

## Syllabus for Philosophy 4320 – Philosophy of Mental Illness

<b>Fall 2021</b>	<b>Instructor:</b> Katie Harster <b>Office:</b> Stokes 253N and by Zoom <b>Office Hours:</b> Mondays 11am-12:30pm and by appointment <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:katie.harster@bc.edu">katie.harster@bc.edu</a> (24 hours to reply) <b>Phone:</b> (617) 804-6487 <b>Classroom:</b> Stokes 215N <b>Class Hours:</b> MWF 10-10:50am
------------------	---

### Course Websites:

**Canvas:** <https://bostoncollege.instructure.com/courses/1623654>

**Zoom:** <https://bccte.zoom.us/my/harster>

**YouTube:** <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCwvXDaoFsd5aXJCU0gc65A/>

**Instagram:** follow @ProfessorHarster (optional)

### Course Description:

This course explores historical and contemporary issues in philosophy and psychiatry. Topics include dimensional versus categorical diagnostic methods, what it is like to live with mental illness, the challenges faced by individuals in recovery, and issues of competence and consent. We will engage these topics through written and verbal discussion as well philosophical, scientific, and narrative literature.

### Learning Objectives:

(1) To critically engage philosophical and psychiatric literature, (2) approach narratives with curiosity and compassion, (3) produce thoughtful essays and meaningful discussion on challenges in the philosophy of mental illness.

### Required Materials:

Weekly readings will be posted on the course website. You are expected to print or bring an electronic copy of the readings to class.

We will frequently use the DSM Online Library, available online through the Boston College Library Catalog (<https://library.bc.edu>)

OPTIONAL: DSM-5 Desk Reference (ISBN 979-8577456832) *provides basic diagnostic info, easier to navigate than online version*

## **Required Technology:**

- 6-8 Hours of High-Speed Internet Per Week
- Canvas Access
- Microsoft Word (free for BC students, <https://www.bc.edu/software/applications/office.html>)
- Zoom (zoom.us)
- YouTube
- Google Slides (available via BC Email)

*Technology (laptops, iPads, etc.) is permitted in the classroom for note-taking, referencing articles or the DSM-5, and looking up questions. Technology should not be used to check email, shop, text, or any other activity that does not further class discussion.*

## **Assessment**

**Participation:** Students are expected to come to scheduled live discussions prepared to discuss the weekly readings, lectures, and any other materials (videos, websites, etc.) uploaded to the weekly module. If you cannot attend a scheduled live discussion please contact the professor ASAP. If you are experiencing technical difficulties, please reach out to the instructor for assistance.

Your participation grade will also include quizzes, activities, and other Canvas-based assignments to assess your engagement with the readings, discussions, and lectures. These are usually due by the end of each week, Friday by 11:59PM Boston time.

**Short Argumentative Essays:** Students will be responsible for completing 4 short argumentative essays throughout the course. Short argumentative essays should be approximately 2 -3 pages, double-spaced. **Short argumentative essays are due on Fridays (11:59pm) and should discuss the readings for the past 2-3 weeks.** For example, the second essay should focus on one or more of the readings from September 20<sup>th</sup>-October 8<sup>th</sup>. Students may focus primarily on one reading but should address any relevant concerns raised by the other readings. You should cite the daily readings and any external sources (optional) using MLA, APA, or Chicago style.

Essays will be graded based on (1) demonstrated knowledge of the readings and (2) thoughtful engagement. Students may choose to critically analyze an argument in one of the reading and discuss how it relates to past class readings and/or other assigned readings for the day, discuss an argument that you do not fully understand and why it seems perplexing, or use some other organization structure that accomplishes the two goals discussed above. We will discuss examples in class.

Extended Argumentative Essay: Students who choose to complete an alternate final assignment will write an extended argumentative essay. This essay is structured like the shorter argumentative essays but is meant to discuss more ideas. The extended essay should be 4-5 pages double-spaced, centered around a thesis, and will typically discuss texts from multiple sections of the course. **Students who choose to write a final essay will be exempt from this assignment.**

<b>Short Argumentative Essay #1 on Disease and Natural Kinds</b>	Due Friday, September 17th
<b>Short Argumentative Essay #2 on Agency</b>	Due Friday, October 8 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Short Argumentative Essay #3 on Responsibility</b>	Due Friday, November 12 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Short Argumentative Essay #4 on Should We Moralize Mental Illness?</b>	Due Friday, December 3 <sup>rd</sup>
<b>Extended Argumentative Essay on Any Topic</b>	Due Wednesday, December 8 <sup>th</sup>

Memoir Discussion: For the midterm students will read a memoir about a personal experience with mental illness. The instructor can suggest titles but students are free to choose a relevant memoir. Selections should be submitted by **September 10<sup>th</sup>**. Students will write a brief reflection and bring it to class the day of the discussions. The memoir discussions will take place in class **Wednesday, October 13<sup>th</sup>**.

Final Essay: Students will write an 10-15 page philosophical essay on one of the topics discussed in class. The class will workshop paper outlines three weeks prior to the essay deadlines via Canvas discussion. Ideally essays will be born out of reflection essays but this does not have to be the case. Students should feel free to discuss potential topics with the instructor.\*

Alternate Final Assignment: Students may complete an alternate final assignment. These students will still be required to participate in the outline workshop. Alternate assignments may include class presentations, mental health advocacy work on campus, a podcast, or another project suitable to student interests and course objectives.\*

\*All paper and project proposals are due by **October 1<sup>st</sup>** via Canvas.

### Grade Calculation:

Participation: 15%  
Short Argumentative Essays: 30%  
Memoir Selection, Essay, & Discussion: 20%  
Final Essay/Project: 35%

### **Attendance and Lateness Policy**

Students are expected to attend all class sessions. If you need to miss a class due to illness (including mental health) or other emergency please email the instructor in advance. Late work will not be accepted.

### **Academic Integrity**

“Presentation of others’ work as one’s own is not only intellectual dishonesty, but it also undermines the educational process.” (quoted from Boston College’s Policies and Procedures Website).

All violations of this policy will be reported to the academic integrity officer. Particularly relevant to this course, the final essay and reflection essays will be monitored for plagiarism. Students should not collaborate on assignments or essays. We will review the policy in class and students are encouraged to refer to the policy on the University’s website:

[https://www.bc.edu/offices/stserv/academic/univcat/undergrad\\_catalog/policies\\_procedures.html#integrity](https://www.bc.edu/offices/stserv/academic/univcat/undergrad_catalog/policies_procedures.html#integrity)

All essays, discussion posts, short answers, etc. should be in your own words. You should cite (formally or informally, depending on the assignment) any course materials or outside sources you use to complete assignments, exams/quizzes, or essays. If you are concerned about academic integrity in an online course, please contact the instructor.

If a student is suspected of an academic integrity violation, the instructor will contact the appropriate authorities within the student’s degree program.

### **Accommodations**

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** Students with disabilities can request different kinds of accommodations. To learn more, please visit: [https://www.bc.edu/offices/dos/subsidiary\\_offices/disabilityservices.html](https://www.bc.edu/offices/dos/subsidiary_offices/disabilityservices.html). If you need accommodations for learning disabilities and ADHD, please contact Kathy Duggan at [dugganka@bc.edu](mailto:dugganka@bc.edu) (617-552-8093) at the Connors Family Learning. If you need accommodations for any other kind of disability (including temporary disabilities) please contact Rory Stein at [rory.stein@bc.edu](mailto:rory.stein@bc.edu) (617-552-3470) in the Disability Service Office. Make sure you contact these offices early in the semester to

make sure you get the help you need. Please let the instructor know if you are having trouble accessing accommodations in a timely manner.

**Accommodations Based Upon Sexual Assault:** Boston College is committed to offering reasonable academic accommodations to students who are survivors of sexual assault. Students are eligible for accommodation regardless of whether they seek criminal or disciplinary action. If you need to request such accommodations, please direct your request to the Title IX Office (<https://www.bc.edu/offices/diversity/compliance/TitleIX.html>). The Title IX Office is a confidential resource; however, requests for accommodations will be shared with the appropriate administration and faculty.

The Women's Center is also committed to providing support for survivors of sexual assault. Their office can offer counseling as well as confidential guidance. Please see their website: <https://www.bc.edu/content/bc-web/offices/student-affairs/sites/womens-center.html>

Finally, the Sexual Assault Network (SANet) provides support and a confidential hotline (617-552-8099) for the campus community for those who have been impacted by sexual violence. They have walk-in support hours. Please see their website: <https://www.bc.edu/content/bc-web/offices/student-affairs/sites/womens-center/programs/sexual-assault-network.html>

Other Resources:

*Boston Area Rape Crisis Center:*  
800-841-8371

*Newton-Wellesley Hospital's Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Program:*  
617-243-6521

*Victim Rights Law Center:*  
617-399-6720

*Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN):* 800-656-HOPE (4673)

**Bias Reporting:** The University has a process through which students, faculty, staff, and community members who have experienced or witnessed incidents of bias, prejudice or discrimination against a student can report their experiences to the University's Bias Response Team. See: [https://www.bc.edu/offices/dos/bias\\_response.html](https://www.bc.edu/offices/dos/bias_response.html)

**Mental Health:** University Counseling Services work with students to resolve personal and interpersonal difficulties, many of which can affect the academic experience. These include conflicts with or worry about friends or family, concerns about eating or drinking patterns, and feelings of anxiety and depression. The Office of Health Promotion (OHP) offers individual and Group Health Coaching appointments with a trained Health Coach. Please reach out by going to: <https://www.bc.edu/offices/counseling> or visiting Gasson 025. Be advised that wait times for appointments can vary and that some students seek help through community resources.

Please contact the instructor as soon as possible if you need further accommodations for mental illness. This course discusses serious matters that may feel personal and upsetting to some students. If you need to step out of a discussion, please do so. Accommodations will not affect your grade. The instructor must report any dangers to yourself or others but will otherwise respect your confidentiality.

**External Mental Health Resources:**

Sanvello (phone app)  
NAMI Massachusetts (namimass.org)  
Crisis Text Line (HOME to 741741)  
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-8255)  
TrevorLifeline for LGBTQ Youth (1-866-488-7386)

**Schedule**

*All assignments are subject to change. Please check the course website regularly. Assigned readings are available on Canvas and should be read before class.*

\*All cases can be found in *DSM-5 Clinical Cases* located in the DSM Library Online

**Monday, August 30<sup>th</sup>:**

Introduction

**Reading:** PMI Syllabus

**Case Study:** “How to Write a Short Argumentative Essay” (during class)

**Assignments:** \*\*Please take the following brief survey before the first day of class:

<https://forms.gle/km9HdQYRmChAeSp2A>

**Wednesday, September 1<sup>st</sup> & Friday, September 3<sup>rd</sup>:**

Disease and Natural Kinds

**Lecture:** Accessing the DSM-5 Online (<https://youtu.be/9fYwOusrXbc>)

**Reading:** Bolton, “What is Mental Illness?”

**Assignment:** DSM Disorder Research (assigned Friday, due W 9/8)

**NO CLASS MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 6<sup>TH</sup> (Labor Day)**

**Wednesday, September 8<sup>th</sup> & Friday, September 10<sup>th</sup>:**

Disease and Natural Kinds

**Lecture:** Classifying Mental Illness (<https://youtu.be/gRGmxTAXG-w>)

**Readings:** Shorter, “The History of the DSM;” Paris, “The Ideology Behind DSM-5”

**Case Study:** Rapier, “Dimensional versus Categorical”

**Assignment:** DSM Disorder Research due 9/8 (bring to class), Memoir Selection due Friday, September 10<sup>th</sup> by 11:59pm (Canvas)

**Week of September 13<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup>:**

Disease and Natural Kinds

**Reading:** Kendler, Zachar, and Craver, “What kinds of things are psychiatric disorders?”, Tabb, “Philosophy of psychiatry after diagnostic kinds”

**Case Study:** Young, Lareau, and Pierre, “One Quintillion Ways to Have PTSD Comorbidity: Recommendations for the Disordered DSM-5”

**YouTube:** Finding Natural Kinds (<https://youtu.be/4QZauB63srA>)

**Assignment:** Short Argumentative Essay #1 (Disease and Natural Kinds) due Friday, September 17<sup>th</sup> by 11:59pm (Canvas)

**Week of September 20<sup>th</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup>:**

Agency

**Lecture:** Introduction to Agency (<https://youtu.be/CZfKzHrDyFI>)

**Reading:** Graham, “Identity and Agency: Conceptual Lessons for the Psychiatric Ethics of Patient Care,”

**Case Study:** Buchanan, “A Dutch Woman Suffering from Mental Illness Chose to Die By Assisted Suicide”

**Assignment:** Agency in the News Example due Friday, September 24<sup>th</sup> (bring to class)

**Week of September 27<sup>th</sup> - October 1<sup>st</sup>:**

Agency

**Readings:** Kennett, “Autism, Empathy, and Moral Agency”; DSM-5, “Autism Spectrum Disorders” (Symptoms and Diagnostic Features only)

**Case Study:** Case 1.1 “A Second Opinion on Autism” and Case 1.2 “Temper Tantrums” (see DSM Clinical Cases online)

**Films On Demand:** “Autism and Relationships” from *Living With Autism* (2015)

**Guest Lecture:** 9/29 Dr. Paul Glaser, MD, PhD, Professor of Psychiatry, Division of Child Psychiatry, Washington University School of Medicine

**Assignment:** Project or Paper Proposal due Friday, October 1<sup>st</sup> by 11:59pm (Canvas)

**Week of October 4<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup>:**

Agency

**Readings:** Kennett, “Mental Disorder, Moral Agency, and the Self;” DSM-5, Substance Use Disorder [Features (only first, general), skim symptoms of specific substance use disorders (e.g. alcohol, opioid, etc.)] (see DSM online)

**Assignment:** Short Argumentative Essay #2 (Agency) due Friday, October 8<sup>th</sup> by 11:59pm (Canvas)

**NO CLASS MONDAY, OCTOBER 11<sup>TH</sup> - Fall Break**

**Tuesday, October 12<sup>th</sup> - MAKE UP CLASS**

Agency

**Readings:** TBA

**Activity:** Burns Library, "History of Agency"

**Wednesday, October 13<sup>th</sup>:**

Experiencing Mental Illness

**Readings:** None

**Assignment:** Memoir Discussions (in class)

**Friday, October 15<sup>th</sup>:**

Experiencing Mental Illness

**Guest Lecture:** Dr. Patrick Cruitt, Minneapolis VA Healthcare System

**Assignment:** Memoir Essay due Friday, October 15<sup>th</sup> by 11:59pm (Canvas)

**Week of October 18<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup>:**

Experiencing Mental Illness

**Readings:** Miller, "Moral Injury and Relational Harm: Analyzing Rape in Darfur;" Kanagaratnam, Rummens, and TonerVA, "...Cultural Meanings of War Trauma"

**Case Study:** Frounfelker et al., "Stronger Together: Community Resilience and Somali Bantu Refugees"

**Activity:** Guest Speaker – Laura Bond, School of Social Work

**Assignment:** Questions for Guest Speaker due Monday, October 18<sup>th</sup> at 11:59pm (Canvas)

**Week of October 25<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup>:**

Responsibility

**Lecture:** Fischer & Ravizza, Explained (<https://youtu.be/D63MEb-0m6o>)

**Readings:** Selections from Fischer & Ravizza, *Responsibility and Control: A Theory of Moral Responsibility*; Shoemaker, "Responsibility and Disability"

**Case Study:** Case 15.1 Doesn't Know the Rules (see DSM Clinical Cases online)

**Week of November 1<sup>st</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup>:**

Responsibility

**Lecture:** No Intention, No Crime (<https://youtu.be/tB7ztKqIb90>)

**Readings:** Nichols and Knobe, "Responsibility and Determinism: The Cognitive Science of Folk Intuitions;" Vatz, "'Affluenza': Just the latest way to shirk responsibility"

**Assignment:** Fringe Case of Responsibility Example due Friday, November 5<sup>th</sup> (bring to class)

**Week of November 8<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>:**

Responsibility

**Lecture:** “Controlling” Addiction (<https://youtu.be/kTYhYwTVTjo>)

**Readings:** Sinnott-Armstrong, “Are Addicts Responsible?”; Pryor, “Guidelines on Writing a Philosophy Paper” [final essay only]

**Case Study:** Silberstein, Case 16.5 A Downward Spiral (see DSM Clinical Cases online), Flanagan, “What It’s Like to Be an Addict”

**Assignment:** Short Argumentative Essay #3 (Responsibility) due by Friday, November 12<sup>th</sup> at 11:59pm (Canvas)

**Week of November 15<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup>:**

Should We Moralize Mental Illness?

**Lecture:** Marsha Marsha Marsha (<https://youtu.be/3BsUuWgiGaM>)

**Readings:** Charland, “Moral Nature of the DSM-IV Cluster B Personality Disorders;” DSM-5, “Borderline Personality Disorder” (Diagnostic Criteria and Features)

**Case Study:** Case 18.5 Fragile and Angry (see DSM Clinical Cases online), Carey, “An Expert on Mental Illness Reveals Her Own Fight”

**Assignments:** Submit Outline by Friday, November 19<sup>th</sup> at 11:59pm [final essay assignment only] (Canvas)

**Monday, November 22<sup>nd</sup>:**

Outline Workshop

**Reading:** Assigned Outlines (final project only)

**Case Study:** selections from Linehan, *DBT Skills Training Manual*

**Assignments:** Start Practicing DBT Skills Monday (11/29)

**Week of November 29<sup>th</sup> – December 3<sup>rd</sup>:**

Should We Moralize Mental Illness?

**Readings:** Horne, “Is Borderline Personality Disorder a Moral or Clinical Condition? Assessing Charland’s Argument from Treatment”

**Assignments:** Discuss DBT Skill Practice Friday, December 3<sup>rd</sup> (in class); Short Argumentative Essay #4 (Should We Moralize Mental Illness?) due Friday, December 3<sup>rd</sup> by 11:59pm (Canvas)

**Monday, December 6<sup>th</sup> & Wednesday, December 8<sup>th</sup>:**

Wrapping Up

**Readings:** TBA

**Assignment:** Extended Argumentative Essay due Wednesday, December 8<sup>th</sup> by 11:59pm (Canvas – paper writers exempt)

**Wednesday, December 15<sup>th</sup> by 9am**

Final Essay/Project due