

Saint Mary's University of Minnesota  
Spring 2022  
HH111 Foundations in Health Humanities  
WF1:30-2:45, LS104

Dr. John Kerr  
[jkerr@smumn.edu](mailto:jkerr@smumn.edu); 457-1673  
Office: 229 Saint Mary's Hall  
Office Hours: via Zoom for now

# Foundations in Health Humanities

## Course Description

This course introduces students to primary concepts and issues within the field of Health Humanities. Students will understand that Health Humanities is a multidisciplinary field, integrated in the vision of care for the whole person. Examining a variety of health-related experiences as viewed from the perspective of the patient, the practitioner, and the public, students will engage with issues at the intersection of health and humanities, including concepts regarding human dignity, human values, and the common good.

*Foundations in Health Humanities* fulfills a requirement in the Health Humanities major and Health Humanities minor.

## Required Learning Materials

Emily Rapp, *The Still Point of the Turning World*

Oliver Sacks, *An Anthropologist on Mars*.

Timothy Snyder, *Our Malady: Lessons in Liberty from a Hospital Diary*

Film: *Rachel Getting Married*

## Course Objectives

This course is designed to assist students to:

- become familiar with fundamental health issues
- expand their understanding of what “health” and “healthy” might mean
- become familiar with the humanities and how humanities approaches to health-related concerns can complement and improve “traditional” medical approaches to health care situations
- reflect upon their own experiences with, responses to, and potential roles in health-oriented situations
- engage with the university's Lasallian, Catholic mission by considering humane, ethical approaches to health care and the spiritual dimension of health experiences

## Alignment with Program Objectives or Department Goals

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Examine systems, contexts, and narratives (ethical, theological, and biosocial) that shape decisions and policies regarding health and healthcare.
  - 1.1. Through case studies, personal narratives, and/or hypothetical scenarios, students will identify factors that contribute to specific health decisions and outcomes, such as class, race, gender, education, occupation, environment, and stigma.
  - 1.3. Students will examine a range of social justice teachings (including Catholic and Lasallian) that respond to injustices in healthcare.
  - 1.4. Students will demonstrate an understanding of ethical perspectives that emerge from a

*deductive, critical, and dialectical examination of health care issues.*

2. *Integrate the methods and perspectives of humanistic disciplines to critique competing conceptions of health.*
  - 2.1. *Students will compare and contrast traditional and alternative conceptions of what it means to be "healthy" and "unhealthy."*
  - 2.2. *Students will demonstrate an understanding of health that includes multiple dimensions of human experience.*
  - 2.3. *Students will explain relationships among underlying cultural, religious, and intellectual assumptions and the perspectives on human health that derive from those preconceptions.*
3. *Analyze health-focused narratives and experiences from multiple perspectives (patient, caregiver, provider, practitioner).*
  - 3.1. *Students will demonstrate an ability to infer meaning through close reading and reflection.*
  - 3.2. *Students will derive meanings from texts based on various contexts (e.g., biographical, historical, cultural).*
4. *Develop skills and dispositions critical to ethical, whole person care reflective of the Lasallian charism, such as discernment, sympathy and empathy, and self-reflection.*
  - 4.1. *Students will discern and reflect on connections between their own and others' affective responses to life experiences, thereby producing sympathy, empathy, and solidarity.*
  - 4.4. *Students will describe how ethical commitments and a humanitarian obligation toward others are in dialogue with the Catholic intellectual tradition and Lasallian principles.*
5. *Demonstrate awareness of rhetorical situation, genre, audience, purpose, and context; integrate primary and secondary research; and communicate effectively with a primarily public audience.*
  - 5.1. *Students will produce documents that explain and/or defend a position in an organized and coherent manner.*
  - 5.3. *Students will defend an interpretive claim through oral argument and/or Q&A.*

### ***Assessments***

- *Participation [20% of course grade] (1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2 4.1, 4.4., 5.3)*
- *Reflection Journal [30% of course grade] (1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 4.1, 4.4) Students will keep a journal in which they regularly respond to reflection prompts throughout the semester, to be collected every two weeks.*
- *Group Presentation [25% of course grade] (1.1, 1.4, 2.1, 2.2, 4.1, 4.4, 5.3) Students, in groups, will prepare and submit a presentation in which they examine multiple perspectives on a health issue (to be selected/assigned from a group of topics chosen by the instructor). Emphasis will be placed on how a humanities-oriented approach can expand awareness of what is at stake in the issue as well as how such an approach might complement and improve "traditional" medical practices.*
- *Health Humanities Paper [25% of course grade] (1.3, 1.4, 5.1): Interpretation Essay. This essay, devoted to an examination of one of the course texts, will require an interpretive thesis claim followed by analysis with supporting evidence in an academic essay format.*

### ***Class Attendance Policy***

*Students are expected to attend all scheduled class sessions. Absence from any class session weakens the learning experience. The student should be aware that excessive absence for any reason may affect his or her course grade, course enrollment, eligibility for financial aid, and continued enrollment at Saint Mary's. More details and descriptions on the Class Attendance Policy are referenced in the Undergraduate Course Catalog.*

*In the unusual case of a course cancellation, students will be notified by email. Students should regularly check their email for course updates (including any cancellations).*

### ***Undergraduate Grading Scale***

|           |                  |
|-----------|------------------|
| <i>A</i>  | <i>93-100%</i>   |
| <i>AB</i> | <i>88-92%</i>    |
| <i>B</i>  | <i>83-87%</i>    |
| <i>BC</i> | <i>78-82%</i>    |
| <i>C</i>  | <i>73-77%</i>    |
| <i>CD</i> | <i>68-72%</i>    |
| <i>D</i>  | <i>60-67%</i>    |
| <i>F</i>  | <i>Below 60%</i> |

***For technical support, contact our help desk at the following:***

*Email: [helpdesk@smumn.edu](mailto:helpdesk@smumn.edu)*

*Website: <http://www2.smumn.edu/helpdesk>*

*Phone: 507-457-7800; option 1*

*Alt. Phone: 866-437-2788; option 4*

*On campus extension: x7800 on campus*

### ***Statement about Academic Integrity***

*A commitment to academic integrity facilitates the pursuit of knowledge and understanding by providing a framework for the open, honest and respectful exchange of ideas and information. It fosters creativity and critical thinking; it allows students to develop the self-confidence that comes from acquiring academic skills; it provides correct information to instructors so that they can give appropriate feedback in the essential relationship between students and teachers; and, ultimately, it ensures the integrity of the Saint Mary's degree. Use this [Academic Integrity and Dishonesty](#) link to reference the Undergraduate Course Catalog.*

### ***Student Success Center and Library Services***

*The [Student Success Center](#) provides support, services, and initiatives to students in areas related to advising, career services and internships, access services, tutoring, and writing services.*

*The [Fitzgerald Library](#) provides academic support, services, and a valued collection of research databases.*

### ***Access Services: Accommodations Notice***

*Saint Mary's University is committed to assuring that students with documented disabilities have access to equal educational programs and activities at the university. If you believe that you have a disability that may interfere with your ability to participate in the activities, coursework, or assessments of this course, you may be entitled to accommodations. Please schedule an appointment at <http://goo.gl/Z5kiY> as early in the semester as is possible to arrange a confidential discussion about your need for an accommodation.*

### **Copyright Notice**

The lectures that I deliver in this class and course materials I create and distribute, including PowerPoint presentations, tests, outlines, and similar materials, are protected by federal copyright law as my original works. My lectures are recorded or delivered from written notes in order to ensure copyright protection. You are permitted to take notes of lectures and to use course materials for your private study, scholarship, or research. You are not authorized to reproduce or distribute notes of lectures or my course materials or make any commercial use of them without my express written consent. You are responsible for adhering to copyright laws (Title 17, U.S. Code) as you use my lecture and course materials.

This syllabus is subject to change.

### **Reading/Discussion Schedule**

#### **1. Overview**

W Jan 19 Angira Patel, "[To Be a Good Doctor Study the Humanities](#)"; Danielle Ofri, "[Yes, Studying the Humanities Might Make You a Better Doctor](#)"; Michael Green et al., "[The Comics Revealing Medical School's Hidden Flaws and Hard Lessons - The Atlantic](#)"

**For next time: journal entry 1**

F Jan 21 Crawford, Brown, et al., "Health Humanities"

**For next time: journal entry 2**

#### **2. Ability**

W Jan 26 Oliver Sacks, *An Anthropologist on Mars*, "Preface"

F Jan 28 Oliver Sacks, *An Anthropologist on Mars*, "The Case of the Colorblind Painter"

**For next time: journal entry 3**

W Feb 2 Oliver Sacks, *An Anthropologist on Mars*, "The Last Hippie" and visit from Dr. Janet Heukeshoven, Department of Fine and Performing Arts

F Feb 4 Oliver Sacks, *An Anthropologist on Mars*, "To See and Not See"

**For next time: journal entry 4**

W Feb 9 Oliver Sacks, *An Anthropologist on Mars*, "An Anthropologist on Mars"

#### **3. Spirituality**

F Feb 11 Christina M. Puchalski and Betty Ferrell, "Why Spirituality in Palliative Care"

**For next time: journal entry 5**

W Feb 16 Harold G. Koenig, *Medicine, Religion, and Health: Where Science and Spirituality Meet*, Chapter 1

#### **4. Mental Health and Addiction**

F Feb 18 Surgeon General's Report on Addiction, [https://addiction.surgeongeneral.gov/sites/default/files/OC\\_SpotlightOnOpioids.pdf](https://addiction.surgeongeneral.gov/sites/default/files/OC_SpotlightOnOpioids.pdf)

W Feb 23 Film: *Rachel Getting Married*

F Feb 25 Film: *Rachel Getting Married* (and discuss film)

**For next time: journal entry 6**

*[Spring Recess: Feb 26-Mar 6]*

**5. Reports on U.S. Conditions**

- W Mar 9 Presentations: U.S. happiness; U.S. health care; U.S. education  
F Mar 11 Presentations: U.S. crime; U.S. poverty; U.S. economic status

**6. The Health Experience Memoir**

- W Mar 16 Emily Rapp, *The Still Point of the Turning World*  
**Visitor: Program Director, M.A. in Counseling & Psychological Services-  
Rochester**
- F Mar 18 Emily Rapp, *The Still Point of the Turning World*  
**Visitor: Instructor of Public Writing course**  
**For next time: journal entry 7**
- W Mar 23 Emily Rapp, *The Still Point of the Turning World*  
**For next time: journal entry 8**
- F Mar 25 Introduction to group presentations and final paper  
**Visitor: Instructor of Philosophy Course**
- W Mar 30 Emily Rapp, *The Still Point of the Turning World*  
F Apr 1 Timothy Snyder, *Our Malady: Lessons in Liberty from a Hospital Diary*  
**For next time: journal entry 9**
- W Apr 6 Timothy Snyder, *Our Malady: Lessons in Liberty from a Hospital Diary*  
**Visitor: MSW Program Director/Chair of Social Work**
- F Apr 8 Timothy Snyder, *Our Malady: Lessons in Liberty from a Hospital Diary*  
**Visitor: Instructor of History Course**
- W Apr 13 Work on group presentations

*[Easter Recess: April 14-April 18]*

- W Apr 20 Timothy Snyder, *Our Malady: Lessons in Liberty from a Hospital Diary*  
F Apr 22 NO CLASS (work on final paper)  
**Submit final journal entry (10)**
- W Apr 27 Group presentations round one  
Th Apr 28 **Study Day**

**Final Period (Saturday, April 30, 10:30-12:30): Final Paper Due; Group presentations round two**