

Medical Ways of Knowing

ENGL1102 – MED, Spring 2011, MWF 1-2, Skiles 311

Professor Anne Pollock – Office hours: Wednesdays 2-5, Skiles 360

This special section of English 1102 for pre-health students will focus on humanistic inquiry into medical knowledge. Medicine has been described as both a science and an art, and medical knowledge is a complicated thing. It draws on incommensurable sources, ranging from stories told by patients, to observations by physicians and scientists in both clinics and labs, to large-scale clinical trials. This course will critically analyze medical knowledge claims as presented in diverse forms: accounts by physicians and patients, as well as scientific reports. This engagement fosters holistic medical literacy. This course will provide students with both the background and analytical tools to grapple with important questions facing medical providers, policy makers, and consumers today.

Like all 1102 courses, this course develops communication skills in networked electronic environments, emphasizes interpretation and evaluation of cultural texts, and incorporates research methods in print and on the Internet. Students will demonstrate their mastery of the texts through class discussion, individual essays, including one that will be substantially revised, as well as a group project.

Required Books

Warwick Anderson, *The Collectors of Lost Souls: Kuru, Moral Peril, and the Creation of Value in Science*, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008.

Robert Aronowitz, *Making Sense of Illness*, Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Roy Porter, *Blood and Guts: a Short History of Medicine* Norton, 2002.

All other readings are available on T-Square.

Assessment:

Attendance and participation: 20 points

Active engagement during class is central to this course, whether the day's activity is discussing readings or engaging in peer critique. Students are expected to come to class prepared, with readings and/or writing in hand, prepared for discussion.

Blogs: 10 points

Before class on each day for which readings are assigned, write an entry on your response to the readings on the blog section of T-Square. Your short comments (100-300 words) should be posted by noon, demonstrate that you have done the reading, and note comments and questions that you would like to raise in class.

Unit 1 "Making Sense of Illness" Individual Project: 20 points

This project has two components: doing an interview about an illness experience and writing up the notes (5 points) and writing a paper using course texts to analyze the interview (15 points)

Unit 2 "Medical Thinking" Individual Project: 20 points

This project has two components: gathering and summarizing accounts of a particular piece of medical knowledge from a newspaper and a medical journal (5 points), and writing a paper analyzing the accounts in light of course texts

Unit 3 "Medical Discovery in Cultural Context" Group Project: 20 points

This group project has three components: an individually-written annotated bibliography (5 points), a group poster (5 points), and a group poster presentation (10 points). Each group member must also submit a self-assessment of their group work.

Substantial Revision: 10 points

Choose the paper for either Unit 1 or Unit 2, and do a substantial revision of it. This should both address comments on the original, and challenge yourself to push the paper further.

Week	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
UNIT 1: MAKING SENSE OF ILLNESS			
1	Jan 10 Introductions	Jan 12 Dumit, Joseph. "Is it me or my brain? Depression and neuroscientific facts," <i>Journal of Medical Humanities</i> 24.1/2 (Summer 2003): 35-47.	Jan 14 <i>Making Sense of Illness</i> Preface and Intro (pp. ix-xxi, 1-18).
2	Jan 17 MLK Day – No Class	Jan 19 Interview Notes Due at Noon In-Class discussion	Jan 21 <i>Making Sense of Illness</i> Chapter 2 "From Myalgic Encephalitis to Yuppie Flu: A History of Chronic Fatigue Syndromes" (pp 19-39).
3	Jan 24 <i>Making Sense of Illness</i> Chapter 3 "Lyme Disease: The Social Construction of a New Disease and Its Social Consequences" (pp. 57-83).	Jan 26 <i>Making Sense of Illness</i> Chapter 4 "From the Patient's Angina Pectoris to the Cardiologist's Coronary Heart Disease" (pp. 84-110).	Jan 28 In-Class Film <i>The Angry Heart</i>
4	Jan 31 Lorde, Audre. "Breast Cancer: Power Versus Prosthesis," from <i>The Cancer Journals</i> (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1980): 55-77.	Feb 2 Ehrenreich, Barbara. "Welcome to Cancer Land: A Mammogram Leads to a Cult of Pink Kitsch," <i>Harpers</i> November 2001, pp. 43-53.	Feb 4 <i>Making Sense of Illness</i> Conclusion, 166-189.
5	Feb 7 Bring three copies of paper to class for workshopping	Feb 9 Workshopping Part 2	Feb 11 Paper 1 Due at Midnight
UNIT 2: MEDICAL THINKING			
6	Feb 14 Fleck, Ludwick, "Some Specific Features of the Medical Way of Thinking," in <i>Cognition and Fact: Materials on Ludwick Fleck</i> , edited by Robert S. Cohen and Thomas Schnelle, D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1986 [1927], pp. 39-46.	Feb 16 Nettleton, Sarah, "Inventing Mouths: Disciplinary Power and Dentistry," in <i>Reassessing Foucault: Power, Medicine and the Body</i> edited by Colin Jones and Roy Porter, pp. 73-90, New York: Routledge, 1994.	Feb 18 Research day: bring laptops
7	Feb 21 <i>Blood and Guts</i> Preface and Chapters 1-2 "Disease" and "Doctors" pp. 1-52.	Feb 23 <i>Blood and Guts</i> Chapters 3-4, "The Body" and "The Laboratory," pp. 53-98.	Feb 25 Paper 2 prep assignment due at midnight

8	Feb 28 <i>Blood and Guts</i> Chapters 5-6 “Therapies” and “Surgery,” pp. 99-134.	Mar 2 <i>Blood and Guts</i> Chapters 7-8 “The Hospital” and “Medicine in Modern Society” pp. 153-169.	Mar 4 Clarke et al., “Biomedicalization: Technoscientific Transformations of Health, Illness, and U.S. Biomedicine,” <i>American Sociological Review</i> Vol. 68, No. 2 (April 2003), pp. 161-194).
9	Mar 7 Bring 3 copies of Paper 2 for Workshopping	Mar 9 Workshopping Part 2	Mar 11 Paper 2 Due at Midnight
10	Mar 14 Form groups for final projects	Mar 16 No class: Individual meetings to discuss substantial revisions	Mar 18 No class: individual meetings to discuss substantial revisions
11	SPRING BREAK		
UNIT 3: MEDICAL DISCOVERIES IN CULTURAL CONTEXT			
12	Mar 28 <i>Collectors of Lost Souls</i>	Mar 30 <i>Collectors of Lost Souls</i>	April 1 In-class research for final projects
13	April 4 <i>Collectors of Lost Souls</i>	April 6 <i>Collectors of Lost Souls</i>	April 8 No Class [Harvard STS Summit] Final Project Annotated Bibliographies Due at Midnight
14	April 11 Group work	April 13 Group work	April 15 Group work
15	April 18 Present Group Projects	April 20 Present Group Projects	April 21 Present Group Projects
16	April 25 Dead week: TBD	April 27 Dead week: TBD	April 29 Wrap-up Class Group project final poster and self-assessment due Substantial Revision Due