

Introduction to *House md*

House is a medical drama, starring Hugh Laurie as Dr Gregory House and Robert Sean Leonard as Dr James Wilson. The show was originally meant to be a medical version of a Sherlock Holmes mystery, with Dr House as Holmes (Homes = House) and Dr Wilson as Dr John Watson. The idea was that a medical mystery would be solved using an inductive process to work out what was wrong with the patient, a bit like solving a detective mystery.

Dr House has a damaged right leg and walks with a cane and is in constant pain, which leads him to take high doses of painkillers. He is grumpy, curmudgeonly and has a negative view of human beings, claiming that 'everybody lies'. He sees himself as up against the world, - and against God. Dr Wilson and Dr Cuddy, the hospital administrator, see themselves as having to 'save' House and help him to do the thing he is best at, diagnosing the diseases of others, - while perhaps not seeing too clearly into his own maladies.

As the show has developed, however, many of the episodes have developed into a question of House vs God (indeed one of the episodes is so titled) and throws up philosophical questions about the nature of illness, religious belief, meaning and purpose in life and a whole host of ethical questions about life and death. Dr House is anti-religious and anti-God, but spends a great deal of time exploring the very things he says he doesn't believe in. In the first seasons, he has adversaries as well as co-workers in his fellow doctors, including Dr Cameron who cares deeply about the ethical issues in any patient's case and Dr Chase whose vocation was initially to become a priest.

Many of these episodes are therefore interesting to discuss and have issues which are of interest and relevance to religious and non-religious people alike.

For discussion of the medicine used in *House*, see www.politedissent.com