University Studies Cluster Proposal Cover Sheet
For Academic Year 2009-2010

Cluster Proposed for: Knowledge, Rationality, and Understanding

Title of course: Philosophy of Medicine

Course Number: PHL 305U

Proposing Faculty: Robert Gillis

Cluster Coordinator: David Weber

Proposal Type:
___ Cluster Course to New Cluster
X ___ New Course to Cluster
___ Removal

Other clusters this course is assigned to:

Proposals are due to the University Studies office (CH 117) with 12 duplicate copies by Friday, November 9, 2007 so that they may be reviewed and forwarded to the UCC Committee for final approval.

ORIGINAL
University Studies New Cluster Course Addition

Adding a previously unapproved course to a cluster

(When addressing questions, please attach a separate sheet)

PROPOSING FACULTY  Robert Gillis

PROPOSED CLUSTER(S)  Knowledge, Rationality, and Understanding

I. THE COURSE

A. Philosophy 305U  Philosophy of Medicine

PHL 305 Philosophy of Medicine: This course is an examination of some central philosophical issues that arise within the theory and practice of medicine, including: the status of medicine as a scientific discipline and its relationship to basic sciences; the roles played in medicine by normative concepts such as health and illness; the nature of causal reasoning in medicine through the study of diagnostic reasoning (including the use of computers, heuristics, and the art of judgment in the clinical setting); the nature of diagnostic categories in medicine and psychiatry through the study of advances in biology and biotechnology; the role of mind-body interaction in therapeutic practice through the study of the ‘placebo effect’ and psychoimmunology.

B. DEVELOPMENT

This is a new course (currently under review as a “new course proposal”).

C. AVAILABILITY

It is intended to be offered 2-3 times a year.

D. PREREQUISITES

None.

2. COURSE OUTLINE. Provide a detailed outline of the proposed course, also including its preliminary reading list, and the name(s) of instructor(s) committed to teaching the course.

Instructor: Robert Gillis
I. Introduction (Week 1)

II Health and Disease (Weeks 1-3)
5. Grene, M., “Philosophy of Medicine: Prolegomena to a Philosophy of Science” PSA, 1976

III. Doctor and Patient (Week 4)

IV. Causal Reasoning (Weeks 5-7)
A. Pathogenesis

B. Diagnosis

C. Evaluating Therapies
V. Mind and Body (Weeks 8-10)

A. The Self


B. Explanation


C. Classification in Psychiatry


3. GENERAL EDUCATION GOALS.

A. COURSE CONTENT & SUITABILITY FOR CLUSTER

The Knowledge Rationality and Understanding cluster focuses on the study of the nature of methods of achieving knowledge and understanding, and this course is uniquely suited for it. It adds to the preexisting set of offerings in the cluster a course specializing in the nature of biomedical knowledge, which is an increasingly important form of scientific analysis of human behavior and experience. This course is a significant addition to the cluster since the “medicalization” of humans has arguably been the only de facto successful strategy for characterizing human behavior and experience within the realm of science (or at least an ostensibly science-based technology). The course addresses some of the foundational epistemological and methodological issues that emerge from philosophical reflection on the scientific nature of theories and practices of medicine, such as the nature of diagnostic inference, the logic of classification behind diagnostic practice, and the processes by which diagnostic categories become part of our self-understanding. The course also addresses debates concerning the conceptualization of the concepts of health and disease (statistical, evolutionary, and social models for these key notions of medicine and our culturally mediated self-understanding). In short, the course fits the general theme of the cluster, focuses on a particularly topical form of 21st century knowledge and understanding, and also fits with a current initiative to add to the KRU cluster courses that introduce students to hermeneutical traditions of epistemology.
B. UNST GOALS

Critical Thinking: Students will develop general analytic skills given the emphasis of all philosophy courses on arguments and clarity of ideas and articulations. Furthermore, the course fosters skills of inquiry in addressing issues pertaining to the application of methods, theories, and facts of science to individual cases and social problems. Students will also enhance their problem-solving skills through the study of the logic of clinical reasoning and diagnostic concept-formation. Through specifically these two topics, the students will also acquire critical perspective on the nature of medical change and advances and the processes that influence their social appropriation.

Communication goals are served by the course in several major ways. First, the class pedagogy underscores cooperative collective discussion. Second, the class material also contributes to learning objectives in communication in that the art and practice of conveying medical information and the collective nature of clinical decision-making form some of its central topics. Third, the topics of the course are extremely user-friendly for the students’ participation because all students have experiences with health care. Fourth and finally, the course is designed to improve the students’ writing skills in contexts involving the argumentative use of scientific information.

The Diversity of Human Experience is addressed in a fundamental form through a critical exploration of the meanings of concepts of normalcy, disease, and health. The exploration unearths quite a bit of variety if not ambiguity within commonly identified disease categories. Through this inquiry, students are exposed to genuine diversity in human experience and behavior and in a context that includes matters of life and death.

Ethical Issues and Social Responsibility are fostered through the class topics that concern the responsible application of general medical concepts and techniques to individuals. The course as a whole also contributes to this learning objective in raising students’ awareness of the problems, challenges, and opportunities that emerge from the medical treatment of conscious rational beings.

C. CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

The course activities are designed to contribute to a genuine collective learning environment. Students will be encouraged, whenever appropriate, to relate personal meaning to class readings and encouraged to share their relevant experiences in class. Students will also be given study questions and projects that will provide an ongoing basis for small and large-group discussions. This format allows for collective exploration of course themes in a safe and sensitive environment. The course will also use guest lecturers for specific cutting edge topics in hopes of advancing sustained student interest and engagement with the course.
**Obtain Chair and Cluster Coordinator Signatures Before Submitting to University Studies Office**

Department Chair(s)  

Date: 11/5/08  .. Date: 

Cluster Coordinator  

Date: 11/5/08  

All changes to Clusters must be approved by PSU's Senate Curriculum Committee.

**The Original + 3 Copies of the Proposal Must Be Received at University Studies (CH 117) By November 7 2008.**

Proposals submitted by this due date will be reviewed for inclusions in clusters beginning in AY 2009 - 2010.
COURSE APPROVED FOR CLUSTER INCLUSION

CHAIR, CLUSTER COORDINATORS: ____________________________

DATE: 12/01/08

CHAIR, UNST COMMITTEE: ____________________________

DATE: 12/02/08