

Readings in Medicine and Society
HON 3301 – Fall 2019

Instructor

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I welcome questions and comments by email. If you email me from Monday to Thursday, I will reply within 24 hours. If you email me on Friday or over the weekend, I will reply on Monday, at the latest. But if you email me about an assignment that is due within 24 hours, do not expect a reply. You should begin assignments, and ask questions, much further in advance of the due date. All assignments will be discussed in class and instructions will be posted on Blackboard.

Course Description

This course is a broad introduction to medical humanities, an interdisciplinary field that engages critically with various aspects of health care, such as the concepts, practices, values, and experiences of patients and clinicians. We will discuss topics in four main areas of medical humanities: history, literature, philosophy, and religion. Many topics will be addressed, such as how medical practice has changed over time; our ideas of health, illness, disease, pain, and suffering; the roles of stories in clinical care and patient experiences; how money and power influence medicine; aging and dying; and what doctors should know about religion and spirituality. We will give special attention to how medicine, health, and illness are portrayed in fiction, poetry, memoir, and movies, and learn how to do close readings of those texts.

Medicine and the Arts Series

This year-long series connects the visual, literary, and performing arts to the meanings of illness and caregiving. The series includes guest readings, movies, round table discussions, and trips to museums and theaters. Open to all students, the events are a rich, co-curricular opportunity for pre-health professionals and all in the Medicine and Society Program. The twelve series events for this semester are marked with * in your Course Schedule.

Required Text

Medical Humanities: An Introduction, by Thomas Cole, Nathan Carlin, and Ronal Carson (Cambridge University Press, 2014)

*You must obtain a paper copy of this text. Other readings and materials will be posted on the course Blackboard site or distributed by email. Students will be expected to rent/buy additional resources, such as movies.

Grade

Your final grade will be derived from four areas of your work.

1. Participation - 100 points (25%)

You are expected to participate *frequently* (i.e., almost every class) in our discussions of readings and other assignments. If you miss opportunities to participate in class, you may also earn credit by emailing me your thoughts on readings.

Also, to earn full credit, you *must* participate in 2 Round Table discussions. I encourage you to bring something to share for one of them. The 7 Round Tables are all on Tuesdays at noon in the Honors Commons (noted in your Course Schedule). You *must* also attend 2 of these events in the Medicine and the Arts Series: Villarreal reading on Jan 24, Medflix Movie Night on March 20, and Off Script on April 11 (also in your Course Schedule).

If you have a scheduling conflict that prevents you from attending 2 Round Tables and/or 2 Medicine and the Arts events, you must email me by Jan 30 to discuss a makeup assignment. For each Round Table or event missed, you will lose 20 points on your Participation grade.

2. Reading Quizzes - 100 points (25%)

There will be 12 pop quizzes on assigned readings, and you can earn up to 10 points on each quiz. I will drop your two lowest quiz scores, and you cannot earn more than 100 quiz points. Quizzes missed due to non-excused absences cannot be taken at another time. Students will receive no credit for a quiz with no name on it.

3. Reflection Papers - 100 points (25%)

There will be 4 of these throughout the semester, and they are worth up to 25 points each. Specific instructions for each reflection paper will be given later.

*If something prevents you from submitting a reflection paper on Blackboard, you may still receive credit by emailing the paper to me, but only if it is *on time*.

4. Research Presentation and Paper - 100 points (25%)

Before submitting your research paper (worth up to 80 points), you are required to give an in-class presentation about your research (worth up to 20 points). You will lose 10 points for failing to present at your place in the assigned order (and 10 more points if you fail to present on that date). You cannot receive credit for the research paper unless you give this in-class presentation. Additional instructions will be given later.

*Research papers should be submitted through Blackboard. However, if something prevents you from submitting your paper on Blackboard, you may still receive credit by emailing the paper to me *on time*.

Grading Scale

93-100% (372 – 400 points) = A

90-92% (360 – 371) = A-

87-89% (348 – 359) = B+

83-86% (332 – 347) = B

80-82% (320 – 331) = B-

77-79% (308 – 319) = C+

73-76% (292 – 307) = C

70-72% (280 – 291) = C-

67-69% (268 – 279) = D+

63-66% (252 – 267) = D

60-62% (240 – 251) = D-

0-59% (0 – 239) = F

Attendance and Absences

Each student is allowed three **non-excused absences**, which I advise you to reserve for illness, medical visits, and other unforeseen events. Non-excused absences do not necessarily hurt your participation grade because you may still earn participation credit by email. However, after three non-excused absences, you will lose 10 points on your participation grade for each additional non-excused absence.

Every student has the opportunity for three **excused absences** due to religious observances, university commitments (including travel), or other important events or commitments. You must notify me of these absences, and provide me with documentation for them, by the Official Reporting Day (Jan 30). Failure to notify me of any absence by the ORD means that I might not excuse it. If you anticipate missing more than five class sessions in total, I suggest you drop the course. Excused absences for other things (e.g., hospital stays) will be granted at my discretion.

Accommodations for each excused absence will include any of the following that are relevant to the class sessions missed: an opportunity to earn participation credit by email, an opportunity to take a missed quiz, and an extension on a due date for a paper (but only if that paper is due on the date of the class missed).

Late Assignments

Failure to submit an assignment on time will result in no credit for that assignment. The only exception is a documented emergency (e.g., illness, car accident) that is so severe that it prevents you from submitting the paper in class or by email. If you experience such an emergency, I expect you to email me as soon as possible to explain your situation, and I will assign you a new due date. You must also provide documentation of your emergency on the first day that you return to class.

Classroom Conduct

During class, you may not use computers, phones, or any other electronic devices without my permission. Sleeping, texting, reading materials unrelated to class, and doing work for other classes are also forbidden. Avoid talking with your classmates unless your discussion is part of a class/group discussion. All of these behaviors distract me and your classmates, reducing the quality of our classroom experience. Each time you violate this policy, you will not be eligible for participation credit for that class session. If you violate this policy repeatedly, expect to be asked to leave the class and to receive an additional deduction from your participation grade.

Accessibility

I will work with the Center for Students with DisABILITIES (CSD) to accommodate "students who have temporary or permanent health impairments, physical limitations, psychiatric disorders, and/or learning disabilities." If you have documentation from the CSD, please share it with me. If you think you might need accommodation, please follow the steps outlined on the CSD website (www.uh.edu/csd/), and the CSD will recommend ways for me to accommodate you.

UH CAPS Statement

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) can help students who are having difficulties managing stress, adjusting to college, or feeling sad and hopeless. You can reach CAPS (www.uh.edu/caps) by calling 713-743-5454 during and after business hours for routine appointments or if you or someone you know is in crisis. No appointment is necessary for the "Let's Talk" program, a drop-in consultation service at convenient locations and hours around campus. http://www.uh.edu/caps/outreach/lets_talk.html

Academic Honesty

See UH's policy on academic honesty at www.uh.edu/provost/policies/honesty/.

Course Schedule

Tues Jan 15 – Introductions; Raymond Carver, "What the Doctor Said"

Thurs Jan 17 – *Medical Humanities*, "Introducing Medical Humanities" (1-18) and Perri Klass, "The Patient Narrative"

Tues Jan 22 – *Medical Humanities*, "History and Medicine" (21-25)
and Chapter 1: "The Doctor-Patient Relationship"
Zora Neale Hurston, "My Most Humiliating Jim Crow Experience"

Thurs Jan 24 – Rita Charon, "Close Reading" (from *Narrative Medicine*)

William Carlos Williams, "The Use of Force"

*5:30 p.m., Honors Commons, Sylvia Villarreal, "Call and Response: When Communication Heals" (Attendance required at 2 of 3 events; others are 3/20 and 4/11)

Tues Jan 29 – *Medical Humanities*, Chapter 4: "Technology and Medicine"

*12-12:45 p.m., Round Table discussion, Medicine and the Arts Series, Honors Commons

Wed Jan 30 – Official Reporting Day (last day to email Dr. Nash regarding excused absences or inability to attend 2 of 3 special events this semester)

Thurs Jan 31 – George Saunders, "Escape from Spiderhead" (online in *The New Yorker*)

Tues Feb 5 – *Medical Humanities*, Chapter 6: "Death and Dying"
Alice Walker, "Medicine" and Max Ritvo, "Poem to My Litter" (in class)
"Forever Young" (in class)

Thurs Feb 7 – William Gay, "I Hate to See that Evening Sun Go Down"

Sunday Feb 10 – Reflection Paper #1: *Never Let Me Go* (due on Blackboard)

Tues Feb 12 – *Medical Humanities*, "Literature, the Arts, and Medicine" (123-24)
and Chapter 7: "Narratives of Illness"

*12-12:45 p.m., Round Table discussion, Medicine and the Arts Series, Honors Commons

Thurs Feb 14 – Arthur Frank, "Five Dramas of Illness" and Richard Selzer, "Fetishes"

Sunday Feb 17 – Reflection Paper #2: *The Fault in Our Stars* (due on Blackboard)

Tues Feb 19 – *Medical Humanities*, Chapter 10: "Poetry and Moral Imagination"

*12-12:45 p.m., Round Table discussion, Medicine and the Arts Series, Honors Commons

Thurs Feb 21 – *Medical Humanities*, Chapter 8: "Aging and Film"

Sunday Feb 24 – Reflection Paper #3: *Still Alice* (due on Blackboard)

Tues Feb 26 – *Medical Humanities*, "Philosophy and Medicine" (211-12)
Chapter 15: "Health and Disease"

Thurs Feb 28 – *Medical Humanities*, Chapter 11: "Doctor-Writers"
Oliver Sacks, "The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat"

Tues March 5 – "Being Mortal," PBS Frontline episode based on Atul Gawande's book (in class)

*Deadline to email Dr. Nash your proposal for your final paper
*12-12:45 p.m., Round Table discussion, Medicine and the Arts Series, Honors Commons

Thurs March 7 – *Medical Humanities*, Chapter 13: “Ways of Knowing”
David Hellerstein, “Touching” (in class)

March 12 and 14 – Spring Break

Tues March 19 – Aleksandar Hemon, “The Aquarium” (online, *The New Yorker*)

*Wed March 20 – 5:50 p.m., Medflix Movie Night, Honors Commons, Anderson Library
(Attendance required at 2 of 3 events; last one is 4/11)

Thurs March 21 – *Medical Humanities*, Chapter 12: “Studying Medicine”
Perri Klass, “Invasions” (in class)

Tues March 26 – Danielle Ofri, “Can We Build a Better Doctor?” from *What Doctors Feel: How Emotions Affect the Practice of Medicine*

*12-12:45 p.m., Round Table discussion, Medicine and the Arts Series, Honors Commons

Thurs March 28 – *Medical Humanities*, Chapter 17: “Medicine and Power”
Ricardo Nuila, “Poor and Uninsured in Texas” (online in *The New Yorker*)

Sunday March 30 – Reflection Paper #4: “The Semplica-Girl Diaries” (due on Blackboard)

Tues April 2 – George Saunders, “The Semplica-Girl Diaries”
“Batman” on This American Life (in class)

Thurs April 4 – Sam Quinones, *Dreamland: The True Tale of America’s Opiate Epidemic*
(excerpt)
Heroin (documentary in class)

Tues April 9 – *Medical Humanities*, Chapter 23: “Suffering and Hope”
Raymond Carver, “Cathedral”

*12-12:45 p.m., Round Table discussion, Medicine and the Arts Series, Honors Commons

Thurs April 11 – Student Presentations

*5:30 p.m., Off Script: Stories from the Heart of Medicine, Baylor College of Medicine
(Attendance required at 2 of 3 events; this is the last event)

Tues April 16 – Student Presentations

Thurs April 18 – Student Presentations

Tues April 23 – Student Presentations

*12-12:45 p.m., Round Table discussion, Medicine and the Arts Series, Honors Commons

Thurs April 25 – Student Presentations