reason(s) the author gives in support of their conclusion(s); and
- Considering whether those reasons are both (a) true or correct, and (b) actually in support of the author’s conclusion(s).

Students often assume that there is some settled Knowledge within a discipline. On this model, the role of a faculty member is to impart that Knowledge to students, so that students can commit the Knowledge to memory and regurgitate it back to the faculty to demonstrate competence. **This is not an accurate model of scholarly reality.** Particularly in philosophy, but also across disciplines, there are typically multiple, competing arguments. Experts can and do disagree, and mapping, understanding, and assessing the bases for those disagreements is a core part of scholarly work. This is the work we will do in this class.

We will be discussing controversial topics about which many of you will have strong feelings. However, our purpose in this class is to **move past feelings and opinions**, and to evaluate and provide **reasoned arguments** for and against various positions on these issues. **Disrespectful comments towards other students will not be tolerated.**

GRADING

Grades are assigned on the following scale:

High A	97.5	B+	87.5	C+	77.5	D+	67.5
A	95	B	85	C	75	D	65
A-	92.5	B-	82.5	C-	72.5	D-	62.5
A-/B+	90	B-/C+	80	C-/D+	70	R	60 or below

You are not defined by your grades. While I recognize that students are under intense pressure (both self-imposed and external) to achieve high grades, there is nothing inherently wrong with getting a B or a C. They are letters on a page, and their primary function is to **indicate where your work can improve.** Students also have widely varying reasons for taking a particular class, and some of those reasons are met perfectly well by doing satisfactory (C-level) work. An “A” on any assignment in this class indicates outstanding or truly exemplary work. A “B” is work that demonstrates a high level of competence. A “C” is satisfactory.

There is a steep learning curve to reading and writing philosophy effectively, which should provide you with strong incentives to work hard at the beginning of the semester and receive the kind of feedback you will need to excel in your written assignments.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Requests for reasonable extensions on writing assignments are **always granted**, provided requests are made in advance of the deadline. **You do not need to provide a reason for asking for an extension.** However, please note that I do not check email outside of regular business hours, so extensions must be requested before 5pm on Friday for assignments with weekend due dates.

COMMUNICATION

Please note that I do not read or respond to student emails outside of normal business hours (i.e. if you email me in the evening or on the weekend, you will not receive a response until the next weekday.) I endeavor to always respond to student emails within one business day, and ask that you try to respond to my emails in a similarly timely fashion.

Students are not always familiar with the norms governing professional correspondence. Please use [this resource](#) to inform your understanding of what is expected from communications in a professional environment.

OFFICE HOURS

I hold regularly scheduled office hours on Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons. Office hours are times that I set aside specifically to be available to meet with students. You do not need an appointment to meet with me in office hours – simply show up. If you need to meet with me and you cannot make it to regularly scheduled office hours, you may email me to set up a time. I encourage you to watch [this video](#) to learn more about office hours.

If you are observant, you will have noticed that there is 5% missing from the total course requirements listed above. You can earn that final 5% in one of two ways: You can send an email to me using the format demonstrated in the linked post, above. Alternatively, you can attend office hours at least once this semester.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY, GENERATIVE AI, & PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism refers to the use of any ideas or words from another person or source without appropriate citation. All sources used for course assignments should be appropriately cited, including information found on the internet, in course readings, or from class discussions. If you are unsure about whether or not to cite something, err on the side of caution.

Large Language Models (LLMs, also often called “generative AI” or “AI”) like Chat GPT are trained on text stolen from the internet without authors’ permission, and as a result create plagiarized content. Submitting work produced by an LLM **with or without attribution** is a form of intellectual theft.

Practicing every step of writing, including brainstorming, research, outlining, drafting, and revision helps you to develop your understanding of course material, yourself, and how you relate to the topics you will write about. Practicing writing also helps you to develop your creativity and your original voice as a writer. For these reasons, among others, you may not outsource any step of your written assignments for this class to an AI tool. To do so will be considered plagiarism.

I have a zero-tolerance policy for cheating: **Any student found to have plagiarized on any assignment will receive a failing grade for the assignment, and at my discretion, for the entire course.** Additionally, all available institutional penalties will be sought.

TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM

I and your classmates put a great deal of time and effort into preparing for an interesting class discussion, and you are expected to do the same. When entering the classroom, please place your phone on “silent” and put it away for the duration of our meeting. The use of laptops during class discussions is **discouraged but not forbidden**. In most cases, using a computer during discussion significantly distracts from what is going on and leads to disengagement from those around you. While some can successfully use a computer without multitasking, most cannot – it is hard not to take a down moment to check your email or look at your calendar. And studies have shown that this kind of multitasking during class not only causes the computer user’s learning to suffer, but also that of the students sitting nearby who can see their screen.¹

¹ Sana, F., T. Weston and N. J. Cepeda (2013). "Laptop multitasking hinders classroom learning for both users and nearby peers." Computers & Education 62: 24-31.

VIDEOTAPING, AUDIO RECORDING, AND COURSE MATERIALS

All course materials, including lectures, syllabi, handouts, and presentations are the intellectual property of your professor. Students are prohibited from sharing any course materials with third parties, including on social media, without the express written permission of your professor. **Videotaping and audio recording are both prohibited without the express written permission of your professor.**

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS

Students with disabilities are legally entitled to reasonable accommodations to ensure equal access to education. If you have a disability and have an accommodation letter from the Disability Resources office, I encourage you to discuss your accommodations and needs with me as early in the semester as possible. I will work with you to ensure that accommodations are provided as appropriate.

The ADA defines a disability as a medical condition that substantially limits one or more life activities – including things like walking, sleeping, taking care of yourself, learning, and regulating your emotions – or major bodily functions. If you have a medical condition, *including mental health conditions*, that significantly interferes with your schoolwork, you probably qualify. **You do not need to disclose your condition to your instructors to receive accommodations.**

Some students will need accommodations in college who did not need them before. If you suspect that you may have a disability and would benefit from accommodations but are not yet registered with the Office of Disability Resources, I encourage you to contact them at access@andrew.cmu.edu. It is important to reach out sooner than later, as most accommodations only function as forward-looking modifications to class expectations, rather than mitigating low grades you may have already received.

More generally: take care of yourself. Do your best to maintain a healthy lifestyle this semester by eating well, exercising, avoiding excess substance use, getting enough sleep, and taking some time to relax. Also: make use of the resources available to you to manage the stresses and anxieties that we all experience sometimes. An important part of maturing is learning how and when to ask for help. Asking for help sooner rather than later can in many cases help to avert more serious crises. If you or anyone you know is experiencing anxiety or depression, I encourage you to seek support. You can contact Counseling and Psychological Services (CaPS) at [412-268-2922](tel:412-268-2922) or visit their website at <http://www.cmu.edu/counseling/>. Consider reaching out to a friend, faculty or family member you trust for help getting connected to the support that you need.

I am committed to providing students with equal access to this class. If you are struggling – whether because of a medical condition or **for any other reason** – please come talk to me. It is an expectation in my classroom that both students and professor see everyone as whole people. Self-care is valid and important work, and should take priority over this class. You cannot pour from an empty cup. Prioritize caring for your health, both physical and mental.

OUTLINE OF TOPICS & TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF READINGS

(All dates and readings are subject to change. I will always confirm what to read for the next class at the end of the previous meeting. All required readings will be provided on Canvas.)

Part I: Course Introduction and Intellectual Property

What is the justification for intellectual property rights? Can intellectual property rights in life-saving drugs be defended? This topic is of urgent relevance today, as many low-income countries cannot obtain COVID vaccines for their populations due to hoarding by high-income countries and barriers to technology transfer in the global intellectual property regime.

Aug. 29	<i>Course Introduction and the Pandemic of Poverty</i> Alston, P. (2020). "COVID-19 has revealed a pre-existing pandemic of poverty that benefits the rich." <i>The Guardian</i> , 11 Jul 2020.
Aug. 31	<i>The Global Intellectual Property Regime</i> Ho, C.M. (2011). "An Introduction to TRIPS." <u>Access to Medicine in the Global Economy: International Agreements on Patents and Related Rights</u> . C. Ho. Oxford, Oxford University Press: 55-88. Read I.A; Skim or Skip I.B & II.A; Skip II.B; Read III; IV.A; Skim or Skip the Remainder
Sept. 5	<i>Personality-based and Utilitarian Defenses of Intellectual Property Rights</i> Moore, A.D. (2008). "Personality-based, rule-utilitarian, and Lockean justifications of intellectual property." <u>The Handbook of Information and Computer Ethics</u> . K.E. Himma and H.T. Tavani, eds. John Wiley & Sons, Ltd: 105-130. Read only through page 119.
Sept. 7	<i>Vaccine Apartheid</i> Paquin, S. and K. Plouffe-Malette. (2023). "The WTO and the COVID-19 'Vaccine Apartheid': Big Pharma and the Minefield of Patents." <u>Politics and Governance</u> 11 (1): 261-271.
Sept. 12	<i>Property Rights & Negative Duties</i> Locke, J. (1689). <u>Second Treatise of Government</u> , chapter 5 ("Property")
Sept. 14	<i>Intellectual Property & Indigenous Cultural Appropriation</i> Bannister, K., M. Solomon, and C.G. Brunk. (2009). "Appropriation of Traditional Knowledge: Ethics in the Context of Ethnobiology." <u>The Ethics of Cultural Appropriation</u> . J.O. Young and C.G. Brunk. Malden, MA, Blackwell: 140-172.
Sept. 19	<i>Epistemic Injustice in Global Health</i> Bhakuni, H. and S. Abimbola (2021). "Epistemic injustice in academic global health." <u>Lancet</u> . <i>Epub ahead of print</i> . doi: 10.1016/S2214-109X(21)00301-6.
Sept. 21	<i>Epistemic Injustice in Global Health</i> Pratt, B. and J. de Vries. (2023). "Where is Knowledge from the Global South? An account of epistemic justice for a global bioethics." <u>Journal of Medical Ethics</u> 49 (5): 325-334. Abimbola, S. (2023). "Knowledge from the global South is in the global South." <u>Journal of Medical Ethics</u> 49 (5): 337-338.

Interlude I: Introducing the Term Paper Assignment

Sept. 26	<i>Discussion of Paper Assignment</i> No assigned readings. Come to class with a minimum of 3 popular media articles on issues you're interested in related to health deficits in the global south.
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Part II: Human Rights and the Social Determinants of Health

What is the basis for the ascription of human rights? How should human rights be conceived? Do we have claims to human rights by virtue of some universal aspect of our humanity, or are all rights essentially political? What kinds of rights are necessary to secure health?

Sept. 28	<i>The Social Determinants of Health</i> Either: Listen to the <i>Death Panel</i> podcast episode, " Social Determinants of Health " Or: Watch Episode I of the documentary <i>Unnatural Causes</i> ("In Sickness and in Wealth"). Available to rent on Vimeo , or attend an on-campus screening (date/time TBD).
Oct. 3	<i>Global public health & human rights</i> Mann, J. M. (1997). "Medicine and Public Health, Ethics and Human Rights." <u>Hastings Center Report</u> 27 (3): 6-13. Sen, A. (2008). "Why and How is Health a Human Right?" <u>Lancet</u> 372 (9655): 2010.
Oct. 5	<i>Human rights grounded in universal basic interests</i> Nickel, J.W. (2005). "Poverty and Rights." <u>The Philosophical Quarterly</u> 55 (220): 385-402.
Oct. 10	<i>The capabilities approach</i> Nussbaum, M. (1997). "Capabilities and Human Rights." <u>Fordham Law Review</u> 66 (2): 273-300.
Oct. 12	<i>Writing Workshop</i> No readings. Bring 2 printed copies of Writing Assignment 6 with you to class.
-- Fall Break --	
Oct. 24	<i>A critical examination of the value of human rights talk</i> O'Neill, O. (2005). "The Dark Side of Human Rights." <u>International Affairs</u> 81 (2): 427-439.
Oct. 26	<i>Human rights as collective moral responsibility</i> Pogge, T. (1998). "How Should Human Rights be Conceived?" <u>World Poverty and Human Rights</u> . Malden, MA, Polity Press, ch. 2.

Part III: Political Determinants of Health & The Source of Moral Obligations to the Global Poor

On what basis might obligations to address human rights deficits among the global poor be sustained? Does the very fact that we have the resources to aid others imply that we have a moral obligation to do so? What impact do global political institutions have on global health? How should we understand the nature and importance of decolonialism in global health?

Oct. 31	<p><i>The Political Determinants of Health & Neoliberalism</i> Kickbusch, I. (2015). "The political determinants of health – 10 years on." <u>BMJ</u> 350: h81. Selection from Bambra, C, D. Fox, and A. Scott-Samuel. (2005) "Towards a politics of health." <u>Health Promotion International</u> 20(2): 187-193 Benjamin McKean (2020). <i>Disorienting Neoliberalism</i>. Oxford, Oxford University Press, pp. 22-27 (required); pp. 27-37 (recommended)</p>
Nov. 2	<p><i>Political Determinants of Health Case Studies</i> Assigned Selections from Ottersen, O.P. et al, "The political origins of health inequity: prospects for change." <u>Lancet</u> 383(9917): 630-667. GROUP PRESENTATIONS</p>

Interlude II: Term Paper Work

Nov. 7	<p>NO CLASS – ELECTION DAY Use this time to vote and to work on your draft for Thursday</p>
Nov. 9	<p><i>Writing Workshop</i> No readings. Bring 2 printed copies of Writing Assignment 9 with you to class</p>

Part III, cont'd

Nov. 14	<p><i>The principle of sacrifice</i> Singer, P. (1972). "Famine, Affluence, and Morality." <u>Philosophy & Public Affairs</u> 1(3): 229-243.</p>
Nov. 16	<p><i>Justice in Rectification</i> Pogge, T. (2005). "World Poverty and Human Rights." <u>Ethics and International Affairs</u> 19(1): 1-7.</p>
Nov. 21	<p><i>Political Determinants & Responsibility for Health: Structural Adjustment</i> Rudin, J. and D. Sanders (2021). "Debt, Structural Adjustment, and Health." <u>Global Health: Ethical Challenges (2nd Ed.)</u> S. Benatar and G. Brock, eds. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press: 170-181.</p>
--THANKSGIVING BREAK--	
Nov. 28	<p><i>Asynchronous Peer Review</i> No assigned readings. Details will be provided on Canvas.</p>

Nov. 30	<p><i>Political Determinants & Responsibility for Health: Extractivism</i> Cielo, C. and L. Coba. (2018). "Extractivism, Gender, and Disease: An Intersectional Approach to Inequalities." <u><i>Ethics and International Affairs</i></u> 32(2): 169-178.</p>
Dec. 5	<p><i>Political Determinants & Responsibility for Health: The Global Anti-Abortion Movement</i> Arguedas-Ramírez, G. and D.M. Wenner. (2023). "Reproductive Justice Beyond Borders: Global Feminist Solidarity in the Post-Roe Era." <u><i>The Journal of Law, Medicine, and Ethics</i></u> (forthcoming).</p>
Dec. 7	<p><i>Decolonizing Global Health</i> Khan, M. et al. (2021). "Decolonising global health in 2021: a roadmap to move from rhetoric to reform." <u><i>BMJ Global Health</i></u> 6(3): e005604 Chaudhuri M.M. et al. (2021). "Decolonising global health: beyond 'reformative' roadmaps and towards decolonial thought." <u><i>BMJ Global Health</i></u> 6(7): e006371.</p>