

AR/ST252: MEDICINE AND VISUAL CULTURE

Fall 2021
W, F 11am-12:15pm
Bixler 178 (Given Auditorium)

Professor Tanya Sheehan
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Office hours by appointment

Course description

This course explores the relationship between medicine and Western visual culture, from the anatomical art of Leonardo da Vinci to media representations of the coronavirus pandemic. Topics include the development of scientific illustration, medical themes in the fine arts, the arts in clinical practices, and visual technologies of medicine. AR/ST252 is designed to introduce students in the humanities and social sciences to the culture of science, while offering pre-health students an important opportunity to think critically about images in relation to human health and disease. Assignments involve close study of primary sources in the Colby Libraries and artworks at the Colby College Museum of Art as well as group research on issues in contemporary medicine.

Course materials

The following book is required for purchase and available at the Colby Bookstore: Devan Stahl et al., *Imaging and Imagining Illness: Becoming Whole in a Broken Body* (Cascade Books, 2018); ISBN: 978-1625648372.

Other required readings and course materials, including the syllabus, writing assignments, and the PowerPoint presentations used in class, will be posted on Moodle, Colby's online course management system: <https://moodle.colby.edu/>.

Learning goals

AR/ST252 fulfills the Arts (A) requirement at Colby. Upon completion of this course students will be able to:

- 1) Speak and write critically about a variety of Western arts and visual media
- 2) Analyze images in relation to medical histories, cultures, practices, and technologies
- 3) Understand the development of ideas about the human body between the 15th century and the present
- 4) Approach the concepts of human health and disease as socially embedded and culturally specific

These learning goals will be assessed as follows:

- 15% Class participation; assessment based on attendance, contributions to class discussion, demonstrated effort, and commitment to course goals
- 25% Comparison essay
- 30% Group research project (with oral presentation)
- 30% Final examination

Class policies

Students are expected to attend all classes. Please inform me if you must miss a class. Three or more absences will impact your final grade.

All assigned readings are required and should be completed before class to enable your full participation.

All assignments must be submitted as an MS Word document uploaded to Moodle. Note that work will receive a 5% grade reduction per day late; if three classes pass after the due date, you will receive a failing grade for the assignment. Exceptions will be made in documented cases of illness, family emergencies, religious holidays, etc. Please make sure to keep me informed of any circumstances that may prevent you from passing in your best work on time. Whenever possible, this should happen before a deadline passes.

Colby makes academic accommodations for students with learning differences. Within the first two weeks of class you should provide me with documentation of any special accommodations you will require.

Communication

Open communication is very important to me. It directly contributes to your success in this (as in any other) course. I encourage you to make an appointment to meet with me and discuss any aspect of your performance in the course, your class experience, or specific course materials. Except in unusual circumstances, I will reply to an email within 24 hours.

If you have practical questions about a course assignment after consulting the assignment sheet and syllabus, please feel free to email me. When seeking substantive feedback on an assignment, however, it is important to meet with me in person. A live, two-way conversation aids my understanding of your writing concerns and promotes your learning.

Diversity and Inclusion

Colby supports an inclusive learning environment where diverse perspectives are seen as a resource, strength, and benefit. You will be exposed to a variety of perspectives through our course materials and activities. It is my intent that these are respectful of diversity in all of its dimensions, which may include race, ethnicity, national origins, gender, sexuality, socio-economic class, age, religion, disability, family status, or primary language. Given the sensitive and challenging nature of course materials, we must create an atmosphere of trust and safety in our classroom. My aim is to foster an environment in which each class member is able to share their particular viewpoints as well as hear and respect one another. There may be situations, however, when something is said or done in class, by either me or other students, that is particularly troubling to you or causes offense. Regardless of intention, the impact of what happens throughout the course is not to be ignored and is something we must address together. You may choose to discuss those situations in whatever way feels most comfortable to you: privately with me, privately with your academic advisor or advising dean (who will notify me), or openly in class.

Writing guidelines

All of your writing assignments must be typed and should adhere to the following style: 12-point font; double spacing; single-sided pages; and 1-inch margins on all sides. Please include internal citations when necessary – e.g., (Sheehan, 5) – as well as a bibliography, both of which should adhere to either MLA or Chicago style. All papers must be proofread carefully for typographical errors as well as spelling and grammatical mistakes. Students who do not follow these guidelines will be asked to revise and resubmit their essays, which will then be subject to the penalties for lateness defined above.

Everyone can benefit from meeting with a tutor at the Farnham Writers' Center, located on the second floor of Miller Library. I recommend meeting with someone who has experience writing and reading visual analysis. Good topics for discussion with a tutor include argumentation, paragraphing, citing sources, clarity of ideas, and writing mechanics. Other questions about the goals of the assignment, topic and thesis choice, course materials, etc. are best explored with me in office hours.

Plagiarism and academic honesty

Honesty, integrity, and personal responsibility are cornerstones of a Colby education and provide the foundation for scholarly inquiry, intellectual discourse, and an open and welcoming campus community. These values are articulated in the [Colby Affirmation](#). Students are expected to live by the tenets of the Colby Affirmation and demonstrate academic honesty in all aspects of this course.

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to: plagiarism (including quoting sources without quotation marks around the borrowed words and a citation); presenting

another's work as one's own; buying or attempting to buy papers or projects for a course; fabricating information or citations; knowingly assisting others in acts of academic dishonesty; violating clearly stated rules for taking an exam or completing homework; misrepresentations to faculty within the context of a course; and submitting the same work, including an essay that you wrote, in more than one course without the permission of instructors. For more on recognizing and avoiding plagiarism, see the library guide: libguides.colby.edu/avoidingplagiarism.

Academic dishonesty is a serious offense against the college. Sanctions for academic dishonesty are assigned by an academic review board and may include failure on the assignment, failure in the course, or suspension or expulsion from the college.

Library resources

The Colby Libraries have designed a series of online guides to help students locate books, articles, images, websites and other resources in specific fields. I recommend using the guides designed for [our course](#), for [Art](#), and for [Science and Technology Studies](#). For research resources and assistance with citations you can go to the "Research Help" tab on the [Colby Libraries homepage](#).

A selection of books has been placed on reserve for this course at Bixler Library.

Class schedule

This schedule is subject to revision. Any changes will be posted to Moodle and announced in class. Please come to class having completed the readings listed below. Your major assignments are described fully in separate handouts posted to Moodle.

W, Sep 8 Introduction

Class meeting on Zoom this week only: <https://colby.zoom.us/j/9122898240>

Take the Turnitin Plagiarism Quiz (in class):
<https://www.turnitin.com/static/plagiarism-quiz/>

Complete syllabus quiz by Friday:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2X76SC8>

F, Sep 10 Vesalius and the art of anatomy

Class meeting on Zoom this week only: <https://colby.zoom.us/j/9122898240>

For discussion: reading questions posted to Moodle

Glenn Harcourt, "Andreas Vesalius and the Anatomy of Antique Sculpture,"
Representations 17 (Winter 1987): 28-61

W, Sep 15 Anatomy lessons
Rembrandt van Rijn and the Netherlandish tradition

Julie V. Hansen, "Resurrecting Death: Anatomical Art in the Cabinet of Dr. Frederik Ruysch," *The Art Bulletin* 78, no. 4 (December 1996): 663-679

F, Sep 17 Comparing anatomies: sex and race

Londa Schiebinger, "Skeletons in the Closet: The First Illustrations of the Female Skeleton in Eighteenth-Century Anatomy," *Representations* 14 (Spring 1986): 42-82

Anne Fausto-Sterling, "Gender, Race, and Nation: The Comparative Anatomy of 'Hottentot' Women in Europe, 1815-1817," in *Deviant Bodies: Critical Perspectives on Difference in Science and Popular Culture*, ed. Jennifer Terry and Jacqueline Urla (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 19-48

W, Sep 22 **Class visit to Special Collections, Miller Library**

In class: discussion of illustrated anatomical treatises; introduction to comparison essay assignment

F, Sep 24 Medicine and visual humor

William Hogarth, Thomas Rowlandson, James Gillray

Roy Porter, "Introductory: Framing the Picture," in *Bodies Politic: Disease, Death, and Doctors in Britain, 1650-1900* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 15-34

W, Sep 29 Training artists as doctors

European and American models to 1900

Martin Kemp, "True to Their Natures: Sir Joshua Reynolds and Dr. William Hunter at the Royal Academy of Arts," *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London* 46, no. 1 (January 1992): 77-88

William C. Brownell, "The Art Schools of Philadelphia," *Scribner's Monthly* XVIII, no. 5 (September 1879): 737-750

F, Oct 1 Visual art in contemporary health education

Class meeting on Zoom today only: <https://colby.zoom.us/j/9122898240>

Guest speakers Alexa Miller (Arts Practica) and Dr. Amy Ship (Brigham & Women's Hospital) lead a discussion of training doctors through Visual Thinking Strategies at Harvard Medical School

Alexa Miller et al., "From the Galleries to the Clinic: Applying Art Museum Lessons to Patient Care," *Journal of Medical Humanities* 34 (2013): 433-38

W, Oct 6 The art of operating

Southworth and Hawes, Robert Hinckley, Thomas Eakins

Comparison essay due

Bates Lowry and Isabel Lowry, "Simultaneous Developments: Documentary Photography and Painless Surgery," in *Young America: The Daguerreotypes of Southworth and Hawes* (New York: International Center of Photography, 2005), 75-88

"Thomas Eakins's *The Gross Clinic*," selected primary sources in *American Art to 1900: A Documentary History*, ed. Sarah Burns and John Davis (Berkeley: University of California Press), 592-97

F, Oct 8 Picturing madness

Francisco Goya, Théodore Géricault, Jean-Martin Charcot

Albert Boime, "Portraying Monomaniacs to Service the Alienist's Monomania: Géricault and Georget," *Oxford Art Journal* 14, no. 1 (1991): 79-91

W, Oct 13 Body trauma: US Civil War to World War I

J. T. H. Connor and Michael G. Rhode, "[Shooting Soldiers: Civil War Medical Images, Memory, and Identity in America](#)," *InVisible Culture* 5 (2003)

Amy Lyford, "The Aesthetics of Dismemberment," in *Surrealist Masculinities: Gender Anxiety and the Aesthetics of Post World War I Reconstruction* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 47-79

F, Oct 15 NO CLASS (Professor Sheehan at conference)

W, Oct 20 American nervousness: painting the ills of modern life

James McNeill Whistler, Thomas Dewing, Abbott Thayer

In class: discussion of selected artworks at the Colby Museum

Zachary Ross, "Rest for the Weary: American Nervousness and the Aesthetics of Repose," in *Women on the Verge: The Culture of Neurasthenia in 19th-Century America*, ed. Katherine Williams (Stanford: Stanford University Museum of Art, 2005), 21-35

Elizabeth Lee, "Therapeutic Beauty: Abbott Thayer, Antimodernism, and the Fear of Disease," *American Art* 18, no. 3 (Fall 2004): 32-51

F, Oct 22 Modernism and art therapy
Vincent Van Gogh, Edvard Munch, Jacob Lawrence

In class: discussion of Van Gogh's *L'homme à la pipe* (1890) at the Colby Museum

Sander L. Gilman, "The Insane See the Insane: Vincent Van Gogh," in *Disease and Representation: Images of Illness from Madness to AIDS* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), 112-126

W, Oct 27 Doctoring the American family
Norman Rockwell and W. Eugene Smith

Maitland Edey, "Introduction from *Great Photographic Essays of Life*" and "Country Doctor," in *Photography: 1900 to the Present*, ed. Diana Emory Hulick and Joseph Marshall (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 1998), 115-118

F, Oct 29 Extreme makeovers
The visual culture of plastic surgery

Sander L. Gilman, "Judging by Appearances," in *Making the Body Beautiful: A Cultural History of Aesthetic Surgery* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 3-42

W, Nov 3 Race and the visual culture of epidemics

Guest speaker: Dr. Kirsten Ostherr, Rice University

Kirsten Ostherr, "How Do We See COVID-19? Visual Iconographies of Racial Contagion," *American Literature* 92, no. 4 (December 2020): 707-22

6pm, Ostrove Auditorium: Dr. Kirsten Ostherr lecture, "Medical Humanities and Artificial Intelligence: A Critical Nexus for Data Ethics and Racial Equity"

F, Nov 5 Preparation for group assignment on representing COVID-19

In class: discuss library research tools and strategies at Colby; explore the digital project, [Visualizing the Virus](#)

W, Nov 10 Medical performances
Joseph Beuys, Hannah Wilke, Orlan

Peg Zeglin Brand, "Bound to Beauty: An Interview with Orlan," in *Beauty Matters*, ed. Peg Zeglin Brand (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 289-313

F, Nov 12 The faces of AIDS

Evelynn M. Hammonds, "Seeing AIDS: Race, Gender, and Representation," in *The Gender Politics of HIV/AIDS in Women: Perspectives on the Pandemic in the United States*, ed. Nancy Goldstein and Jennifer L. Manlowe (New York: NYU Press, 1997), 113-126

W, Nov 17 Probing the interior: the art of medical imaging
Meret Oppenheim, Terry Winters. Mona Hatoum

In class: discussion of Terry Winters's *A Portfolio of Fourteen Etchings* (1980) at the Colby Museum

Devan Stahl et al., *Imaging and Imagining Illness*, chapter 4 (56-73)

F, Nov 19 Probing the interior: disability and its representation
Darian Goldin Stahl

Devan Stahl et al., *Imaging and Imagining Illness*, introduction (xxi-xxviii) and chapters 1-2 (1-41)

W, Nov 24 NO CLASS (Thanksgiving break)

F, Nov 26 NO CLASS (Thanksgiving break)

W, Dec 1 Representing COVID-19

Presentations: groups 1-2

F, Dec 3 Representing COVID-19 (cont.)

Presentations: groups 3-4

W, Dec 8 Blackness and the art of care
LaToya Ruby Frazier, Simone Leigh, Doreen Garner

Simone Leigh, "Free People's Medical Clinic" (2016), in *Health*, ed. Bárbara Rodríguez Muñoz (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2020), 85-88

["Access to Healthcare: A Conversation Led by LaToya Ruby Frazier,"](#) *Art21*, July 6, 2018

F, Dec 10 Final exam review session

To prepare for the final exam you should review all of our course materials (readings, slides, notes) and generate a list of 2-3 major themes that we've

developed/explored over the semester. Please upload your list to the forum on Moodle by **Thurs, Dec 9 at 5pm** (the night before the review session) and be prepared to relate them to particular images, artists, topics, etc. when we meet. During the review session we will discuss these themes together and select some for inclusion on the final exam.

FINAL EXAM: TBD