

Philippe van Basshuysen

philippe.van.basshuysen@philos.uni-hannover.de

Course guide available: <https://philippevanbasshuysen.com/>

Office hours: by appointment

Seminar – Philosophy, Politics and Economics of Health

Winter Semester 2021/22

The seminar will be held on Thursdays at 2-4 pm during the Winter Semester 2021/22, from the week starting on the 18/10/2021. We will meet in the seminar room B.410; please get acquainted with the Corona rules before accessing the building!

Important: Please read this document carefully and in full, to make sure you understand how the course will operate, and what you will need to do. Your Stud.IP account needs to be linked to an email account that you check regularly, so you can keep track of all announcements and updates. The readings for this seminar will be made available to you via Stud.IP. You can find other important materials, including this course guide, on <https://philippevanbasshuysen.com/>.

Course Description

Public health raises a number of issues which require the joint efforts of philosophy, politics and economics: how should healthcare resources be allocated to generate fair and efficient outcomes? What do different healthcare systems imply for what kinds of services will be provided, and what is the appropriate role of the state in promoting public health? When are inequalities in health unfair, and what should be done about it? We will also discuss pressing issues that are raised by the COVID-19 pandemic, such as when it might be justifiable for governments to restrict basic liberties in the face of a public health emergency.

Objectives

1. Become familiar with some of the main philosophical issues that are raised by public health, such as justice, responsibility, and paternalism.
2. Understand the basics of cost benefit analysis (in particular the QALY approach) and its possible drawbacks.
3. Develop the ability to critically assess policy decisions concerning public health, including in emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic.
4. Develop the ability to extract the main messages and arguments out of texts that are written in different disciplines (mainly PPE).

5. Enhance ability to engage with philosophical debate in English (in particular, development of the ability to engage in written philosophy).

Course Schedule

Note: The reading list will be updated as the term moves on.

Session	Date	Topic and Readings
1	21/10/2021	Admin Session No assigned readings
2	28/10/2021	Introduction to the Philosophy, Politics and Economics of Health Chapter "Introduction" in James Wilson, <i>Philosophy for Public Health and Public Policy</i> (required) Francoise Baylis, Nuala P. Kenny, and Susan Sherwin, "A relational account of public health ethics" (required)
3	04/11/2021	Improving Health in a Complex World Chapter "Evidence, Mechanisms, and Complexity" in James Wilson, <i>Philosophy for Public Health and Public Policy</i> (required) Nancy Cartwright, "Knowing what we are talking about: why evidence doesn't always travel" (recommended)
4	11/11/2021	Justice and the Social Determinants of Health Chapter "Measuring and Combatting Health-Related Inequalities", in James Wilson, <i>Philosophy for Public Health and Public Policy</i> (required) Jonathan Wolff, "Equality: The Recent History of an Idea" (recommended)
5	18/11/2021	Paternalism, the Common Good, and the Right to Public Health Jessica Flanigan, "Seat Belt Mandates and Paternalism" (required) Chapter "Paternalism, Autonomy, and the Common Good", in James Wilson, <i>Philosophy for Public Health and Public Policy</i> (recommended)
6	25/11/2021	Responsibility and Health Rebecca C.H. Brown, Julian Savulescu, "Responsibility in healthcare across time and agents" (required)
7	02/12/2021	Budgets, the Scope of Funded Care Packages, and Waiting Alex Voorhoeve, "May a Government Mandate more Comprehensive Health Insurance than Citizens want for themselves? In <i>Oxford Studies in Political Philosophy</i> Volume 4 (required)

		Tyler M. John and Joseph Millum, "First Come, First Served?" <i>(recommended)</i>
8	09/12/2021	Measuring and valuing health: QALYs, NICE's approach and deciding which interventions to fund Richard Cookson and Anthony Culyer, "Measuring overall population health: the use and abuse of QALYs" <i>(required)</i>
9	16/12/2021	Pandemics, Emergencies, and Lockdown Lucie White, Philippe van Basshuysen, and Mathias Frisch, "When is Lockdown Justified?" <i>(required)</i> Eric Winsberg, Jason Brennan, and Chris Surprenant, "How Government Leaders Violated their Epistemic Duties During the SARS-CoV-2 Crisis" <i>(optional)</i>
		Christmas break
10	06/01/2022	Vaccination Chapter "Communicable Disease", in James Wilson, <i>Philosophy for Public Health and Public Policy (required)</i> Lucie White, "Can One Both Contribute to and Benefit from Herd Immunity?" <i>(required)</i>
11	13/01/2022	Big data, Privacy, AI and the Social Contract Solon Barocas and Helen Nissenbaum, "Big Data's End Run around Anonymity and Consent", in Julia Lane, Victoria Stodden, Stefan Bendner, and Helen Nissenbaum (eds.), <i>Privacy, Big Data, and the Public Good (required)</i> Mark J. Taylor and James Wilson, "Reasonable Expectations of Privacy and Disclosure of Health Data" <i>(recommended)</i>
12	20/01/2022	Buffer Session

Course Requirements

The coursework (**Studienleistung**) consists of the following:

1. Read the scheduled material carefully, and set aside some time to look into any concepts or terms that you don't understand, and to think about the issues raised.
2. Attend the seminars regularly (do not miss more than 1 meeting).
3. Participate actively in the seminar discussions.
4. In addition, give a short presentation (10-15 minutes) about one of the required readings.

An examination (**Prüfungsleistung**) consists of, in addition to the coursework: A term paper of **3000 words**, due on the **28/02/2022**. You should devise your own essay question/topic for this essay, but you need to run it past me before you start writing. I also highly recommend that you talk to me about your PL essay well before it is due, either by sending a short outline (of about a page) via email, or scheduling a meeting, or both. If you have any questions or want to discuss anything to do with the essay, please get in touch.

For an essay of this length, you should reference at least 6 sources.

Important: Your essay should correspond to the following guidelines (that means please read them well in advance of writing your essay – you are unlikely to do well in your essay if you have not read them): J. Pryor, “Guidelines on writing a philosophy essay”

<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>

Your essay will be graded on the basis of how well it corresponds to these guidelines.

Tips for essays

Make sure that you properly cite and reference all material that you use in the essay. I recommend the following style of citation:

https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-2.html

You are free to use another style if you prefer, but make sure you stick to the guidelines for your chosen style, remain consistent, and include all the necessary details for any reference.

Plagiarism is taken very seriously - it will result in an automatic fail, and may need to be reported to the university. Avoid plagiarism at all costs! Here is a guide to help you do this:

<https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/applying-to-oxford/university-policies/plagiarism?wssl=1>

If in doubt about anything to do with plagiarism, please contact me – even accidental plagiarism will result in a failing grade.

Tips for online research

The TIB (university library) provides access to many online resources, which you can search for here: <https://www.tib.eu/en/>

The TIB offers many resources for students who are trying to do research online, including daily webinars, see their website for details.

You can sometimes gain access to these resources by entering the details from your library card, however, accessing this material works best if you use the VPN client – you can find out how to download it here: https://www.luis.uni-hannover.de/netz_vpn.html?&L=1

As well as providing easy access to material you find through the library catalogue, the VPN client also allows you to search philosophy databases like <https://philpapers.org/> or academic databases like <https://scholar.google.com> and automatically access the papers that the university has a subscription for.

Please note that no late submissions (without a pre-arranged extension) will be accepted!

If you have any questions that are not covered here, please get in touch with me!