Question 1
Medical historian Anne Digby maintains that: “A brief review of traditional or indigenous healing in southern Africa suggests the malleable and flexible nature of tradition, and that healing could both reflect and strategically respond to a range of needs in the present”. Do you agree? Discuss with reference to examples covered in our course from the Southern African region.

Question 2
Some scholars, such as Daniel Headrick, have argued that biomedicine was an important instrument of empire builders in sub-Saharan Africa. In an essay that considers at least TWO examples from the course (such as the activities of European military doctors or public health doctors or Christian missionary doctors and nurses or colonial psychiatrists in sub-Saharan Africa), consider whether you think biomedicine was a powerful tool of the imperial project during the late 1800s through to the World War 2 era.

Question 3
Leslie Swartz’s work has been important in this course. He argues that we should recognise at least ‘three sectors of healing’ when studying histories of health and healing, and also consider how these ‘three sectors’ have historically (as well as in the present) overlapped or influenced one another in complex ways. In an essay that discusses specific examples from the course, consider what studying hybrid histories brings to the subject of health and healing in Africa.

Question 4
Roy Porter has argued that researching the subject of medical history “from below” is an essential way to expand the focus of health and healing matters. In an essay that considers the patient’s view, consider 1) whether you agree or disagree with Porter, as well as 2) some of the problems but also potentials that analysis of medical history from the patient’s perspective brings to the study of history.
Question 5
Some scholars have argued that international aid to Africa is merely the latest incarnation of Western imperialism. One example of this is the United States President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS relief (PEPFAR), which limits funding to AIDS agencies that do not follow a neo-conservative agenda. Bearing in mind the complex history of health and development in Africa since independence, and specific examples discussed in the course, consider whether you think the issue of health care in sub-Saharan Africa has continued to be influenced by “developed” countries’ agendas.

Question 6
Throughout this course, we have questioned the meanings of health and healing. Reflect on what this course has taught you, and how your own understandings of these concepts has changed – or been confirmed – through this debate.