

# Philosophy of Psychiatry

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## Course Overview

Psychiatric disorders and mental illnesses raise questions at the intersection of multiple branches of philosophy. Understanding psychiatric diagnosis thus requires getting clear on fundamental issues in all these areas. Traditional questions in philosophy of science and mind concerning explanation, reduction, and classification come to the fore as soon as one considers what it means to have a mental illness. But answers to these questions are constrained by practical and moral concerns: what is it to *be* mentally ill, and what obligations do we as a society have to those with mental illnesses?

In this course, we will begin with the theoretical questions: What are mental illnesses? How do mental illnesses relate to neurological disorders? As we will see, we cannot disentangle these issues from normative questions concerning how society is and should be structured. We will close with extended case studies of two major classes of psychological disorders: Dissociative Identity Disorder and Delusion. We will see how the questions raised throughout the course bear on these concrete discussions.

## Reading Schedule

Readings marked with a ‘\*’ are recommended, not required.

- **Week 1: Introduction: What is Illness? What is Mental Illness?**
  - Bolton, D. *What is Mental Illness?*
  - \* Thagard, P. *The Concept of Disease: Structure and Change*
  - \* Poland, J. and von Eckardt, N. *Mapping the Domain of Mental Illness*
- **Week 2: Psychiatric and Natural Kinds**
  - Beebee, H. and Sabbarton-Leary, N. *Are Psychiatric Kinds ‘Real’?*
  - Pickard, H. *Mental Illness is Indeed a Myth*
- **Week 3: Psychiatric and Neurobiological Disorders**
  - Andreasen, N. *The Broken Brain: The Biological Revolution in Psychiatry* (Excerpts)
  - Graham, G. *Ordering Disorder: Mental Disorder, Brain Disorder, And Therapeutic Intervention*
- **Week 4: Explanation and Mental Illness**
  - Cratsley, K. and Samuels R. *Cognitive Science and Explanations of Psychopathology*
  - Hacking, I. *The Looping Effects of Human Kinds*
- **Week 5: Social Construction**
  - Hacking, I. *Madness: Biological or Constructed?*
- **Week 6: Phenomenology: What is it Like to be Mentally Ill?**
  - Tauchert, A. *Diary of a Literary Schizophrenic*
- **Week 7: Treatment**
  - Chapman, R. *Neurodiversity Theory and Its Discontents: Autism, Schizophrenia, and the Social Model of Disability*
  - Lewontin, R., Kamin, L., and Rose, S. *Not In Our Genes* (Chapter 7)
- **Week 8: Case Study I: Dissociative Identity Disorder**
  - Hacking, I. *Rewriting the Soul* (Excerpts)
- **Week 9: Case Study II: Delusion**
  - Bortolotti, L. *Delusions and Other Irrational Beliefs* (Excerpts)
- **Week 10: Conclusion and Recap**
  - No New Reading