MEDICAL HUMANITIES ELECTIVE

PHILOSOPHY of MEDICINE SEMINAR

COURSE INSTRUCTOR: Stacey E. Ake, PhD, PhD, Associate Teaching Professor of Philosophy, Drexel University

PURPOSE: This course will help the participants begin the process of engaging medicine from a philosophical perspective. When philosophical reasoning becomes second nature, a person seeks the right answers because he or she is asking the right questions.

REQUIREMENTS: It would be advisable if the participant had some background in philosophy and/or humanities and literature.

PREPARATION: There will be approximately 2 hours of preparation weekly (see below) consisting of short articles and videos. It is also asked that students sketch out some ideas concerning the questions assigned for that particular day.

SCHEDULE of TOPICS:

**Wednesday, January 4**, 5-7 PM
Assignment: Philosophy of Medicine Questions to Ponder on page 2 of syllabus
- What is health? What is disease?
- What is the difference between treatment and healing?

**Wednesday, January 25**, 5-7 PM
Nazi Medicine: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6C8Q5o5KlxY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6C8Q5o5KlxY)
- Is the physician a morally superior person?
- What does it mean to have a calling?

**Monday, February 13**, 5-7 PM
- What is the role of spirituality in medicine?
- What is suffering? What is death?

**Monday, February 20**, 5-7 PM
*The Myth of Mental Illness* on bbLearn
- What is mental illness?
- What is the social construction of disease?

**Monday, March 13**, 5-7 PM
Science and the Swastika: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FZquBH0CH24](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FZquBH0CH24)
- When medicine goes mad: I.e., Nazi experiments, race research, etc.
- Consider euthanasia: what are the right to life and the right to die?
Questions to ponder….

This is the WHO definition of health. What do you think of it?

“Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”

(Preamble to the Constitution of the World Health Organization as adopted by the International Health Conference, New York, 19-22 June, 1946; signed on 22 July 1946 by the representatives of 61 States (Official Records of the World Health Organization, no. 2, p. 100) and entered into force on 7 April 1948.)

What three elements do you believe constitute health?

What is the difference between an illness and a disease?

Can you have an illness and still be healthy?

Is health the same as wellbeing?

How much control does a person have over their health?

How necessary are physicians to a person’s health?

Please jot down a few notes in response to each question before class.