This course that brings together the recent literature from the social sciences and health sciences as well as other disciplines to explore how philanthropy impacts health care in society at large, and in particular, the health of the donor and volunteer. Furthermore, the course will include an "ideas in action" component. Students will examine philanthropic donations at work in Philadelphia, as well as engage in philanthropic activities alongside the instructor. The course consists of three parts: Part 1) Philanthropy and Healthcare in Society. The US has a long tradition of channeling philanthropic resources to augment healthcare in society, as the demand for health care exceeds the capacity of individuals or government to fully satisfy the demand. Philanthropic resources, which include both time and money, are emerging as significant means by which the capacity of the healthcare sector is fortified; these include resources for service providers, health care researchers, and health care policy advocates. To understand the heterogeneous impact of philanthropy on healthcare, this part of the course will examine the "who, what, when, where, and how" of philanthropic inputs into healthcare and their impact. Part 2) Health Effects on the Individual Philanthropist: The second part of the course examines individuals who give of their time and money. From decreased mortality to better health outcomes, researchers have carefully documented the effect on individual givers. Recent findings from the health sciences also show what mechanisms might be involved in an individual's psychology and physiology that can explain the beneficial health effects of philanthropic behavior. We will examine recent experimental research along these lines provides further evidence along these lines. Part 3) Ideas in Action: The course will include three specific volunteering events and do so by selecting a healthcare related organization of their choice that uses philanthropic resources. Students will gain first-hand experience as volunteers (and if feasible, as donors) and discuss their experiences with philanthropy in class presentations and relate them to course content.

Fall  
1 Course Unit

BENF 2260 Health and Social Justice

This course considers various theoretical approaches to justice and health, motivated by the idea that a moral framework is needed to address the ethical challenges posed by inequalities in access, quality, financial burdens, and resource priorities, as well as rising health care costs. The course includes four parts. The first part examines ethical frameworks that involve various approaches to medical and public health ethics. The second part presents an alternative theory of justice and health, the health capability paradigm (HCP), grounded in human flourishing. The third part explores domestic health policy applications, including equal access, equitable and efficient health financing and insurance, rising costs and allocating resources. The fourth and final part of the course investigates domestic health reform, particularly a normative theory of health policy decision making grounded in political and moral legitimacy. The course scrutinizes the relevance of health justice for governing health at the domestic level, that is within countries, offers a new theory of health and social justice, the health capability paradigm, and of health governance, shared health governance, evaluating current domestic health systems and proposals for reforming them in light of these alternative theoretical frameworks.

1 Course Unit
BENF 2990 Health Capability
This course examines the idea of health capability. Health capability is the ability to be healthy; it integrates health functioning and health agency. Health capability helps us understand the conditions that facilitate and barriers that impede health and the ability to make healthy choices. Health capabilities are key strengths resulting from individual and societal commitment of human, financial, and physical resources with the goal of helping people thrive. Differences in health capability explain why, for example, personal skills and determination or health beliefs are not enough to achieve health, why people with even the best external conditions can still have poor health, and why a narrow biomedical model of disease is insufficient. Health capability captures the dynamic, interactive, multidimensionality of health and flourishing. Health capability has the effect of creating a virtuous circle; developing people's health capability enables them to create and support the conditions for their own and other's health capability and so forth. It offers an evaluation of the aim and success of public policies in terms of people's lived experiences. The course is motivated by the idea that health capabilities ought to be a primary dimension in which equity in health and public policy is sought. The course includes three parts. The first part engages with the health capability model. The second part examines the health capability profile. The third part explores health capability applications. Twin goals of the course include cultivating the development of students’ knowledge base, values and competencies as well as aiding students in identifying, assessing and expanding their own health capabilities for individual and community health and flourishing.
Fall or Spring
1 Course Unit